

# FIFTY YEARS OF CONCESSIONS TO IRELAND

1831—1881.

BY

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"THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY OF THE IRISH LAND QUESTION."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY  
OF  
THE IRISH LAND QUESTION.

By R. BARRY O'BRIEN.

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OPINIONS.

"I have been reading, within the last week, a very interesting little volume written by Mr. Barry O'Brien. . . . It details what has been done in both Houses of Parliament from the year 1829 to the year 1869."—*Mr. Bright's Speech at Birmingham, Nov. 16th, 1880.*

The author has received the following letters from the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., and the Right Hon. John Bright, M.P.:—  
10, Downing Street, Whitehall, *Nov. 5th, 1880.*

"Sir,—I thank you for kindly sending me your work, and I hope that the sad and discreditable story which you have told so well in your narrative of the Irish Land Question may be useful at a period when we have more than ever reason to desire that it should be thoroughly understood. I venture on the single remark, that your account of the Bill of 1870 would, I think, be more exact, if it distinctly mentioned the compensation for disturbance, which the authors of the Bill considered to be by much its most important feature.

"I have the honour to be, sir, yours very faithfully,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."

"Reform Club, *Nov. 10th, 1880.*

"DEAR SIR,—I thank you for the gift of your little book. I have read it through carefully, and found it very interesting. I wish all the members of Parliament could read it—I mean the members of both Houses.

"I am, yours truly,

"JOHN BRIGHT."

"It is likely to become a veritable handbook of debate in the next session of Parliament. It traces the legislative efforts which have been made upon the subject of Irish land, from the Union to the present time; and also sketches the most prominent features of Irish landlordism from the earliest of the existing plantations."—*Liverpool Daily Post.*

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"Whatever may be thought of the adequacy or practicability of



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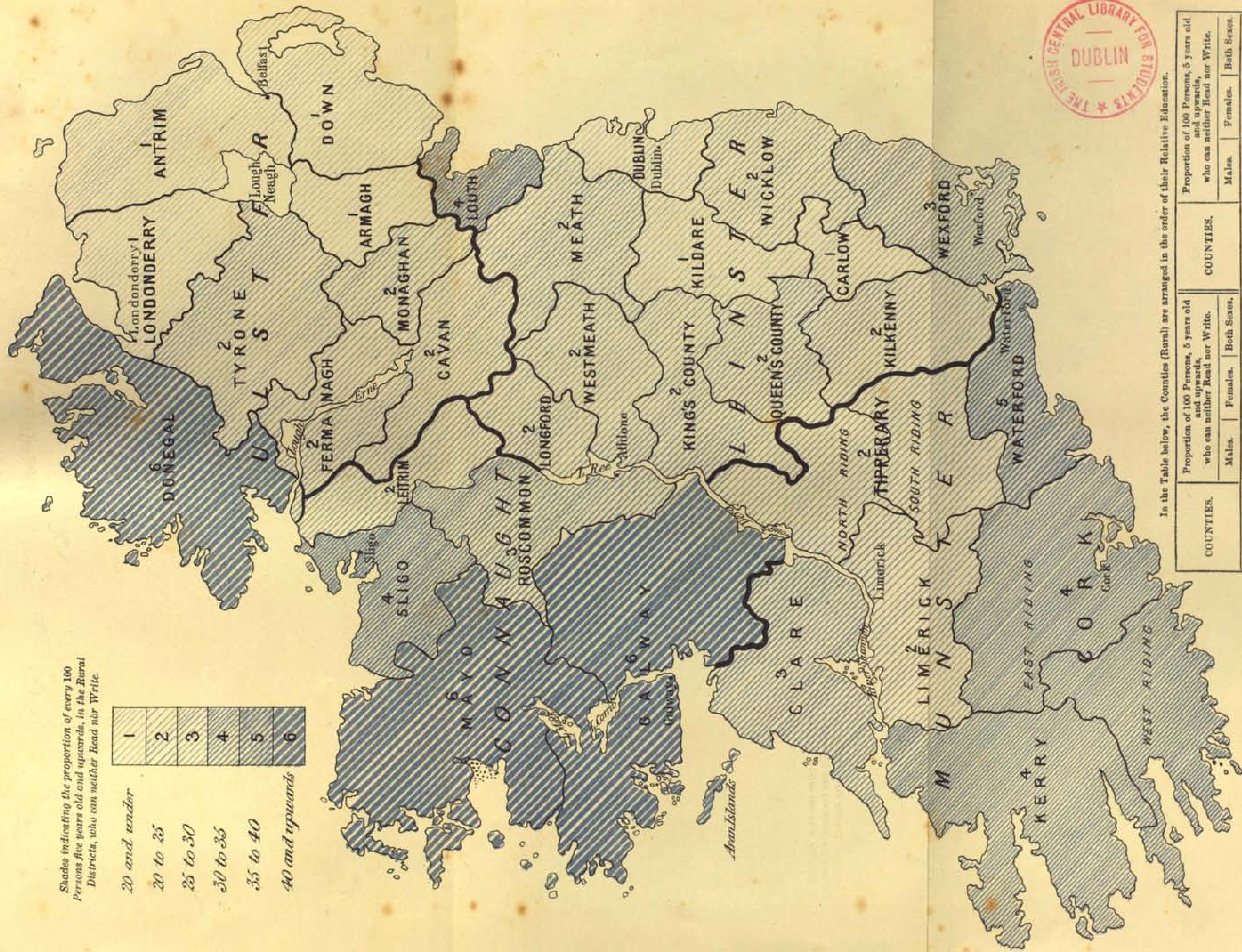
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Shades indicating the proportion of every 100 Persons five years old and upwards, in the Rural Districts, who can neither Read nor Write.



In the Table below, the Counties (Rural) are arranged in the order of their Relative Education.

COUNTIES.	Proportion of 100 Persons, 5 years old and upwards, who can neither Read nor Write.			COUNTIES.	Proportion of 100 Persons, 5 years old and upwards, who can neither Read nor Write.		
	Males.	Females.	Both Sexes.		Males.	Females.	Both Sexes.
ANTRIM .....	11.8	12.3	12.1	LONGFORD .....	22.4	23.8	23.1
LONDONDERRY .....	13.0	14.0	13.5	MEATH .....	23.6	23.9	23.2
DOWN .....	13.7	14.9	14.3	MONAGHAN .....	22.3	24.3	23.3
DUBLIN .....	18.9	16.6	17.7	WESTMEATH .....	23.7	23.6	23.6
CARLOW .....	19.8	19.4	19.6	LIMERICK .....	21.9	26.7	24.4
ARMAGH .....	18.5	20.9	19.8	WEXFORD .....	26.9	24.6	25.8
KILDARE .....	19.6	20.2	19.9	CLARE .....	25.1	30.2	27.6
QUEEN'S .....	20.8	19.5	20.2	ROSCOMMON .....	26.5	29.4	27.9
TIPPERARY .....	19.5	22.1	20.8	LOUTH .....	29.8	32.8	31.2
TIPPERARY .....	19.4	22.2	20.8	CORK .....	29.5	33.3	31.4
WICKLOW .....	22.7	30.3	21.5	SLIGO .....	30.6	32.5	31.5
FERMANAGH .....	21.1	22.3	21.7	KERRY .....	31.3	38.7	34.9
KING'S .....	22.3	22.4	22.3	WATERFORD .....	28.0	41.6	39.8
CAVAN .....	22.1	22.7	22.4	DONEGAL .....	27.2	43.0	40.1
LEITRIM .....	21.8	33.2	22.5	MAYO .....	41.9	49.5	45.8
TYRONE .....	22.0	23.7	22.9	GALWAY .....	44.3	50.5	47.4
Total for Ireland					25.7	28.4	27.0

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O'BRIEN'S

"Fifty Years of England's Concessions to Ireland."





# FIFTY YEARS OF CONCESSIONS TO IRELAND.

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## INTRODUCTION.

It is my purpose to write a short history of the remedial measures passed by the British Parliament for Ireland between the years 1831 and 1881. In carrying out this design, I hold it of essential importance not to confine myself to a mere narrative of the events which have occurred within that period. For it is, I believe, absolutely necessary to a right understanding and a just appreciation of the measures treated in the following pages, that the condition of things which they were introduced to correct should be known; and no full knowledge of that condition of things can be attained without an acquaintance with the transactions and policy of the remoter past. I will illustrate my meaning by reference to two of the subjects with which I deal:—I am of opinion that judgment cannot properly be pronounced, either upon the measure of educational reform introduced by Mr. Stanley in 1831, or upon the measures of land reform introduced by Mr. Gladstone in 1870 and 1881, unless a complete knowledge of the policy of England in Ireland with respect to education and land for the past 200 years has been acquired. Therefore, in considering the subject of the National Schools in the present, and that of the Land Acts of 1870 and 1881 in the ensuing volume, I have given in the one case, some account of the systems of public



instruction maintained in Ireland from the time of Henry VIII. to the passing of Mr. Stanley's measure of 1831, and in the other, traced the history of the Irish land system, from the battle of Limerick to the initiation of Mr. Gladstone's policy of redress; and I have treated likewise other measures of concession.

The Irish people have, upon the whole, been fairly well abused by English publicists and politicians (of a class) during the past fifty years. I do not mention this fact now for the purpose of making it a subject of complaint, or of reviving disagreeable recollections. Indeed, I much desire that whatever there is of unpleasantness in the memories of the past fifty years should be forgotten; whatever there is of satisfaction alone borne in mind. But one observation I wish to make, and it is this: I think that English publicists and legislators, who are, apparently, never weary of framing indictments against the Irish nation, should endeavour to acquire some little knowledge of the history of that nation. It would perhaps be too much to expect that—I will not say the ordinary Englishman, who has no special duty in the premises—but that even the ordinary English publicist and legislator should study the history of Ireland as Mr. Bright has studied it, and having done so, should act as Mr. Bright has acted. Thirty-eight years ago, the attention of Mr. Bright was turned to the condition of Ireland; and when the Devon Commission appeared in 1845, he waded through its volumes, literally from page to page, in the hope that he might find therein some facts which would aid in solving the painful problem of Irish poverty, Irish disaffection, and Irish crime. Having got to the end of the volumes, he thought he had discovered much that explained the existence of chronic disaffection and misery in Ireland; and from thenceforth he devoted himself with unceasing zeal to the advocacy of the cause of Irish tenant-farmers. He has had his reward. He has lived to see the reforms which he was vilified

and traduced for proposing, carried into law. I repeat, that it would, perhaps, be too much to expect the ordinary English publicist and legislator to do likewise. But it is not too much to expect that English politicians, publicists, and legislators, who speak, write, or vote on Irish questions, should make an effort to understand those questions. It is not too much to expect that those Englishmen who are for ever describing the Irish as ignorant and uncivilized, should learn something of the educational systems upheld by England in Ireland for 200 years. It is not too much to expect, that Englishmen who denounce the whole Irish nation as a race of beggars, and assassins, should make themselves acquainted with the history of Irish landlords and Irish land.

From the middle of the sixteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the end aimed at by the policy of the English Government in Ireland was the conversion of the Irish people to the reformed faith, and their incorporation, in language and feeling, with the English name and nation. That the Irish should be made Protestant in creed, and English in sentiment, was, not unnaturally, deemed, by those who had completed the conquest of the island in the sixteenth century, the most essential requisite for consolidating their own power, and uniting the people of the two countries. This being the end in view, the means employed by English sovereigns and statesmen to effect it were unquestionably neither very just nor very wise.

However, in judging the policy which England pursued towards Ireland for generations after the subjugation of that country, it seems but fair to bear in mind, that the question of the treatment of a conquered nation, generally presents to the conqueror—and, perhaps, especially to the conqueror who, after the lapse of centuries, desires to make some reparation for the original wrong—difficulties of a perplexing and often almost insurmountable nature; and it must be allowed that the conqueror does not invariably receive



much help or sympathy from the subjugated race in his efforts—sometimes really honest—to surmount them. At the same time it should be remembered that the difficulties in government which many conquerors have to encounter are originally of their own making; and that these original difficulties have been permitted or encouraged to develop in subsequent generations, into almost hopeless entanglements, for want of the courage, and often of the wish, on the conqueror's part, to do timely justice. Therefore, however unwise, as a matter of policy, the conquered nation may be, not, at certain intervals, to assist the conqueror in bringing about a reconciliation, it is questionable whether this want of co-operation ought to cause either surprise or disappointment to the ruling class.

Defeated nations are prone to dwell on the memories of past wrongs, even when the traces of those wrongs are being gradually effaced, and to brood over the causes of their discontent, even when those causes are being steadily removed. This conduct on the part of nations that have lost their independence is not always readily understood by nations that have retained it. To the latter it seems strange that they cannot command at will the sympathies and the friendship of those whose affections they have, for generations, not only failed, but hardly tried to win. When conquerors who have entered upon a career of reparative justice, and persevered in it for a time, address an appeal to the conquered "to let bygones be bygones," they hope to strike a responsive chord in the hearts of the conquered, and are disappointed and chagrined at finding that they fail. Puzzled and perplexed because (as it seems to them) their generous approaches are not warmly reciprocated, they begin to despair of success and to talk about ingratitude. Yet, if conquerors would but look back—which they are so often reluctant to do—on the whole history of their connexion with the con-



quered, they would find in the retrospect sufficient cause for the indifference to and disbelief in their well-meant efforts, that they too readily ascribe in moments of passion and resentment, to some natural taint or infirmity in the character of the subject race.

The success of a conqueror-nation in pursuing a policy of conciliation and union, may, I think, be said to depend in great measure on the period (with reference to the date of conquest) at which that policy was inaugurated, and the manner in which it has been carried out.

The longer such a policy is postponed, and the more haltingly it is persevered in, the more uncertain will be its chances of success. It seems but a truism to say that unfriendly races, whose original dislikes have been perpetuated from generation to generation, will with all the more difficulty be induced to unite in the end; that peoples between whom enmities, discords, and class-distinctions have been permitted and encouraged to grow up and endure, will not without much struggle, if at all, be finally welded into one nation.

Conquerors, in dealing with the conquered, adopt, for the most part, either a policy of expatriation or a policy of absorption. Whenever the conqueror finds himself sufficiently strong for the purpose, the first is the policy generally resorted to; when that cannot safely be tried, the second is usually adopted.

The conquest of England by the Normans may be pointed to as an instance of the policy of gradual and mutual absorption.<sup>1</sup> As an instance of the policy of expatriation, the invasion of Britain by the Saxons affords a familiar illustration.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Thierry, "Norman Conquest."

<sup>2</sup> "Britain fell, however (A.D. 450), to one of the fiercest of the barbarian nations, the Saxons. They were possessed in the highest degree of the land-hunger that made the invasions of those northern hordes so terrible beyond all former conquests. They seized the houses,

In the occupation of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans it would scarcely be accurate to say that either a policy of expatriation or of absorption was adopted. The Anglo-Norman policy in that country may, perhaps, be best described as a policy of isolation. The natives were rather boycotted than expatriated. In the first instance, no doubt, the invaders, "in violation of their faith pledged to the Irish princes," confiscated nearly the whole island, most of the land being divided among about ten English families. But having strengthened themselves in their own strongholds, for the rest they seem upon the whole to have left the natives "severely alone;" "not interfering with the government of their septs," and being "content with the promise of homage and tribute, neither of which was afterwards paid."<sup>3</sup>

The conquerors were, in fact, too weak to carry out a policy of expatriation, but strong enough to prevent the work of racial assimilation from going on smoothly. The invaders were, in truth, powerful for mischief only. They were able to prevent the native Irish from working out their own destiny, and possessed sufficient strength to interrupt the natural course of social and political evolution;<sup>4</sup> but they were incapable of impos-

and the farms of the Romanized Britons, exterminated them and their language, and the very names of their towns and districts, and drove the survivors behind the Severn; and they there shut them up among the mountains of Cambria, surrounded by the River Severn and the sea, and further secured on the land side by the dyke called Offa's Dyke, just as their descendants, 1000 years later, penned up the Irish in Connaught behind the Shannon."—Prendergast, "Cromwellian Settlement," p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Hallam, "Constitutional History," vol. iii. p. 465; Davis, "Discovery of the True Causes why Ireland was never Subdued."

<sup>4</sup> "We may be led by the analogy of other countries to think it probable that, if Ireland had not tempted the cupidity of her neighbours, there would have arisen in the course of time some Egbert, or Harold Harfager to consolidate the provincial kingdoms into one hereditary monarchy, which, by the adoption of better laws, the increase of commerce, and frequent intercourse with the chief courts of Europe, might have taken as respectable a station as that of Scotland in the commonwealth of Christendom. If the two islands had afterwards



ing on the aboriginal inhabitants the advantages of that "higher civilization" which they came avowedly to spread.

Having, in the first instance, created those enmities of race and class which are inseparable from all conquests, the conquerors subsequently failed to adopt any healing measures calculated to pacify the native population, to compensate them for the loss of national independence, and to reconcile them to the new *régime*.<sup>5</sup>

The result of the policy thus pursued was very naturally, as Thierry says, to keep up the "primitive separation and hostility." The end at last came. The Irish, persistently treated as "enemies," even when they evinced a disposition to become friends, and the Norman colonists (who reciprocated this feeling) being regarded as "rebels" by their own countrymen, banded together for the common purpose of overthrowing the Anglo-Norman power in the island.<sup>6</sup> The efforts of

become incorporated through intermarriage of their sovereigns, as would very likely have taken place, it might have been on such conditions of equality as Ireland, till lately, has never known, and certainly without that long tragedy of crime and misfortune which her annals unfold."—Hallam, "Constitutional History," vol. iii. p. 463, 3rd ed.

<sup>5</sup> See the policy of the Normans in England and in Ireland, contrasted in Thierry's "Norman Conquest," vol. ii. p. 343 *et seq.*

<sup>6</sup> Davis, citing the Statute of Kilkenny, caps. 1, 10, and 11; the 11 Henry IV. caps. 2 and 4; 10 Henry VI. cap. 1; 18 Henry VI. cap. 4; 5 Edward IV. cap. 6; and 10 Henry VII. cap. 17; in which the Irish are spoken of as "enemies," and the "degenerate and disobedient" English as "rebels," says: "All these statutes speak of English rebels and Irish enemies; as if the Irish had never been in the condition of subjects, but always out of the protection of the law, and were indeed in worse case than aliens of any foreign realm that was in amity with the crown of England. For by divers heavy penal laws the English were forbidden to marry, to foster, to make gossips with the Irish, or to have any trade or commerce in their markets or fairs . . . whereby it is manifest that such as had the government of Ireland under the crown of England did intend to make perpetual separation and enmity between the English and Irish; pretending, no doubt, that the English should in the end root out the Irish; which the English not being able to do, did cause perpetual war between the nations. . . . But perhaps [it will be said] the Irishry in former times did wilfully refuse to be subject to the laws



these Irish "enemies" and Norman "rebels," spread over many generations of struggle and turmoil, were ultimately attended with a large, though only temporary, measure of success. Gradually, amidst the fluctuating fortunes of war, English authority in the island became seriously undermined; English interests, almost everywhere, slowly lost ground; in a word, the

of England, and would not be partakers of the benefit thereof, though the crown of England did desire it; and therefore they were reputed aliens, outlaws, and enemies? Assuredly the contrary doth appear, as well by the charters of denization purchased by the Irish in all ages, as by a petition preferred by them to the king, Anno 2 Edward III., desiring that an act might pass in Ireland whereby all the Irishry might be enabled to use and enjoy the laws of England, without purchasing of particular denizations. . . . To this petition 'the great lords of Ireland' replied that 'the Irishry might [could] not be naturalized without damage and prejudice either to themselves or to the crown.'" —Davis, p. 113 *et seq.* See also vol. ii. Appendix A.

With reference to the policy of the English to discourage all connexion between the English colony and the natives, Lord Clare, addressing the Irish House of Lords on February 10th, 1800, said [that such policy was not] "to be reconciled to any principle of sound policy: it was a declaration of perpetual war against every person of English blood who had settled beyond the limits of the Pale, and from motives of personal interest or convenience had formed connexions with the natives, or adopted their laws and customs; and it had the full effect which might have been expected: it drew closer the confederacy it was meant to dissolve, and implicated the colony of the Pale in ceaseless warfare and contention with each other, and with the inhabitants of the adjacent districts."—Lord Clare, as quoted in Plowden's "Historical Review of the State of Ireland," vol. i. p. 56. Referring to the same subject, Mr. Lecky says, "The English rule as a living reality was confined and concentrated in the narrow limits of the Pale. The hostile power planted in the heart of the nation destroyed all possibility of central government, while it was itself incapable of fulfilling the function. Like a spear-point embedded in a living body, it inflamed all around it, and deranged every vital function. It prevented the gradual reduction of the island by some native Clovis, which would necessarily have taken place if the Anglo-Normans had not arrived, and, instead of the peaceful and almost silent amalgamation of races, customs, laws, and languages which took place in England, and which is the source of many of the best elements in English life and character, the two nations remained in Ireland for centuries in hostility," &c.—"History of England," vol. ii. p. 93.

English occupation was all but completely overthrown, when, three centuries after Strongbow's invasion, the reconquest of Ireland was undertaken by the Tudor dynasty.<sup>7</sup>

A policy of isolation was unsuited to the genius of the Tudor family, and its abandonment, and the adoption of more thorough methods of government in Ireland, date from their accession. Henry VII. proceeded, with more or less energy, to recover the ground which had been lost during the sway of the Plantagenets, and to reduce the country to greater subjection to English rule.

In the reign of his successor a new feature and a fresh difficulty in the administration of Irish affairs were presented. Henry VIII. had changed his religion, and the English people had changed with him. In these circumstances the king deemed it essential for the good government of Ireland, and, to use a modern memorable phrase, for the "consolidation of co-operation" between the two countries, that the Irish people should change their religion too—a view of the situation which the Irish people did not share. But, either with or without their consent, Henry was determined the Irish people should embrace the reformed religion.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Hallam, "Constitutional History," vol. iii. p. 478.

<sup>8</sup> "In England the Roman yoke became intolerable; under Henry VIII. the English Parliament broke with it, and Ireland was required to break with it also. Religion was changed next. The Irish peasantry might possibly have become Calvinist. Calvinism suited the Celtic nature. It was born in France; it was bred in Switzerland; it was adopted by Scotland; the Highlanders accepted it at last; and the Welsh, if they are not Calvinists, are Protestants of an extremely emotional type. The Celtic nature requires something which is intense, real, and passionate. If any phase of the reformed faith could have taken root in Ireland, it would have been of the kind which suited Wales or Scotland. But Calvinism would not do for England. England required something which was neither Catholic nor Protestant, but a hybrid which was both and neither; and what she chose for herself she insisted that Ireland should share with her. The Irish rebelled again and again; whole provinces were depopulated; churches fell to ruins; the miserable people perished





In his reign, accordingly, commenced that policy of eradicating the Irish nationality and faith referred to in the opening sentences of this chapter—a policy which was persevered in by the adoption of various, but gradually diminishing measures of severity, until the achievement of Catholic Emancipation, in 1829. Under the Tudors the means used for carrying out this policy were, to quote Hallam, “Penal statutes and the sword;”<sup>9</sup> under Cromwell the sword and a wholesale system of confiscation;<sup>1</sup> under William,<sup>2</sup> Anne, and the first George, renewed confiscations, and fresh penal statutes; under George II., George III., and George IV., the method—more humane and rational at all events,—of educational proselytism, accompanied, however, by the maintenance of religious and national disabilities, was tried. But all the coercive methods which had been employed failed to make this policy a success. At length in 1829 the necessity for taking a new departure

in hundreds of thousands. To no purpose. The Anglican Church was to be the Church of Ireland—that and nothing else. Nor was this the worst, Ireland was not only to submit, but she was to seem to submit of her own will. The English princes did not like to act as despots. They were constitutional sovereigns who ruled with the consent of the representatives of their subjects. As England had a Parliament to legislate for her, so Ireland must have a Parliament. She must not only have laws imposed upon her which she hated, but she herself must seem to approve of them by her own peers and burgesses, if only to keep up appearances before the world.”—Froude, “Romanism and the Irish Race,” *North American Review*, January, 1880, p. 33. See also Hallam, “Constitutional History,” vol. iii. p. 487.

<sup>9</sup> Hallam, “Constitutional History,” vol. iii. p. 490; and Appendix B.

<sup>1</sup> “After the king’s person had fallen into their hands, the victorious party set themselves in earnest to effect the conquest of Ireland. This was achieved by Cromwell and his powerful army, after several years, with such bloodshed and rigour, that in the opinion of Lord Clarendon, the sufferings of that nation, from the outset of the rebellion to its close, have never been surpassed but by those of the Jews in their destruction by Titus.”—Hallam, “Constitutional History,” vol. iii. p. 523.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B.



became evident.<sup>3</sup> Since that time an alternating policy of concession and coercion has been adopted, and it is the history of this policy that I now propose to write.

To those Englishmen who have favoured and supported that policy of concession which has, to a greater or less extent, been pursued for the past fifty years, the continuance of discontent in Ireland is not unnaturally a cause of some despondency and misgiving. On the other hand, those who believe in the efficacy of what is called firm government—a phrase which, as applied to Ireland, is understood, at all events, by the bulk of the Irish people to mean pure and unmixed coercion—affect to find in the circumstance of a still disturbed and disaffected Ireland much proof of the correctness of their views, and of the wisdom of pursuing a “strong-armed” policy.<sup>4</sup> The Irish people themselves look at the matter in a light very different from that in which it is regarded by either of the great parties on this side of the channel. They think that there has been a great deal too much of the strong-armed policy, and assert that many of the Irish difficulties of the present day can, to a great extent, be directly ascribed to its operation. As for the partial failure of the policy of concession, they say that it has so failed because England has never con-

<sup>3</sup> “We had to choose between emancipation and rebellion. We took the former as the lesser evil of the two.”—Froude, “Romanism and the Irish Race.”

<sup>4</sup> “The Irish Celts, in the opinion of Mr. Froude, are a race hopelessly vitiated and debased, absolutely, incurably, and constitutionally unfitted for self-government, and only to be ruled by a strict despotism. They are a people ‘who do not understand forbearance, who interpret lenity into fear, and respect only an authority which they dare not trifle with. . . . The worst means of governing them is to give them their own way. In concession they see only fear, and those that fear them they hate and despise. Coercion succeeds better. They respect a master-hand, though it be a hard and a cruel one.’”—Lecky, on Froude’s “English in Ireland; *Macmillan’s Magazine*, January, 1873, p. 247, and Froude’s “English in Ireland,” pp. 65, 138, 1st ed.

ceded in time; because she has never conceded adequately or graciously: because the enactments embodying the concessions have been allowed to remain a dead letter on the statute-book, or have been administered in a manner hostile to the spirit and intention of the law.

Into the controversial question thus raised, it is not my desire to enter. I shall state simply, I hope, fairly, the facts and circumstances connected with the concessions to Ireland, which, within the past fifty years, have been carried through the English Parliament. How far these concessions have been adequate to remove the just causes of Irish discontent; whether they have been marred in their passage through Parliament by a want of grace of manner, or opportuneness of time; whether the policy of "leniency" has been a mistake in any degree, or in any way; and, whether the adherence, from the outset, to a policy of force, and force only, would have been more suitable to the character of the Irish people, and better calculated to promote the material and moral prosperity of the country—these are points upon which I shall leave my readers to draw their own conclusions from the facts which I shall place before them.



# BOOK I.

## THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM.

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### CHAPTER I.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN IRELAND FROM THE REIGN OF HENRY VIII. TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHARTER SCHOOLS.

THE first attempt made at the establishment in Ireland of any system of education under the auspices of the English Government was essayed in the reign of Henry VIII.

In 1537 an Act was passed by the Irish Parliament<sup>1</sup> entitled "An Act for the English order, habit, and Language."

Having recited how much "a good instruction in God's Blessed laws, with conformity, coincidence, and familiarity in language, tongue, in manner, order, and apparel with them, that be civil people and profess and acknowledge Christ's religion," tended to the "induction of a rude and ignorant people to the knowledge of Almighty God, and of the good and virtuous obedience

<sup>1</sup> Henry's first Irish Parliament was summoned in 1536. "So limited, at this time," says Plowden, "was the jurisdiction of the Irish Parliament, or, to speak more properly, of the provincial assembly of the Pale, that the Master of the Rolls reported to the king that the laws were not obeyed twenty miles from his [Irish] capital." "Yet did Henry successfully exert every device of art and power to render the members that composed it ductile and subservient to his dictates."—Plowden, "Historical Review of Ireland," vol. i. p. 54.

which by His most holy precepts and commandments they owe to their princes and superiors," the statute provided, in the first place, that the Irish habit and apparel should be abolished, and the peculiar way the the Irish wore their hair discontinued; and in the next, that "all the king's true subjects in the land should speak the English tongue," and "should bring up their children in such places where they should have occasion to learn the English tongue, language, and condition."<sup>2</sup>

For the more effectual carrying out of the second, which was the main provision of the statute, it was enacted that spiritual promotion should be only given to such persons as could speak the English language, and further, it was declared that every person seeking spiritual orders or preferment should take an oath not ~~only, that he would speak,~~ and "~~hid the heade,~~" in English, and instruct all under his authority to do likewise, but that he would "keep or cause to be kept within the place, territory, or parish, where he shall have rule, benefice, or promotion, a school for to learn English if any of the children of his parish come to him to learn the same, taking for the keeping of the said school such convenient stipend or salary as in the said land [Ireland] is accustomably used to be taken."

Under this Act the "parish schools," as they came to be called, were founded. The object of these schools was to secure instruction for such persons as spoke the English tongue or wished to learn it, but for none other. However, as the bulk of the population of Ireland were ignorant of the English tongue, and had little reason to desire to acquire a knowledge of it, or for trusting themselves to the guidance of those who were empowered to impart that knowledge,<sup>3</sup> their educa-

<sup>2</sup> 28 Henry VIII. cap. 15.

<sup>3</sup> "No motive that can be conceived to estrange the Irish from the English at this time [reign of Henry VIII.] was omitted; nothing neglected that could tend to provoke insurrection, or insure its punish-



tional wants were of course altogether neglected by the State. Nor was it possible, in the then condition of the country, that those wants could by any exertion on the part of the popular leaders or pastors be supplied.

The work of the parish schools was in fact confined entirely to the most English districts of the Pale, and even there it was not effectively done.

Thus we learn that, upon the accession of Edward VI., "the Irish language had become so predominant within the Pale" that fresh enactments had to be introduced "to restrain it." Indeed the clergy of Henry VIII. do not seem to have been over-zealous in their exertions to "instruct" the Irish people, either in the English language or the doctrines of the reformed religion. "Hard it is," complains the Irish Chancellor of the time in a letter addressed to the Duke of Northumberland, the then President of the Council, "that people should know their duties to God and the king, when they shall not hear teaching or preaching throughout the year."<sup>4</sup> But this was not the worst.

ment. The Irish annalists tell us that those who were commissioned to enforce the spiritual supremacy of the king seized the most valuable utensils and furniture of the churches, which they exposed to sale without decency or reserve. Lord Grey burnt the cathedral of Down, and destroyed the ancient monuments of SS. Patrick, Bridget, and Columbkille. The crucifix of the Abbey of Baelibagan, and the celebrated crozier, believed to have belonged to St. Patrick, which the natives held in great veneration, were indignantly committed to the flames as objects of superstitious idolatry. The violence done by one party to the feelings and favourite prepossessions of the other, superadded to the numberless provocations and insults, produced collisions in the body politic that threatened its very existence."—Plowden, "Historical Review," vol. i. p. 59, n.

It is in dealing with this portion of Irish history that Mr. Froude has said, "the Irish were not to be blamed if they looked to the pope, to Spain, to France, to any friend in earth, or Heaven, to deliver them from a power which discharged no single duty that rulers owe to subjects."—"History of England," vol. x. pp. 262, 263.

<sup>4</sup> Cusack's letter to the Duke of Northumberland, A.D. 1552, quoted in Report of the Education [Irish] Commissioners, 1810 (reprinted 1821). Mr. Lecky, in his "History of England in the Eighteenth Century," referring to this time, says, "the benefices were filled with

The clergy not only failed to impart to their flocks a knowledge of the English language; they seem not to have kept up their own acquaintance with it. To such a degree had this acquaintance been lost, that in the reign of Elizabeth the clergy were found to be unable to officiate in English, a circumstance which led to the passing of an Act in 1560,<sup>5</sup> providing for the celebration of the services in Latin, wherever the English language was not known.

It is indeed doubtful if any parish schools were erected in the reign of Henry VIII., or if a serious effort at all was at the time made to carry out the intentions of the Legislature on the subject; nor between the reign of Henry and the accession of Charles II. did any change take place in this respect. However, during the reigns of Charles II., William III., and Anne, more interest seems to have been evinced in the working of the schools; a new feature appears also to have been added to them. Originally, the object of the schools was to teach the English language, but in the reign of Charles, William, and Anne, "the advancement of the Protestant religion was more distinctly provided for by the legislative regulations respecting" them.<sup>6</sup> Few schools, however, seem to have been built before the reign of Anne;<sup>7</sup> and, indeed, it may be said that the system did not attain any degree of efficiency whatever until the time of the Georges.

As to its efficiency during this era, we learn that in 1788 there were in twenty-nine dioceses, comprising 838 benefices, 361 parish schools, at which 11,000 children were being educated. For the maintenance of those schools there were no Parliamentary grants, and the burden of keeping them up was accordingly

adventurers without religious zeal, and sometimes without common morality."—Lecky, "History of England," vol. ii. p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Eliz. cap. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Report of the Education [Irish] Commissioners, 1810 (reprinted 1821).

<sup>7</sup> The most ancient school of which we have any record, the school in the parish of St. John, Dublin, was built in this reign.—Ibid.



thrown upon, though not apparently borne to any considerable extent by, the clergy.<sup>8</sup> For instance, it seems that in seventy-four out of the 838 benefices, each incumbent paid 2*l.*<sup>9</sup> per annum to a nominal master, who did not, however, keep the school, and that in the remaining benefices the incumbents neither paid a salary nor caused a school to be kept.<sup>1</sup> In the schools which were kept, the parents of the children who attended them paid for their instruction sums varying from 1*s.* to 3*s.* a quarter, the course of instruction consisting of writing and arithmetic in some cases, and spelling and reading in all.

Between 1788 and 1810 the number of schools and the number of pupils returned as attending them increased slightly. For instance, by a return made to the Commissioners of Education in 1810, it seems that in 736 benefices, out of a total of 1125, there were 549 parish schools, attended by 23,000 children. These schools were frequented mainly by Protestants, the greatest number of them being in the northern dioceses, and the fewest in the provinces of Munster and Connaught, where they were regarded as proselytizing institutions, and accordingly avoided by the Catholics, that is to say, by, practically, the whole population.

Though the return of 1810 showed an improvement, both in the number of schools and scholars over the return of 1788, yet the Commissioners of Education, who reported in the former year, seem not to have taken a satisfactory view of the prospects of the system. "We are fully persuaded," they said, "of their [the schools,] inadequacy as a system of general education

<sup>8</sup> No provision was made by the Act of Henry VIII. for the payment of school-masters, but the custom gradually sprang up—at what time it is uncertain—that the Incumbent of the parish should discharge this obligation.—Report of Education Commissioners, 1810 (reprinted 1821).

<sup>9</sup> This was the usual payment, but in some cases the master got 5*l.* or 10*l.* with a house.—*Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

Schols:  
1788  
1810

for the poor, even if it were practicable to establish an effective one [school] in every union.”<sup>2</sup>

The parish schools have long been institutions of the past.

The schools established next, in order of time, for the education of the Irish poor, were the Diocesan Free Schools founded by Elizabeth in 1570. The Act for the foundation of these schools,<sup>3</sup> having recited that the Irish people “lived in a rude and barbarous state, not understanding that Almighty God hath by His divine laws forbidden the offences which they hourly commit, [the offences were not specified] and hath by His Holy Scriptures commanded a due and humble obedience from people to their princes and rulers,” provided that free schools should be kept in every diocese in Ireland, and that a school-house should be built in every shire-town at the cost and charge of the whole diocese. The school-master (who was to be “an Englishman, or of English birth”) was to be appointed by the Lord-Deputy in all the dioceses, except in Armagh, Dublin, Meath, and Kildare, where the appointment was placed in the hands of the Archbishops and Bishops of these dioceses respectively.

Under this Act, free schools were established in most, if not in all, the dioceses in Ireland. As to the working of these schools, few accounts of their condition, previous to the Restoration, have reached us. After that event, a Commission was appointed to inquire into the state of the schools, and to consider the best means for working them efficiently in the future. But little came of the action of this Commission. “If,” says the Report of the Commissioners of Education of 1809-10, “any schools were at that [the Restoration] time set on foot, they appear to have been of little public utility.”

<sup>2</sup> See Report of Commissioners of Education, 1810 (reprinted 1821), also Report of Select Committee (Commons) on Foundation Schools, Ireland, 1837-38.

<sup>3</sup> 12 Elizabeth, cap. 1.



In the reign of George I. fresh efforts were made to render the schools effective. An Act was then passed<sup>4</sup> empowering “Archbishops and Bishops to set apart an acre of ground out of any lands belonging to them for the site of a free school to be approved of by the Chief Governor for the time being.” It also empowered the grand jury of each county “to present, from time to time, such sums as they should find reasonable for their respective proportion towards building or repairing the school-houses in the counties, to be levied on the whole, or such parts thereof as are situate in each respective diocese.” This Act seems not to have been used to any very great, though it was to some, extent. Indeed the schools appear to have made such little way that, in 1810, we find the Commissioners of Education expressing a doubt “whether a system should be continued which in its principle appears not altogether equitable, and has never been found efficient in practice.” In 1810, there were free schools in connexion with this system kept at the following towns: Tuam, Longford, Cashel, Naas, Downpatrick, Carlow, Elphin, Trim, Castle-Island, Killaloe, Derry, Dromore, Cork, Ross-Carbery, Monaghan, Cloyne, one held in the College of Ossory, and one near Wexford.<sup>5</sup> In 1810 the stipend of the master of a Diocesan free school averaged from 25*l.* to 40*l.* per annum. Those schools were all kept by Protestant clergymen, and were mostly attended by the Protestant children of the middle classes. Very few “free” scholars were educated at them, and indeed not many scholars of any kind; in fact the total number did not exceed 380 in 1810, and of this number only four were described as “free scholars,” the rest being described as “day scholars and boarders,” and being chiefly the children of well-to-do Protestant parents, who paid for their education.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 12 George I. cap. 12.

<sup>5</sup> See Report of Education Commissioners, 1810.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Between 1810 and 1830 the prospects of the schools did not improve. In the latter year the Commissioners of Education report that their "best endeavours to establish the Diocesan Free Schools on a proper footing" had failed, "by reason of the indisposition of the grand juries of most of the counties to co-operate with the Commissioners," and "of a misapprehension that the schools were not open to free scholars of all religious persuasions."

In 1857 there were fourteen Diocesan Free Schools in operation, namely: Ballymena, Carlow, Cork, Downpatrick, Londonderry, Mallow, Elphin (subsequently transferred to Sligo), Limerick, Monaghan, Mullingar, Naas, Tuam, Wexford, Ross-Carbery.<sup>7</sup> All these schools, however, have now ceased to exist, except three: Ballymena, Sligo, and Tuam.<sup>8</sup> The Report of the Endowed Schools' Commission of 1881, states that, at the date of their inquiry, the endowment of the Sligo school consisted of an annuity of 163*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.*, payable by the Commissioners of the Church Temporalities to the master. In 1879, there were 27 pupils on the roll—2 boarders, and 25 day-pupils, of which 2 were free. At Tuam there were only 19 boarders and 1 day-pupil, none of which were free. At Ballymena, the number of pupils was still less, there being only 6 boarders and 6 day-pupils. Of the 6 boarders 5 were sons of the master.<sup>9</sup>

The Endowed Schools' Commissioners of 1880-81 reported all these schools to be in a state of decay. Of Ballymena they said that "the number of scholars was too small to admit of assistant-masters being employed, and that the education of the pupils was entirely in the hands of the master [a popular and competent man], who, with some aid from a French gentleman, taught all English and classical

<sup>7</sup> See Report of the Endowed Schools' Commissioners of 1879-81, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> See Report of Endowed Schools' Commission, pp. 46—54, 1879-81.



subjects himself. Of Tuam Mr. Mahaffy (the well-known professor of Dublin University, and the author of "Social Life in Greece," and other interesting works), who visited the schools on behalf of the Endowed Schools' Commissioners, reported that the boys were "carefully and kindly kept, and the comforts of the school well attended to," but added that he was "not impressed with the teaching or answering in the various classes," and that the school was "decaying." Mr. Mahaffy of Sligo said that when the present master (whose health was bad) died, the school "must collapse if not reconstructed by the people of Sligo."

So much for the Diocesan Free Schools of Elizabeth's creation.

We now come to the Royal Free Schools of James I.

James, in carrying out his scheme for the settlement of Ulster, was not unmindful of the advantages which might be derived, in the furtherance of his policy, from the establishment of a system of education, in which the youth of the province should be brought up in English ideas and feeling. Accordingly, we find that at an early date in the history of the Plantation scheme the subject of education occupied the attention of the king. In 1608, he made an order in the Privy Council, applicable to the plantation counties—Armagh, Tyrone, Derry, Donegal, Fermanagh, and Cavan—to the effect that, "one free school, at least, should be appointed in every county for the education of youth in learning and religion." To this end, coupled with the desire of founding municipal institutions, where an English public opinion (under the control of the crown, however) might be created and fostered, 100,000 acres of the confiscated estates were set apart for "Church, School, and Corporation" purposes, it being generally stipulated, with reference to the corporate lands, that, a small quantity of them, usually an acre and a half, should be reserved for the site of a public school. Having



thus formed the resolution of founding a series of educational establishments, James applied himself, with promptitude and vigour, to the execution of his design. In the first Commission, issued in 1609, to the Lord Deputy and his colleagues for carrying out the plantation of Ulster, instructions were given to them, directing that the parcels of land allotted to the free schools should be set out by "mears and bounds" to the end that they might be passed as grants from the crown. The Irish Government, and the colonists, however, do not seem to have taken very energetic action on these instructions. Between 1609 and 1612, nothing appears to have been done in the matter of the schools. But James did not permit the subject to drop. In 1612 he wrote to the Lord Deputy, complaining of the delay which had occurred, and directing that the lands should be promptly conveyed, for the use of the school-masters (who were to be nominated by the Archbishop of Armagh, and appointed by the king himself), to the several bishops of the respective dioceses where the schools were to be established. Notwithstanding this, nothing was done in fulfilment of the king's injunctions. In 1614 he again addressed a letter to the Lord Deputy, this time ordering that the lands should be conveyed to the Archbishop of Armagh, who was empowered to select the "most apt places" for erecting the schools. This letter was followed immediately by a charter for the establishment of a "perpetual free school" at Dungannon. However, no school seems to have been established at Dungannon in 1614. Even the possession of a charter does not appear to have much stimulated the energies of those who had been entrusted with the execution of the king's schemes for the education of the youths of Ulster.

In 1618 we find James again writing to the Lord Deputy. Having referred to the letter of April, 1614, and stated that, as he was informed, it had not taken so much effect as he desired, the king



goes on to say, "albeit, as we are advertised, the said Archbishop [of Armagh] hath appointed certain school-masters for the several schools, and that there are incumbents in the several churches within the said province [of Ulster], yet, by reason said lands are not conveyed [to the Archbishop of Armagh, in compliance with the directions of the letter of April, 1614], for their maintenance, as we intended, the same lands are daily diminished, and the school-houses not builded, to the hindrance of education."

He then repeats his orders that lands intended as maintenance for the schools should be granted to the Archbishop, upon trust to convey the same to the several masters and ushers of the said schools erected, or to be erected, with powers to them and their successors ("they being first incorporated and enabled by letters patent under the great seal") to purchase lands in the province to the value of 50*l.* a year for the support of the schools. The scheme was now at length fairly launched, though not, perhaps, very vigorously pushed on. However, by 1621 four schools had been established—one at Mountjoy (not at Dunganannon as originally intended) for the County Tyrone, one at Derry for the county of that name, one at Enniskillen for the County Fermanagh, and one at Cavan for the County Cavan. Of these four, the schools at Enniskillen and at Cavan seem only to have been in operation about this time.<sup>1</sup>

With reference to the Derry School, it never came into operation at all, and the citizens of Derry allege, with "more than a colour of probability," according to the report of the Royal Commissioners of 1857, that the Irish Society intercepted the endowment intended for the school (which was erected by a Mr. Springham at his own cost), and appropriated it to

We have records of the appointment of masters to both schools; to Enniskillen in 1618, to Cavan in 1621.—Report of Royal Commissioners in 1854-58, p. 7.

their own use—an allegation which the Irish Society very indignantly repudiate.<sup>2</sup>

Like the Derry School, the Mountjoy School was also a dead failure, though not for the same reason. The lands had been duly set apart for the use of the school, but no further steps were taken to advance the project. The precise date at which the schools for the Counties Armagh and Donegal were established it is difficult to say—probably a short time prior to 1625, when the school for Armagh was founded at Mountnorris, and that for Donegal, at the town of Donegal. James did not live to see any of the schools in efficient working order. He had, however, laid the foundation. The task of raising the superstructure was left to other hands. This task was not neglected by James's successor. Charles I. indeed, evinced a solicitude equal to that shown by his father for the success of the Royal Free School system. In the second year of his reign he made re-grants of the lands conveyed by his father, in Armagh, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Donegal, and Cavan, to the Archbishop of Armagh and his successors for ever, for the sole and proper use and behoof of the respective masters of the five Free Schools established in these counties. No grants were made this time to Derry. The king apparently had no faith in the educational inclinations of the Irish Society; and profiting by the experience of the transactions which had taken place during his predecessor's reign, he was

<sup>2</sup> The citizens of Derry, to the present day, say that the Foyle College at Derry should properly be the Royal Free School appertaining to the County Londonderry, in accordance with the intention of James I. The Irish Society (who contribute something to the support of the College) say that it merely possesses the character of a Diocesan Free School, and as such is not entitled to the endowment. The controversy has never been quite cleared up, but the Royal Commissioners of 1857 suggested that the "300 acres allotted to the Free School [in the county of Londonderry, by James I.] should be set apart from the property of the Society, and attached to Foyle College, which should henceforth be called 'The Londonderry Royal Free School.'" See Report of Royal Commissioners of 1854-58, p. 60.



on his guard against affording the skilful Londoners another opportunity of enriching themselves at the public expense. However, he was resolved that there should not be a Royal School the less notwithstanding; therefore, in creating the municipality of Banagher in the King's County, two years later, he specially stipulated that a portion of the lands conveyed to the corporation should be used for the purpose of establishing a Free School. This stipulation was carried out, and a Royal Free School was founded in Banagher in 1629. In the same year another school was founded at Carysfort, in the County Wicklow, and, three years later, another at Clogher, in the County Tyrone. Thus, by 1632, seven Royal Schools had been established, six being grammar schools, and the seventh an English school.

But it would seem that in 1633 none of the schools were conducted to the satisfaction of the Irish Government at all events. No provisions had been inserted in the charters founding the schools for the imposition of any religious disabilities or restrictions, with respect either to teachers or pupils. Thus, so far as the charters were concerned, the schools were open to children of all religious persuasions, and teachers might be chosen alike from the ranks of the Catholic, Presbyterian, and Established Churches. However, as a matter of practice, the head-masters were exclusively members of the Established Church, as were mainly but not entirely the pupils, some of whom were Catholics, others Presbyterians. Though all the head-masters were Episcopalian Protestants, assistant-teachers were occasionally appointed from amongst Catholics, and possibly Presbyterians. This appointment of Catholics as assistant-teachers gave offence to the Irish Government of the day.

In 1633, the Lord Deputy (Strafford), wrote to Laud, complaining that "the schools, which might be a means of seasoning the youth in virtue and religion," were "either ill-provided" and "ill-

governed in the most part, or, which is worse, applied sometimes to the maintenance of Popish schoolmasters." But there seem to have been other causes of dissatisfaction.

"The lands," says the Viceroy, "which were given to these charitable uses . . . in [so] bountiful a proportion, especially by King James of ever blessed memory, [have been] dissipated [and] leased forth for little or nothing . . . contrary to all conscience, and the excellent purposes of the founders." . . . "All moneys raised for charitable purposes," he adds, "are converted to private benefits." Thus, it would seem that, on various grounds, all was not proceeding well with the schools in 1633, from the Government point of view. Whether any steps were taken after Strafford's letter of complaint to regulate the management of the schools, so as to prevent the appointment of Catholic teachers in the future, I cannot ascertain with precision. But a Bill was introduced in the Irish House of Commons in 1633, entitled, "An Act to redress the misemployment of lands, goods, and stock of money heretofore given to charitable uses," whose main object was to check the malpractices of which Strafford had complained with reference to the misapplication of the Royal Schools' lands.<sup>3</sup>

Whether this Bill was effectual or not, or whether any change for the better took place about this time in the conduct of the schools, we have no means of knowing. But it may easily be supposed that, in the interval which ensued between 1633 and the Restoration, not many opportunities were afforded for the effective working of the schools. During the struggle between Charles I. and the Parliament, the Ulster Rebellion of 1641, and the devastating Irish wars of Cromwell, the times were sadly out of joint for the promotion

<sup>3</sup> This Bill, perhaps, was the earliest attempt made of the establishment of the jurisdiction now vested in the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests. See Report of Royal Commissioners on Endowed Schools, 1854-58, p. 10.



or development of educational systems in Ireland.<sup>4</sup> Little information has reached us of the condition of the schools during those years; but from such data as we can command it would seem that those at Enniskillen, Cavan, Banagher, and Carysfort, were just kept together in such a manner as not to forbid the hope that they might yet be more efficient establishments, while the establishments at Mountjoy, Mountnorris, and Donegal, had completely broken down.

Immediately after the Restoration the attention of the Government was directed to the state of all the Royal Free Schools, and an Act regulating their future management was passed in 1662.<sup>5</sup>

Amongst other things, this Act empowered the Lord-Lieutenant to remove all schools which were inconveniently situated to more accessible places, where a better attendance of pupils and teachers might be secured. Under this Act the school at Mountnorris was removed to Armagh, the school at Mountjoy to Dunganon, and the school at Donegal to Raphoe. The changes then made have not since been disturbed.

How the schools fared between 1662 and 1669 (the latter being a year which marks another epoch in the history of Irish educational systems) no satisfactory accounts are to be had. Perhaps the most that can be said of the state of the schools in those years is, that, upon the whole, they did better than either the Parish Schools or the Diocesan Free Schools, which is not saying very much. The educational establishments of the Stuarts were, however, upheld in some kind of working order. The school-houses were, at all events, kept in repair, and school-masters were regularly appointed; this is more than can be said of the educational establishments of the Tudors.

<sup>4</sup> In the negotiations at Oxford in 1644, amongst the moderated proposals of the agent of the Irish Confederates was one to the effect that an Inn of Court should be erected, and the university and schools made free to Irish Catholics. See Report of Royal Commissioners, 1854-58, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> 14 and 15 Charles II. cap. 10.

In fact, the one thing mainly wanted to make the Royal Schools a success, was a good attendance of pupils, and there was no such attendance in 1669. The Presbyterians did not much take to the schools, regarding them as Episcopalian institutions, and there was at this time no welcome in them for Catholics, by whom they were accordingly avoided. Thus the attendance was confined exclusively to Episcopalian Protestants, and Episcopalian Protestants were then, as they always have been, in a very small minority in the districts where the schools had been founded. That there was even amongst Episcopalian Protestants a considerable number of pupils who frequented the schools in 1669 is far from clear.

Between 1669 and 1791, the schools do not seem to have made very much progress. The report of the Commissioners of Education in the latter year states that there was not then a single scholar at Banagher; that the master at Carysfort (who held his appointment on good behaviour since 1784) had never kept a school, nor performed any of the duties of school-master, and did not even reside in the town; while at Raphoe, the school-master had done no duty since 1785. The Commissioners, however, speak better of the school at Armagh; indeed, they say that it was the only school then in a satisfactory state. The total number of pupils at all the schools in 1791 was 211, and out of that number there were only thirty-eight free pupils. The report of 1791 concluded by stating that the schools had not answered the intentions of the founders, and that the benefits derived from them had been "totally inadequate to the expectations that might have been justly formed from their large endowments."

Between 1791 and 1807 the school at Armagh continued to progress favourably, while a change for the better took place in that at Raphoe. The schools at Dungannon and Enniskillen also seem to have improved. But the condition of the schools at Bana-



gher and Carysfort remained unaltered. The united endowments of the schools in 1807 amounted to 5800*l.* a year, the number of scholars being about 360 ; of these, however, there were very few "free." Between 1807 and 1857, the schools of Armagh, Dungannon, Enniskillen, and Raphoe, improved considerably, the Royal Commissioners of the latter year reporting all four to be in a "very satisfactory" condition. The condition of the schools at Banagher, Carysfort, and Cavan, was, however, stated to be "unsatisfactory."

Between 1857 and 1879 the attendance at Armagh and Enniskillen had increased, but there was a falling off in this respect at each of the other grammar schools, as the following table will show.

NUMBER OF PUPILS ON ROLL

	1857.	1879.	Increase.	Decrease.
1. Armagh .	56	137	81	—
2. Banagher .	31	16	—	15
3. Cavan .	34	26	—	8
4. Dungannon	65	39	—	26
5. Enniskillen	70	83	13	—
6. Raphoe .	55	46	—	9
Total . .	311	347	36	

Thus it would seem from the above table that the number of pupils on the rolls had, upon the whole, increased from 311 in 1857 to 347 in 1879. I cannot find the number on the rolls at the Carysfort (the English) schools in 1857, but the number in 1879 was 33. So that the grand total on the rolls at all the schools in 1879 amounted to 380, the average attendance however, was only 361.<sup>6</sup> Of this number, 322 were members of the Disestablished Church, 21 Catholics, 37 Presbyterians. There were 61 free pupils. The head-masters (with one exception, Banagher, where the master was a Catholic layman,

<sup>6</sup> Report of Endowed Schools' Commission, 1879-81, pp. 29—33.

appointed in 1874, and the only Catholic ever appointed) were all members of the Disestablished Church. No Protestants of any denomination attended the school at Banagher. The pupils there, 16 in number, were all Catholics. At Raphoe, on the other hand, the Presbyterians were in a small majority, the numbers being: Presbyterians 23, Disestablished Church 22, Catholics 1. In 1879 the total endowments (that is to say, the net annual income from the lands) amounted to 5463*l.* 17*s.* 8*d.*<sup>7</sup> To sum up; the Royal Free Schools, it will be observed, have since their foundation remained practically Protestant Episcopalian institutions. They have never apparently answered the purposes of free schools, and, indeed, there seems to have been no great desire on the part of the masters, whose power in their management was uncontrolled, that they should to any considerable extent become "free" schools. With the exception of Carysfort, which is an English school, attended by the poorer inhabitants of the district, and Raphoe, where the Presbyterian pupils are in a very small majority, the schools might be described as establishments for the education of Episcopalian Protestants of the better classes.

Regarding the present condition of the schools, I think it desirable to state the opinion of Mr. Mahaffy and Mr. Moore as summarized by the Commissioners of 1880-81:—

*Armagh.*—Mr. Mahaffy found evidence of careful teaching in "the answering of the minor classes, but [not equally so] in the answering of the senior, which he attributed to the system of examination adopted by the Commissioners of Intermediate Education." Upon the whole, however, Mr. Mahaffy "considered this school the best in the north of Ireland."

*Banagher.*—Mr. Mahaffy described the school as "a complete failure."

*Cavan.*—Mr. Mahaffy reported the classical answering in the higher classes good: the answering in science, geography, and dictation decidedly bad.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 33.



*Dungannon.*—The senior classes, Mr. Mahaffy said, were exceedingly well taught in classics, and also answered well in Euclid and French; but the junior were backward in all subjects.

*Enniskillen.*—The highest classes were admirably taught in classics. In mathematics the answering was indifferent, and in history, geography, dictation, and classics, he found the minor classes deficient, and much improvement required.

*Raphoe.*—The school was doing quietly, and without any display, a considerable amount of work.

*Carysfort.*—Mr. Moore reported that the school seemed in every respect neglected.<sup>8</sup>

Having now traced the career of the Royal Free Schools from their foundation to the present time, I shall consider the rise and progress of the schools of Erasmus Smith.

Erasmus Smith, an alderman of the City of London, obtained a considerable portion of land in Ireland under the Cromwellian settlement, and he was fortunate enough to retain possession of it after the restoration of the Stuarts to power. In 1657 he conveyed the land thus acquired to trustees, for the purpose of establishing and endowing a number of Free Grammar Schools in Ireland. That these schools should be Protestant in character, Smith strongly desired; that that they should be placed under the control of any particular Protestant sect in preference to another, he does not seem to have regarded as a matter of essential importance. Indeed it is not known to what particular Protestant sect Smith belonged. However, so far as the management of the schools was concerned, he showed the most perfect willingness to work harmoniously either with Churchmen or Nonconformists.

In 1657, Nonconformity was in the ascendancy in England. It was then practically the religion of the State; and in compliance with what were doubtless

<sup>8</sup> Report of the Endowed Schools' Commissioners, 1880-81, pp. 33, 46.

On the subject of the Royal Free Schools generally, see Report of Royal Commissioners on [Irish] Education 1854-58; and Report of Endowed Schools' Commissioners, 1881; and Appendix.

the behests of the dominant class, Erasmus offered no objection to the insertion in the grants of land made for the maintenance of the schools of a provision to the effect that the pupils attending them should be taught the catechism as published by the Assembly of Divines. For the execution of the trust, he appointed Nonconformist trustees. Twelve years later, Episcopacy was again in the ascendancy in England. The trustees of 1657, who were stout Cromwellians, felt themselves constrained to retire from the trust, as they feared the schools could no longer be conducted on Nonconformist principles.

In the changed circumstances of the political situation, Smith, accepting the accomplished facts, resolved to allow the trustees to retire, and to place the schools under Episcopalian control.

He petitioned Charles for a new charter, and consented to the insertion in it of a clause providing that religious instruction should for the future be given in the schools in accordance with the principles of the Established Church. It was then arranged that the schools should thenceforth be managed by a Board of Episcopalian governors. In fact, Smith was a non-sectarian Protestant, and so long as the schools rested on a Protestant foundation, he was indifferent whether the trustees appointed to direct their management were bishops or presbyters.

The course of instruction, as prescribed by the charter of Charles, was to consist of writing, casting accounts, and, so far as the pupils were capable, of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Those who desired to enter the Dublin University were to be prepared for that career. The number of poor scholars whom the Governors were empowered to admit was to be limited to twenty, save in the case of the tenants' children on the Erasmus Smith estate, where no limit was fixed. Provisions were further made for clothing those poor children, and binding them, when fit, as apprentices to Protestant masters, for the purpose of acquiring the knowledge of some trade or handicraft.



The masters and ushers chosen were to be approved of by the bishops of the respective dioceses in which the schools were to be established; they were to sign the first two canons of the Established Church, and to catechize the children out of Primate Usher's Catechism. It was further provided that the surplus revenues arising from the estates should be applied to increasing the number of poor scholars in the schools and (when the rents exceeded 300*l.* a year) "to repairing and beautifying" the school-houses. The remaining trusts were for the payment of the ushers and the founding of a Hebrew or other lectureship in Trinity College, Dublin.

It was originally the intention of Erasmus Smith to establish five schools, but, in order to make a more liberal allowance to the masters, and to provide better for the maintenance of poor children, and to start them in life, he resolved to reduce the number to three. These three he established in Catholic centres—Galway, Drogheda, and Tipperary. It was no doubt the wish and hope of their founder that the schools should be largely attended by Catholic children; and, in fact, that they might ultimately become effective proselytizing institutions. But he was not prepared to abate one jot the strictly Protestant discipline of the schools in order to make it more easy for Catholic children to enter them. His policy was a perfectly straightforward one. Catholic children might come to the schools if they were willing to receive instructions in the doctrines of the Established Church, but not otherwise. The Governors in Ireland, however, whether through laxity of conduct in the administration of the trust, liberality of sentiment, or because they were influenced by considerations of expediency, did not evince a similar determination to stand by the regulations of the charter. The rule which made religious instruction out of Usher's Catechism obligatory, was not at all times rigidly insisted upon, and Catholic teachers were occasionally appointed. The

relaxation of this rule and the occasional appointment of Catholic teachers would, the Governors possibly thought, tend to facilitate and encourage the access of Catholic children ; and, situated as the schools were in Catholic centres, the support of Catholics seemed to some extent necessary to secure their success. The Governors, in fact, acted more or less on the principle that the most judicious mode of treatment was first to catch the fish and then to cook it. But the founder, with the utmost frankness, made it clear to the fish that he was to be caught for the sole purpose of being cooked. The former presented the hook baited ; the latter offered it perfectly bare. But baited or bare, the fish did not take, and at this Smith was much disappointed. He wrote to the Governors, complaining of the little profits made by the schools, and attributing this unsatisfactory state of affairs to the fact that Catholic children did not come in sufficient numbers to them. However, to the suggestion that the true remedy for this regrettable condition of things might be to mask, even in some small degree, the Protestantism of the schools, he would not listen. They should stand forth to the world as Protestant establishments ; and if Catholics avoided them in consequence, other means besides those of temporizing with Popery should be tried to get over their scruples.

“ If parents,” he said, “ will exclude their children because prayers, catechism, and exposition, are commanded, I cannot help [it], for the removal of that bar is to make them [the schools] seminaries of Popery. I beseech you to command him [the head-master] that shall be presented and approved by your honours, to observe them [the teachers] that decline those duties, and to expel them, which will oblige [me].”<sup>9</sup>

If this letter produced any effect it must have been only of a temporary character, for, up to the reigns of

<sup>9</sup> Letter of Erasmus Smith to the Governors of the schools, quoted in Report of Royal Commissioners, 1854-58, p. 11.



William III. and Anne, the practice of appointing Catholic teachers does not seem to have been abandoned.<sup>1</sup> Then under the pressure of the penal code it was wholly discontinued;<sup>2</sup> but the schools did not progress any the better on account of this change. However, though the schools had not attained any appreciable state of efficiency previous to 1709, the rents arising out of the estates had considerably increased. So much had this been the case, that in 1709 a petition was presented by the son of Erasmus Smith to the Irish House of Commons, praying that the surplus rents of the school-estates might be appropriated to the purposes of founding and supporting a mathematical school in the city of Dublin. A draft bill in compliance with the prayer of this petition was prepared and approved of by the Governors, but it never seems to have developed into an Act of Parliament. In 1723, the income of the estates having continued to increase, a private Act was obtained, sanctioning the establishment of an Erasmus Smith Exhibition in Trinity College.<sup>3</sup>

This Act<sup>4</sup> also contained an important provision for the distribution of any future surplus of the funds. It empowered the Governors to apply such a surplus to any of the following uses at their discretion : (1) to Trinity College, (2) to the Bluecoat Hospital,<sup>5</sup> (3)

<sup>1</sup> It may be said that one of the reasons why Catholic teachers were appointed, was that Protestants could not always be conveniently found in the very Catholic towns of Drogheda, Galway, and Tipperary.

<sup>2</sup> By the 8 Anne, cap. 3, sec. 16, it was made penal to employ "a Papist as an usher to a Protestant school-master." This section precisely hit the case of the Erasmus Smith Schools as managed by the Board of Governors in Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> 10 George I.

<sup>4</sup> The Act, moreover, sanctioned an agreement with the Governors of the Bluecoat Hospital to have twenty poor boys maintained in that institution. Thus a connexion was established between the Dublin Corporation, the members of which were then Governors of the Bluecoat Hospital and the Erasmus Smith Board, which continued down to the time of the Municipal Reform of 1840.

<sup>5</sup> See *post* for account of the Bluecoat Hospital.

to the education and apprenticing of poor children, (4) to the forming one or more Erasmus Smith English schools in Ireland. Despite the care thus evinced for the welfare of the schools, they seem to have made but little progress up to the year 1733, the date of the establishment of the famous Charter Schools.

The rents from the estates having continued to increase, the Governors applied them mainly to the founding of new schools. In 1733 a grammar school was established at Ennis, in the County Clare, and some time afterwards another at Nenagh, in the County Tipperary. Thus the full complement of grammar schools, as originally intended by Erasmus Smith, was made up. Three English schools were also established between 1733 and 1791: one in the island of Valentia, in the County Kerry, one in Tarbert, in the same county, and a third at Templederry, in the County Tipperary.

The Commissioners of 1791 report upon the whole favourably of the management of the Erasmus Smith Trust and the state of the schools at that time. The income of the Governors, they say, had increased from 300*l.* a year mentioned in the charter, up to 4200*l.* a year, while the annual disbursements were only about 2800*l.*, thus leaving an annual surplus of 1400*l.* With reference to the efficiency of the schools, the Commissioners write contentedly of the state of the school at Drogheda and of the school at Ennis; but they do not seem to have been equally satisfied with the progress of the Tipperary and Galway establishments. Of the condition of the Nenagh school, I cannot find that they report at all; indeed, it seems to have gradually collapsed.

At the Drogheda school there were, in 1791, 123 pupils, of which 72 were boarders and 51 day-scholars; of the latter between 20 and 30 were free. At Ennis (which, to use the words of the Commissioners, "enjoyed a high reputation,") there were 80 pupils, of which 56 were boarders and 24 day-scholars, there



being in all 12 free scholars among the latter. The Tipperary school, the Commissioners say, "had fallen in its character, and did not answer the expectations" formed of it, notwithstanding the fact that the "master and usher were men of abilities and good character." There were only 18 pupils in this school in 1791, though it had accommodation for 80 boarders alone; of the 18 pupils, 5 were boarders and 13 day-scholars, 5 of which were free. In Galway there were 53 pupils, all day-scholars, and all free.

By the year 1807 the surplus rents had reached the handsome sum of 35,000*l.* which the Governors applied to the founding of English schools. Between 1808 and 1815, sixty-nine such schools had been founded, all being based upon the same principles, with reference to the subject of religious teaching, as had been prescribed in the charter of 1669, under which the grammar schools had been established.

Up to 1839 there is nothing particular to note respecting the schools, but between 1839 and 1845, fifty-two additional English ones were founded. In the establishment of these schools a new departure was taken with reference to the subject of religious teaching. Instruction out of the Church of England Catechism was no longer made obligatory. The reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the instruction of all the children in them was required instead. This alteration in the discipline of the schools seems to have induced Catholics and Presbyterians to look on them with more favour, though in the main their Protestant Episcopalian character continued practically unchanged. In some cases, indeed, they were managed on principles as narrow as ever, though in others more liberal views prevailed. The teaching of the Church Catechism, as well as the reading of the Bible, and instruction in it, were in several instances enforced where the latter only had been provided for. At a school in Londonderry (attended by 16 Presbyterians, 24 Catholics, 18 Episcopalians) the Presbyterian minister of the neigh-

bourhood claimed the right to visit, but was informed that the rules of the Erasmus Smith Foundation allowed only one visitor, the clergyman of the "United Church," and the Presbyterian clergyman was accordingly excluded. In Pallas-Green, in the County Limerick, instead of liberalizing the regulations, and appealing to the intelligence and the consciences of the Catholic poor of the districts, their appetites were tempted. Large quantities of meal were supplied at the schools, and given out by the rector of the parish as rewards to the Catholic children who attended. So long as the meal lasted the children came. But meal, unlike Mr. Tennyson's brook, cannot "go on for ever." The meal ultimately stopped, and then the children stopped.

Notwithstanding the relaxation of rule with reference to the Catechism, very few Catholics or Presbyterians seem to have been in attendance at any of the grammar schools when the Royal Commissioners of 1854-58 made their report. According to the report of the Royal Commissioners, the number of pupils on the roll of all the grammar schools in 1855-56 was 160, the average attendance being 116. Of this 160, 128 were members of the Established Church, 23 Catholics, and 1 Presbyterian. The numbers were distributed over the various schools thus :—

	Roll.	Est. Church.	Catholics.	Presbyterians.
Drogheda	61	59	2	0
Ennis	58	52	6	0
Galway	20	17	3	0
Tipperary	21	0	12	1
	<hr/> 160	<hr/> 128	<hr/> 23	<hr/> 1

With reference to the "state of instruction" in the grammar schools, the Commissioners report Drogheda as being "generally satisfactory," Ennis as being "very satisfactory," but Tipperary and Galway as being "unsatisfactory." With reference to the English schools the number of them had increased from



121 in 1843 to 140 in 1854-58. At the latter date the number of pupils on the roll was 7010. Of these 4293 were members of the Established Church, 1420 Presbyterians, 875 Catholics, and 47 of other religious persuasions. Some of the English schools seem to have been efficiently conducted, others not. But upon the whole the Commissioners of 1854-58 appear to have been dissatisfied with the manner in which the trust was administered, and the schools, both grammar and English, were generally managed. "The Governors," they said, "have not only neglected the primary trust of the grammar schools, but have not prudently managed the secondary trust of the English schools, which they have developed to an extent disproportionate to their resources." These observations seem to have been applied mainly to the want of visitation and inspection of the schools of every class, the unsatisfactory and costly mode of transacting the legal business of the Board, and the absence of a regular system of accounts. The non-observance of the rules relating to religious instruction, especially in the grammar schools, was also a subject of complaint.

Between 1854 and 1880 the schools seem upon the whole to have been much better managed.

With reference to the subject of religious instruction, the rules now provide that the children shall every day read to the teacher a chapter in the Bible, the teacher explaining the sense in plain language without entering into controversial or abstruse matters. These rules are at present strictly carried out in the English schools, but not in the grammar schools. The reason assigned for the relaxation of the rules in the latter establishments is that the children attending them, being of the better classes, are likely to have religious instruction imparted at home. The following table will show what the attendance at the four grammar schools was in 1880 :—

	Roll.	Disest. Church.	Catholics.	Dissenters.
Drogheda	43 <sup>6</sup>	32	5	7
Ennis	57	53	4	0
Galway	68 <sup>7</sup>	52	7	9
Tipperary	76	59	17	0
	<hr/> 244	<hr/> 196	<hr/> 33	<hr/> 16

Thus it will be seen that while in 1854 Tipperary stood at the lowest ebb, in 1880, judging from the attendance of pupils, it held the first place, and Galway, which was next before Tipperary when Tipperary was last, is now next after Tipperary when Tipperary is first. The total number of pupils has increased from 160 in 1854 to 244 in 1880. The number of Catholics attending the schools has also to some extent increased, there being 33 in 1880 as against 23 in 1854. The number of Dissenters has risen from 1 in 1854 to 16 in 1880.

In the number of English schools there has been a falling off since 1854. The number was then, as we have seen, 140; it is now 105. The number of pupils on the rolls at these schools is now as follows:—

Disestablished Church . . . .	4103
Catholics . . . .	163
Protestant Dissenters . . . .	951
Total . . . .	<hr/> 5217

The average attendance, however, is only about 3500.

Thus we find that (allowing for the falling off in the number of schools), in proportion to the total number of pupils, there has been a decrease in the attendance of Catholics and Presbyterians since 1854. Out of a total of 7010 there were, then, 825 Catholics, 1420 Presbyterians, 4293 members of the Established Church, and 47 of other religious per-

<sup>6</sup> Six of this number were free.

<sup>7</sup> Seven were free.



suasions; out of a total of 5217, now, there are only 163 Catholics, 951 Dissenters, and, 4103 members of the Disestablished Church.<sup>8</sup>

With reference to the present state of the Erasmus Smith schools, I shall subjoin a few brief extracts from the reports of Mr. Mahaffy and Mr. Moore contained in the report of the Endowed Schools' Commission 1879-81:—

#### GRAMMAR SCHOOLS.

*Ennis.*—Mr. Mahaffy reported that “in science the boys were admirably taught. . . . The little boys also answered well in spelling, but not so well in easy geographical questions.”

*Drogheda.*—“Found the boys, on the whole, fair in their answering. A senior class wrote almost uniformly bad dictation exercises, and a junior class were almost puzzled by an ordinary sum in interest, though they were familiar with the rule.”

*Galway.*—“Instruction in Latin and Greek good; mathematics very good; English deficient, and French indifferent.”

*Tipperary.*—“Discipline very good; religious teaching peculiarly careful and complete; answering in Euclid very well; French and German fairly; Greek and Latin not above a moderate average.”

With reference to the English schools, Mr. Moore reported that the actual condition of the schools was, on the whole, satisfactory so far as the instruction was concerned (though by no means so good as might be expected). The special feature of the Erasmus Smith schools was the excellent manner in which spelling and geography were taught. In those subjects the pupils answered as well as, if not better, than the pupils of any other school examined by Mr. Moore.<sup>9</sup>

Having now disposed of the Erasmus Smith schools, it will be necessary to notice two other institutions of a more or less educational character before I come to

<sup>8</sup> See Report of Royal Commissioners, 1854-58; and Report of Endowed Schools' Commissioners of 1879-81. The return of the religious persuasions seems incomplete.

<sup>9</sup> On the subject of Erasmus Smith schools generally, see Reports of Education Commissioners of 1791, 1810, 1854-58, 1879-81.

the important subject of the Charter schools. The two institutions to which I refer are the Bluecoat and the Foundling Hospitals.

In 1672 Charles II. granted to the Corporation of Dublin a charter for the purpose of erecting under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin, a hospital for "maintaining aged and poor people," and "a free school for the education of youth." At the same time a site was placed at their disposal on Oxmantown Green, and upon it the Bluecoat Hospital was built. The establishment thus founded was used not as a hospital, but as a school where poor children were instructed "in the Holy Scriptures, and the principles of the Protestant [Episcopalian] religion, in the English language, and in Euclid, navigation, and the various branches of practical mathematics." Boys were admitted at the age of eight years, and apprenticed at the age of fourteen to a trade or the sea service, with an apprenticeship fee of 5*l.* for each boy. As an exclusively Protestant Episcopalian establishment, the Bluecoat "Hospital" seems to have done some good service. In 1812 there were 130 boys in the hospital, who were educated and maintained at an expense to the institution of about 24*l.* a head.

On the passing of the Irish Municipal Reform Act in 1840, it was provided that as the charter of the hospital limited the benefits of the institution to members of the united Church of England and Ireland, the Corporation, having ceased to be exclusive, should no longer exercise control over its affairs.

The government body at present consists of fifty members, of whom forty-six are nominated by the Archbishop of Armagh, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and the Bishop of Meath. The other four members are the Treasurer and three Governors of the Erasmus Smith schools.

The number of pupils in 1879-80 was 101; all being Protestants. In fact, both parents must be Protestants to entitle a boy to admission. Mr. Moore found



the “answering of the boys in spelling, grammar, and geography unsatisfactory.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1704, during the administration of James, Duke of Ormonde, the Foundling Hospital was established for the reception and education of deserted children. The system adopted was this : deserted infants were received into the hospital from the time of their birth ; they were then sent to the country to be nursed, and brought back to the hospital at the age of eight years, where they were educated and maintained until fit to be apprenticed to some trade or calling. Like the Bluecoat Hospital, the Foundling Hospital was essentially a Protestant Episcopalian institution—it being a *sine quâ non* that the infants should be brought up in the religion of the Church of England.

From the time of its foundation up to 1797, the affairs of the hospital seem to have been very badly managed, though under the direction of 200 persons of “the first rank and character in the country.” The infant children for whose benefit it was founded were shamefully ill-treated. The conduct of the women employed in carrying them from remote parts of the country to the hospital was marked by great negligence and inhumanity. Many of the unfortunate little ones died on the road. Others died immediately on their arrival at the institution ; while those who survived were grossly neglected by the medical department of the establishment.

In 1797, some reforms in the management of the hospital were introduced, and more care was subsequently taken in the administration of its affairs. Nevertheless, at no time were the results realized of a satisfactory character. Between 1796 (or about the date of the reformed administration) and 1826, 52,150 children were received. Of this number 41,524 died either while in the hospital or at nurse in the country. Of the rest, 413 ran away, 526 were transferred to the Charter schools, 1127 were delivered up to the parents,

<sup>1</sup> Endowed School, 1879-80.

204 were apprenticed to school-masters, and 5466 to trades : 6339 were in hospital, or at nurse, on the 5th of January, 1826, including 3410 received prior to the 25th of June, 1796.<sup>2</sup>

It may be added that many of the Foundling children were, at one time, put to nurse with the wives of Catholic peasant-farmers in the country until they attained the age of eight, and, sometimes, twelve years. Between those children and their nurses—or “mothers,” as the little ones used to call them—a warm attachment sprang up. The nurses, in the main, do not seem to have made any attempts to convert the children to Catholicism ; on the contrary, they appear to have sent them, when of a suitable age, regularly to the Protestant Church for service on Sundays, and sometimes to have taught them the Protestant catechism, and made them repeat Protestant prayers at night. Those children, when removed from the nurses to the hospital to be educated and apprenticed, evinced a longing to be back with their “mothers” again. Often, after being apprenticed, they ran away from their masters or mistresses, to return to the country-nurses, and frequently the nurses would offer to take the children without any fee, and to bring them up with their own—an offer which was never accepted when the nurse was a Catholic.

This attachment of the children to their Catholic nurses at last alarmed the Governors of the hospital, and in 1824 they resolved, then, and for the future, to remove from the care of Catholic nurses “all children above the age of four years.” Originally, the Governors had thought that the religion of the child could be formed after it had attained its eighth year, but they learned by experience that where the affections of the child were, there also would be its religion. Between June, 1824, when the new rule came into force, and January, 1826, no fewer than 2150 children were transferred from Catholic,

<sup>2</sup> The returns seem slightly defective.



and placed in the country near Dublin under Protestant nurses, selected and approved of by clergymen of the Church of England. The parting scenes between those children and their old nurses were, as described by the witnesses examined before the Commission of 1825-27, touching to the last degree.

In conclusion, the children brought up in the Foundling Hospital do not seem upon the whole to have turned out well. The Rev. Robert Daly, Rector of Powerscourt, informed the Royal Commissioners of 1825-27 that "no children turned out so ill as the children sent [to his parish] from the Foundling Hospital." "Most of the females," he said, "turned out profligate."

The Rev. John Beasley, Protestant chaplain of the Asylum in Leeson Street for the reception of unfortunate females, stated that "a very large proportion of our inmates come from parochial schools and the Foundling Hospital." "When I was a minister of a parish within fourteen miles of Dublin," he added, "so great was the evil which I saw arising from the advent of children from the Foundling Hospital that I never gave but a single note to bring a child from it."

Finally, Mr. Kinahan, the secretary of the Mendicity Asylum, said that those in the asylum who "had been educated in the Foundling Hospital, concealed it, because it would be thrown against them afterwards by their fellow-mendicants as a circumstance of degradation."

The hospital, which was chiefly supported by Parliamentary grants, continued in existence up to 1838.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Report of Evidence given before Commissioners on Irish Education, 1810, 1825-27.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CHARTER SCHOOLS.

Six years after the accession of George II. the most avowedly and vigorously proselytizing institutions which had, up to that time, been introduced into Ireland were founded. Primate Boulter, in a letter addressed on the 5th May, 1730, to the Bishop of London, complained "of the great number of Papists in this kingdom [of Ireland], and of the obstinacy with which they adhere to their own religion," reminding his Grace of the "good success" which had attended the efforts of "the corporation established in Scotland for the instruction of the ignorant and barbarous part of that nation," and suggesting that, if the nobility, clergy, and gentry of Ireland were incorporated for a like purpose, "we might likewise have some success in our attempts to teach the Papists the English tongue, and the principles of the Christian religion." "I can assure your Grace," continued the Primate, "the Papists are so numerous, that it highly concerns us, in point of interest, as well as out of concern for the salvation of these poor creatures, who are our fellow-subjects, to try all possible means to bring them and theirs over to the knowledge of the true religion; and one of the most likely methods we can think of is, if possible, to instruct and convert the young generation; for instead of converting those that are adult we are daily losing many of our meaner people who go after Popery."

This letter was followed by action on the part of



the Irish nobility, clergy, and gentry. In 1733 "the chief dignitaries of the Church, the officers of state, and other persons of rank, respectability and power," impressed by the misfortunes which the ignorance, disaffection and impiety of the Irish people had brought upon the country, petitioned the king to afford them the necessary aid for launching a project by means of which they hoped to eradicate the evils that afflicted the island; to shed light where there was darkness, to establish religion where superstition and idolatry only prevailed; in a word, to lay deep down the foundations of civilized and cultured order, where anarchy and barbarism had too long been permitted to exist. The prayer of these petitioners was granted, and by virtue of a charter, obtained in compliance with it, the "Incorporated Society for promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland" came into being. The project which the members of this society had conceived for converting Irish people to the reformed faith, and securing their attachment to the English connexion, was the establishment of proselytizing schools. Nothing discouraged by the fact that the schools hitherto founded with a similar design had utterly failed; that the severe laws, passed to render the aims of these schools more certain of attainment had been wholly unsuccessful; the new society proceeded with zeal and hope, upon the old lines, to work out the reformation of the Irish people. The policy of proselytism and repression must, they seem to have thought, be in the end triumphant, if it were only persevered in with sufficient firmness and for a sufficient time.

There are those who think that it is possible to proselytize and to repress too much. The members of the "Incorporated Society for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland," did not think so at the time to which we refer. Indeed, they seem rather to have been of the opinion that, so far as the Irish Catholics were concerned, there had not been proselytizing and repressing enough. The schools

of Henry and Elizabeth, of James and Charles, the statutes of William and Anne, had not, in their estimation, been sufficiently thorough. For themselves had been reserved the honour and glory of demonstrating what Christian blessings and victories might be wrought by the adoption of a really thorough system of educational proselytism, combined with penal laws, and conducted under the guidance of an intellectual, a zealous and a righteous body of men. "Gross ignorance and disaffection [in Ireland]" (to quote the words of the petition praying for the charter,) were now to be removed; the "want of civilization amongst the Popish inhabitants" of the country was at last to be supplied. What the Tudors, the Stuarts, Oliver Cromwell, and the men of the Revolution, had failed to accomplish, the "Incorporated English Protestant Schools Association" was to achieve. Let us see how this Society of great expectations was started; by whom it was supported; how it worked, and what it did.

On the 6th February, 1733, the charter of foundation was, we are informed, "opened" in the Council Room at Dublin Castle, in the presence of Lord Dorset, the Lord-Lieutenant of the day, and many of the noble and ecclesiastical celebrities of the country. Subscriptions rapidly flowed in. Expressions of sympathy with the objects of the Society came from all the influential classes in the land, and practical help from many of them. The support of English Episcopalian Protestants was enlisted on behalf of the movement, and the substantial aid of the Irish Parliament was obtained. Foremost among the noblemen who gave their adhesion to the new enterprise was the Earl of Kildare. He came forward with a handsome subscription of 500*l.*, and a generous grant of twenty acres of land. In recognition of his kindly dispositions and valuable services, the Society determined to do his lordship the honour of founding the first of their schools in the county of Kildare. And



agreeably to this resolve, during the year 1735, in the town of Castle Dermot, in the country of the Geraldines, the first of the institutions which have come to be known in history as the "Charter schools," saw the light. Subscriptions increased, and other schools were promptly founded. In all, three schools were founded in 1735; one was established in 1736, and three more were opened in 1737.

The average annual income of the Society for the first four years of its existence amounted to 1600*l.*; the greater part of this sum was, however, subscribed in England, where a kindred association under the title of the "Corresponding Society," had been established as a "feeder" for the Irish institution.

In 1738, the king, in acknowledgment of an address from the Society, contributed an annual donation of 1000*l.* Stimulated by this substantial expression of royal favour, the society immediately erected six more schools.

Assistance from other quarters was also proffered and given. In 1740 the Hon. Mrs. Hamilton devised to the Society an estate in the County Louth for the establishment of a school at Dundalk,<sup>1</sup> and offerings and contributions of like liberality being continuously made in money or in land, the work of promoting schools went briskly on. In the nine years which elapsed between 1738 and 1747 nine new schools were erected. In the latter year the Irish Parliament passed an Act compelling hawkers and pedlars to take out licences, and the income arising from this impost, which amounted to about 1150*l.* a year, was applied to the support of the association. "By this bounty of Parliament," say the Commissioners of Education<sup>2</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> It was then let for 35*l.* 10*s.* a year. In 1809 the rental had been raised to 200*l.* a year.

<sup>2</sup> The Primate of Ireland, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Provost of Trinity College, the Dean of St. Patrick's, Mr. Whitelaw, Mr. Desney, Mr. Edgeworth.



their report of 1809, "the Society was enabled to erect fourteen new schools in the next three years."

Why the "bounty" of Parliament? one feels disposed to ask. If the Irish Parliament, composed, as it was, exclusively of Protestants, and mainly of landlords, had imposed an absentee tax, and applied the proceeds to the support of the Society for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland, such an act might perhaps be properly described as bountiful.<sup>3</sup> But why the act of a number of Irish Protestant landowners, in imposing a tax upon a number of Irish Popish hawkers and pedlars, and applying the proceeds of that tax to the support of English Protestant schools should be described as an act of "bounty" on the part of those noble lords and right honourable and honourable gentlemen does not seem very clear.

But, to resume:—In 1751 Lord Dorset, then again Irish Viceroy, recommended the Charter schools in his speech on the opening of Parliament, and the result of this recommendation was a Parliamentary grant of 5000*l.* From this fructifying seed seven new schools sprang up within the ensuing three years. But the "bounty" of Parliament did not stop here, any more than it had stopped with the tax on the hawkers and pedlars.

In 1758 an extraordinary grant of another 5000*l.* was voted for the erection of four provincial nurseries for the reception of children too young to be admitted to the schools. Altogether, between 1751 and 1761 an annual average sum of 3500*l.* was voted by Parliament for the benefit of the Society, which in addition obtained in 1758 an estate from the Rev. William

<sup>3</sup> "As Ireland then was, and in the existing humour of its inhabitants, a tax of twenty-five per cent. on the rents of absentee proprietors applied to multiplying schools would have ended the Irish difficulty. Nay, the sums charged annually on the Irish hereditary revenue for royal mistresses, royal bastards, and court favourites generally scandalous, would have more than sufficed for the purpose."—Froude, "English in Ireland," vol. i. p. 577.



Wilson, for the purpose of establishing a school in the County West Meath.<sup>4</sup> In 1760 certain estates which had been devised in trust some time previously by Lord Ranelagh, for the establishment of Protestant charity schools in the towns of Roscommon and Athlone, were vested by Act of Parliament in the same body, which in execution of the trust promptly erected two schools in the towns designated by his lordship.<sup>5</sup>

In 1763 Dr. Pococke, Bishop of Ossory, bequeathed to the Society large estates both real and personal, for the founding of a weaving school near Kilkenny. Lord Ranelagh had made it an essential condition of his trust, that none but Protestant children should be educated in his schools. The Bishop of Ossory, on the other hand, declared that none but Catholic children should be admitted to his weaving establishment; laying it down, however, as a vital condition, on the carrying out of which the existence of the school was to depend, that those children should be brought up as Protestants. His Grace had no objection to the Irish becoming good Protestant weavers. He had a very decided objection to their becoming good Catholic ones. Meanwhile the Irish Parliament had not been unmindful of the wants of the schools, for between 1751 and 1761 we find that they had granted on an average the yearly sum of 5880*l.* to meet those requirements.<sup>6</sup>

The generous gift of the Bishop of Ossory was supplemented in 1764 by the liberality of Mr. Chidley Carte, of Limerick, who devised an estate in that county to the Society.<sup>7</sup> The Society had not done badly so far, but better things were yet in store

<sup>4</sup> The rents of this estate amounted in 1809 to 191*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*

<sup>5</sup> The rental of the Ranelagh estates amounted in 1809 to 1748*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

<sup>6</sup> The real estate bequeathed by the Bishop of Ossory produced a yearly rent of 846*l.* 9*s.* 4*d.*

<sup>7</sup> Rental in 1809, 280*l.*

for it. In 1786 it was enriched to the extent of 1350*l.*, subsequently increased to 1700*l.* a year by the estates of Mr. John Rogerson. In 1789 it succeeded, under the will of Dean Stewart, made in 1774, to an estate in the County Louth,<sup>8</sup> and about the same time obtained a grant of 250*l.* a year from the Governors of the Erasmus Smith schools in support of the Charter school at Sligo. In 1790 a Dutch nobleman resident in London, one Baron Veyhouven, added to its funds the handsome sum of 56,666*l.* in the Three per cent. Consols, and at the same date an unknown benefactor gave for its use stock in the Four per cents. to the value of 40,000*l.*

Whilst these private benefactions were thus steadily pouring in, the Anglo-Irish Colonial Parliament had continued to help the Society out of the public purse. We have seen that between 1751 and 1761 various sums, amounting in all to the annual average of 3500*l.* had been voted for the schools. Between 1761 and 1771 this annual average was increased to 5820*l.*; between 1771 and 1781 it was further increased to 6100*l.*; between 1781 and 1791 to 9000*l.*; and between 1791 and 1801 it reached 11,800*l.* It may here be stated that the tax on the hawkers and pedlars ceased to yield any return in 1787, and that the king withdrew his annual 1000*l.* in 1794. But Parliament was resolved that the schools should not suffer in consequence of the deficit thus occasioned, and, to make good the loss so sustained by the Society, voted increased amounts for its support. Neither hawkers, pedlars nor kings should have it in their power to diminish the influences for good of the Incorporated Society. The Anglo-Irish Colonial Parliament ceased to exist in 1801, whereupon the work of maintaining the Charter schools was taken up by the Imperial Parliament, which in the seven years after the Union voted for the support of the schools a sum amounting to the annual

<sup>8</sup> Rental in 1809, 300*l.*



average of 20,000*l.* From 1807 up to 1832 Parliamentary grants were regularly made to the Charter schools, and the nature of these grants may be gathered from the fact that between 1801 and 1832 the society received altogether from the British Parliament the sum of 625,707*l.* In 1832 the grants ceased. In fine, to state generally the financial extent of State-aid given to the Charter schools, it may be said that from 1733 to 1832 they received Parliamentary grants amounting to the sum of 1,300,000*l.*

We have now seen how the Charter schools were established, and how maintained. We shall next consider how they were worked.

The business of the schools was carried on by four central and several local committees, all under the control of a General Board. The central committees consisted of—

- (1.) The Committee of Fifteen ;
- (2.) The Committee of Accounts ;
- (3.) The Law Committee ;
- (4.) The Committee for examining the qualifications of candidates for the positions of masters, mistresses, and assistants in the schools.

Of these committees the Committee of Fifteen was the most important. The members of it met at least once a week to transact all the ordinary business of the schools, except the election and dismissal of the officers and of masters and mistresses—matters that were attended to by the General Board, which met once every month, and sometimes oftener. The head officers of the association consisted of a secretary who received a salary of 250*l.* a year, a registrar who received a salary of 100 guineas, and an inspector of apprentices at a salary of 20*l.* a year. With reference to the local committees, there was one in every district where schools had been established, consisting of the principal Protestant Episcopalian gentlemen and ladies of the neighbourhood. The duties of the local committees were to watch over the management of the

schools, and report their condition from time to time to the Committee of Fifteen.

To each school a clergyman of the Church of England was attached in the capacity of catechist; his duties being to superintend the education of the children generally, and their religious instruction in particular, and to report thereon to the local committee every month. In the schools, according to the provisions of the charter, the children were to be lodged, fed, and clothed; taught reading, writing, and arithmetic; instructed in husbandry and housewifery, and prepared for trading and commercial pursuits; they were also to be brought up in the principles of the Protestant religion as by law established. In addition to the schools four nurseries were, as we have seen, founded. Those nurseries were managed upon the same principle as the Foundling Hospital. Children were received into them from birth, and removed, generally at the age of eight, to the schools to be educated. The education of the children having been completed, they were then apprenticed to Protestant masters or mistresses, who were allowed a fee of 5*l.* with boys, and 7*l.* 7*s.* with girls. 1758.

Both boys and girls were entitled to receive, at the end of their apprenticeship, a bounty of three guineas on the production of a certificate from their masters or mistresses certifying to their good conduct, and a certificate of their Protestantism from the Protestant clergyman of the parish in which they had lived.

Though, according to the provisions of the charter, children of all religious persuasions<sup>9</sup> were entitled to enter the schools, yet the General Board and the Committee of Fifteen, in the exercise of their discretion, initiated so early as 1733 the policy of admitting

<sup>9</sup> The words of the charter were to the effect that "the children of Popish and other poor natives should be instructed in the English tongue and the principles of the Protestant religion."



Catholic children only.<sup>1</sup> This policy was apparently not approved by the local committees, who, contrary to the wishes of the central authority, admitted both Protestant and Catholic children, relying on the words of the charter. Finding their wishes disregarded, the General Board in 1775 determined on taking steps to enforce obedience to them. On the 15th March in that year, at a meeting of the General Board, presided over by Dean Ledwich, and attended by Lord Ranelagh, the Bishop of Dromore, Robert Fetherston, Esq., Redmond Morris, Esq., George Simpson, Esq., Dr. Lyon, Dean Bayley, James French, Esq., and the Rev. J. Drury, the following resolution was passed:—

“Whereas it has been the constant practice of this Society not to admit any children but such as are children of Papists, or at least where one of their parents *are*<sup>2</sup> or have been Papists, or in case the parents are dead, or they, being deserted, are on the hands of Papists, and thereby are in the utmost danger of being bred up Papists, and whereas the Society have some reason to suspect that, in some instances, some of their committees have acted contrary thereto in admission of children:

“Resolved, That the Committee of Fifteen, or the local committees of the several schools or nurseries, do not admit any children in their schools or nurseries unless the children shall appear in the above circumstances, or by proper certificates or affidavits, and that the local committees do not admit any children until, upon sending up such certificates or affidavits to the Society or Committee of Fifteen, they shall approve of their admission.

“Ordered, That the foregoing resolution be immediately sent to the several committees belonging

<sup>1</sup> The two Ranelagh schools at Roscommon and Athlone were exceptions, Lord Ranelagh had provided that none but Protestants should be admitted to them.

<sup>2</sup> The grammar is the grammar of the General Board.

to this Society in order that they may conform thereto."

At a general meeting of the Incorporated Society, held on 11th December, 1776, the above resolution was "unanimously agreed to and confirmed."

The following members of the society were present upon the occasion:—Dean Ledwich in the chair, the Bishop of Waterford, George Simpson, Esq., the Rev. J. Drury, Archdeacon Wight, James Forde, Esq., Redmond Morris, Esq., and Dr. Lyon. In pursuance of the resolution thus passed, every Catholic parent who sought admission for his or her child into the Charter schools was obliged to sign or fill up the following form:—

"I [the father, mother, &c., as the case might be] of [the name of the child] do most earnestly entreat that [he or she] be admitted into a Protestant Charter [school or nursery], and I do hereby give my full and voluntary consent to [his or her] being educated in the doctrines and principles of the Protestant religion."

This form, duly filled up, was forwarded by the local committee to the Committee of Fifteen, and, the Committee of Fifteen approving, the child was admitted. Admission having been obtained, all communication between parent and child was then and there completely cut off. To render the child more secure against the distractions of domestic ties and affections, he was removed to a school situated at the farthest distance from his home. Confined within the walls of this establishment, he was allowed to see neither father, mother, relation, nor friend, except in the presence of the master or mistress of the school.<sup>3</sup> Such were the means taken by the Society to save the Papist child from contact with influences which, no doubt, they believed would prove fatal to his well-being in this world and in the next.

I have now disposed of the question, "How were

<sup>3</sup> Report of Commissioners of Inquiry into Irish Education, 1825, p. 7.



the Charter schools worked?" and come lastly to the subject of their achievements. Between 1733 and 1784 no public statement was made respecting the condition of the schools. No doubt, people were disposed to take it for granted that all was going on well. For were not the first men in the land, "the chief dignitaries of the Church, the officers of state, and other persons of the highest rank and respectability,"<sup>4</sup> responsible for the good management of the schools? Had not Parliament<sup>5</sup> voted sums of money almost every year to the support of the schools, and was it likely that Parliament would do this without satisfying itself of the excellent character of those great national and moral institutions? Was not the king himself the patron of the schools? Assuredly, if ever there was a case in which things might be taken for granted—and things must sometimes be so taken—it was the case of the Charter schools. So at least seem to have thought the nobility, gentry, and clergy of Ireland.

But there are some individuals in the world who never take anything for granted, and who have what often proves a very troublesome and disagreeable way of examining matters for themselves upon every occasion. John Howard, the philanthropist, was a man of this stamp. In 1784 this public benefactor visited Ireland chiefly for the purpose of inspecting the prisons. But, being on the spot, he determined to make some inquiries respecting the Charter schools, whose fame had reached him. He visited several of the schools, and in his work on prisons, published in the same year, gave a brief account of what he had seen in them, urging the necessity of an immediate Parliamentary inquiry into their condition.<sup>6</sup> However, no such inquiry took place in 1784, 1785, or

<sup>4</sup> So in Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into Irish Education in 1825.

<sup>5</sup> Report of Commissioners of Inquiry into Education in 1825.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

1786. In 1787 Mr. Howard returned to Ireland, and again, accompanied by Sir J. Fitzpatrick, visited the schools, this time making a more searching investigation, inspecting all the schools except two, and the four nurseries. He promptly placed before the public the results of this his second and more complete investigation. Parliament now moved in the matter. A committee of inquiry was appointed in 1788, and before this committee Mr. Howard, Sir J. Fitzpatrick, and others, were examined concerning the condition of the State Educational Establishments.

Then the doings of the Charter schools were brought to light. It is difficult now, though nearly a hundred years have passed since it was written, to read without a shudder Mr. Howard's account of those vile institutions, which, under the patronage and control of the Irish Protestant Episcopalian Church, encouraged and endowed by Parliament, and sanctioned by the authority of the Crown, had, without a word of complaint, without an expression of dissatisfaction from those responsible for their management, been for half a century permitted to dishonour and disgrace the land. Never, perhaps, was there established in any civilized country a system of education based on principles so immoral, and worked by such disreputable means, as the Irish Charter schools.

Of Count Cagliostro, Carlyle said that "it was not so much that he told lies as that he himself was a lie." It may be said of the Charter schools that it was not so much that lies were told and frauds perpetrated in connexion with them, as that the whole system was one vast lie and fraud. The masters of the schools lied to the catechists, the catechists lied to the local committees, the local committees lied to the Committee of Fifteen, the Committee lied to Parliament, and Parliament, by voting supplies for the maintenance of those schools, on the strength of the statements furnished by their managers, published those lies as truths to the world. The very children obtained admission to



the schools by virtue of a lie which the society made their parents tell. For what were the statements in the forms of admission but falsehoods deliberately framed and deliberately adopted?—"I ——, the father of ——, do *most earnestly entreat* [the italics are mine] that my child be admitted into a Protestant Charter school, and I do hereby give my *full and voluntary* consent to his being educated in the doctrines and principles of the Protestant religion." Does any person acquainted with the history of Ireland and the dispositions of the people—does any person who understands human nature, believe for a moment that a single one of the starving peasants of Munster and Connaught who tottered to the doors of those schools seeking admission for their wretched children, and knowing that those doors would be slammed in their faces if they refused to sign this precious document—does any person, I say, believe that those peasants so circumstanced meant the words they were made to use? Did not the Committee of Fifteen, when they composed this form, know that they were issuing a document which would simply be made a vehicle for the transmission of falsehood? Did not the catechists and the local committees, under whose eyes these forms were signed, who saw the condition and were well acquainted with the circumstances of the peasants—who, clothed in rags, and broken in heart and spirit, came to crave for their children shelter of a Protestant roof because no Catholic one was afforded them—know that the signing of this form was nothing more nor less than an act of enforced hypocrisy and deceit? "I do *most earnestly entreat* . . . and I hereby give my *full and voluntary* consent." Imagine the peasants of Connaught, who knew as much of the "principles and doctrines of Protestantism" as they did of the religion of Mohammed or Buddha, and who cared, and had got every reason for caring, very much less about them, "entreating," forsooth, to have their children brought up in the Protestant faith, and giving their

“full and voluntary” consent to the change. How any reputable body of men could have lent themselves to a trick so mean—could have thought that a cause which they must have believed to be good could be served by a stratagem so dishonouring—is scarcely conceivable. Yet these things were done by the “chief dignitaries of the Church, the officers of State, and other persons of the highest rank and respectability” in Ireland in the eighteenth century.

But false statements more serious than those subscribed to—under dire necessity—by the Irish peasants who signed the forms of admission—more discreditable to those who made them, were put forward with the sanction of the Incorporated Society. In 1781 a sermon was preached before the Society on the subject of the schools. This sermon, with an account of several of the schools appended to it, was, at the Society’s request, subsequently published.

The statements thus put forth Mr. Howard found to be false. “In visiting the schools,” says this just and benevolent man, “I carried with me a sermon preached before the Incorporated Society (to which is added an account of several of the schools), published in 1781 at the request of the Society. In the two schools near Dublin—one at Clontarf Strand for boys, and one at Santry—I was greatly surprised to find but 46 boys in the former, and 34 girls in the latter, though the numbers in the published account were 100 boys and 40 girls. At Kilkenny and Castle Dermot the numbers were 26 in the former, and 17 in the latter, and there was a like deficiency in some of the other schools.” It is doubtful whether the Committee of Fifteen were aware of the falsehoods which were thus published under their sanction and at their request. It may be that they were only ignorant of the matters which it was their bounden duty to know. “This committee,” says Mr. Howard, referring to the Com-

<sup>7</sup> See Howard, “State of Prisons,” 1784, p. 208.



mittee of Fifteen, "have lately discovered a consciousness of their error in publishing such false accounts, and suffering them to be delivered from the pulpit, for in their last *ephemeris* the true numbers seem to be given, and they amount to 700 (or nearly a third) less than the numbers which had been before stated.<sup>8</sup>

But the Committee of Fifteen was made the medium for disseminating false statements under even graver circumstances. In a petition presented by the Society to Parliament about this time, it was alleged that the total number of children in all the Society's establishments, schools and nurseries, amounted to 2100. Mr. Howard showed that these figures were a gross exaggeration, the true numbers being 1400. The schools were also represented by the committee as being well maintained, and the children in them as being "well cared for, well fed, well clothed, well taught." In what state did Mr. Howard and Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick find the schools?—in what condition the children? "The state of most of the schools which I visited," says Mr. Howard, "was so deplorable as to disgrace Protestantism, and to encourage Popery in Ireland rather than the contrary."<sup>9</sup> In most of the establishments—schools and nurseries—he tells us that the "instruction, cleanliness, and health of the children had been grossly neglected; that they had not been allowed sufficient food, clothing or other necessities; that in many of these schools they were half-starved, half-naked, and covered with cutaneous disorders, the effect of filth and negligence; while," he added, "in some of those schools the children of the masters and mistresses appeared fresh, clean, and in good health."<sup>1</sup> "The children in general," said Mr. Howard before the Committee of the Irish House of Commons,<sup>2</sup> "were

<sup>8</sup> Howard, "State of Prisons," 1784, p. 208.

<sup>9</sup> "State of prisons," 1784, p. 208.

<sup>1</sup> Howard "On Prisons," 1784, 1789.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Committee of Irish House of Commons—Evidence

sickly, pale, and such miserable objects that they were a disgrace to all society; and their reading had been neglected for the purpose of making them work for the masters." At Longford he found twelve "sickly boys, almost naked;" and thirteen "miserable objects" at Clonmel. At Innisshannon (boys') school (visited on the 8th May, 1788) he found the children "very dirty, and their clothes in rags." "Several had the itch, and some had scald heads." On the day on which Howard saw these things, the doctor of the school, who was also a member of the local committee, reported "all the boys now healthy."<sup>3</sup> Howard expressed to this gentleman surprise at such a statement, considering the condition of the children, to which he drew the doctor's attention. The doctor's reply was, "We do not call the itch and scald heads sickness." "Scald heads," nevertheless, to say nothing of the itch, was, as Howard pointed out, a complaint of which Charter school children had died.<sup>4</sup>

Howard also visited Inniscarra school, where the master said that the local committee had applied for sheets about two years previously, but that none were ever sent. Observing on this fact, Howard remarks, that, in the case of other schools, applications had also been made, and made often, to the Committee of Fifteen, for necessaries wanted, but that no attention was paid to them.<sup>5</sup> At Castlebar he describes the children as "puny, sickly objects, almost naked." "Seven," he says, "had scald heads, and almost all the itch." "The children," he adds, "had never been at church since they came." At Loughrea (girls') school he found the children "sadly neglected" by a "drunken mistress." He visited Castle Dermot school on the

of Mr. Howard, as summarized by Commissioners of Education in their Report of 1791, and quoted in Report of Royal Commission of 1854, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Royal Commission, 1825, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Howard, *Account of Lazarettos in Europe, with some remarks on Irish Prisons, &c.*, p. 113.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.



15th April, 1788. On the day previous to his visit the local committee had reported "all the children well, except one sick of the ague." But Howard observed that "some had scald heads," and "the mistress acknowledged that eight had that disorder." The house," says Howard, "was out of repair; the walls very dirty; the children sadly neglected; the master only seventeen or eighteen years of age."<sup>6</sup>

At the Miltown nursery, near Dublin, Howard found thirty-three children of both sexes, "many of them unhealthy." "I observed," he says, "an excessive parsimony in linen, soap, and other things necessary for cleanliness and health."

In the Leinster nursery at Monasterevan, he found all the children crowded into one room, seventy-eight of them being between two and six years of age. "The master," says Howard, "calls himself an apothecary, and was lately paid six guineas for medicines. The impropriety of thus vesting the power of an apothecary and of the master in one man appears too plainly from the uncommon mortality among the children."

At the Munster nursery at Shannon Grove he found a "well-built house, properly adapted for a school-house." There were ninety-one children in it; "they were not kept properly clean, and had not been washed or combed the day I was there. . . . Many had the itch, and I observed other cutaneous eruptions on their heads, necks, and hands. Six had died the last quarter of 1787; nine since;"<sup>7</sup> and there were fourteen in the infirmary."

At the Connaught nursery at Monivea, he found twenty-two children, most of them from two to four years old, "in a very sickly condition, with the itch, scald heads, and sore eyes; some lay grovelling in the turf ashes. . . . The children lay in a large cold room, which extends the whole length of the house." . . .

<sup>6</sup> Howard's account of the Lazarettos in Europe, with additional remarks on Prisons, &c., in England and Ireland, p. 110.

<sup>7</sup> Howard visited this school on April 5th, 1788.

“The visitor” [the catechist], adds Mr. Howard, “lives about a mile and a half distant. It seems he makes his report from his own house; for on the back of one account sent to the master he wrote, ‘send the copy of this to Dublin, and keep this for me.’ The committee-room is a granary for the visitor’s oats.”

Such are some of the statements to be found in Mr. Howard’s Reports, and in the evidence given by him before the Committee of Inquiry in 1788. I shall now turn to the evidence of Sir Jeremiah Fitzpatrick. In 1786 and 1787 he visited twenty-eight (out of thirty-two) of the Charter schools. He tells us how he came to take an interest in the schools, and to prosecute inquiries respecting them. “The barbarous treatment,” he says, “which I had witnessed of some of the children in the school at Kilkenny was one of the first and principal inducements to persevere in the inspection of the other Charter schools.” In those other schools he found “the children puny, and not in the state of health in which children generally are; they were in general filthy and ill-clothed.” He had seen them “without shifts or shirts, and in such a situation as it was indecent to look on. The diet was insufficient for the support of their delicate frames; their instruction was very much neglected. In general, the children had the itch and other eruptive disorders. At Castle Carbery there was no appearance of a school-room; part of the window was stuffed with a turkish and dung, and there were about twenty-four ragged shirts and shifts. There were eighteen girls and fourteen boys in the school, most of them sickly, wretched-looking creatures, covered with the itch; two only could read, and all order appeared to have been neglected; but the masters’ and mistresses’ apartments were comfortable and well-furnished, and likewise the parlour, which served as a committee-room.”<sup>s</sup>

<sup>s</sup> Evidence of Sir J. Fitzpatrick before Committee of Irish House of Commons, 1788, as summarized in Report of Commission of Inquiry, 1825, p. 7.



Though I have dwelt at much length on the reports and evidence of Mr. Howard and Sir J. Fitzpatrick, yet before leaving this part of the subject I cannot forbear from placing before my readers the following brief extract from Mr. Howard's report of 1788, referring to the condition in which he found the children who had not been brought up in the Charter schools, and alluding generally to the dispositions of the Irish peasants on the matter of education.

"The lower class of people in Ireland," says Mr. Howard, "are by no means averse to the improvement of their children. At the cabins on the roadside I saw several schools, in which, for the payment of 3s. 3d. Irish per quarter, children were instructed in reading, writing, and accounts. Some of these I examined as to their proficiency, and found them much forwarder than those of the same age in the Charter schools. They were clean and wholesome, and consisted of the children of both Catholic and Protestant parents."

"I hope," he adds, "I shall not be thought as a Protestant Dissenter indifferent to the Protestant cause, when I express my wish that these distinctions were less regarded in obtaining the advantages of education, and the increase of Protestantism was chiefly trusted to the dissemination of knowledge and sound morals."<sup>9</sup>

All the facts and circumstances respecting the abuses and scandals which had arisen in connexion with the management of the Charter school system having been placed before the Irish Parliament, what, it will be asked, did Parliament do to prevent the recurrence of those evils that had been shown to exist? The question admits of a brief answer. Parliament did nothing, absolutely nothing, believing that "the publication of such a statement of facts would be sufficient to produce an effective remedy, considering the character of the distinguished individuals who constituted the In-

<sup>9</sup> Account of Lazarettos, &c., p. 119

corporated Society.”<sup>1</sup> And, accordingly, Parliament, trusting to the “character of those distinguished individuals,” went on steadily voting supplies for the maintenance of the schools, without making the slightest effort to bring about reforms in their management, until 1801, when Parliament could vote supplies no more.

But the “publication of such a statement of facts” did not, unhappily, produce any considerable effect on the “distinguished individuals who constituted the Incorporated Society.” “It is certain,” say the Commissioners of Education in their Report of 1807-9, “that after the period of Mr. Howard’s report till some time from the rebellion of 1798 (though some defects might have been remedied in consequence of Mr. Howard’s statement, and the investigation of the Committee of the [Irish] House of Commons) no considerable reformation had taken place in the state of the schools.”<sup>2</sup> In addition to the evils which had been exposed by Howard and Fitzpatrick before the inquiry of 1788, the Commissioners of Education refer, in their report above-mentioned, to frauds of the meanest kind which seem to have been perpetrated upon the masters to whom the children were apprenticed, and upon the unfortunate children themselves. Between 1787 and 1809, it was provided by the Charter school rules, as we have seen, that the master to whom a child was apprenticed should receive a fee of 5*l.* 5*s.*, which was to have been paid in the following way, one guinea and a half on the expiration of the second year; the like sum on the expiration of the fourth year, and the remaining two guineas on the expiration of the apprenticeship. It had also been provided, as has already been pointed out, that the children on completing their term of apprenticeship should receive a bounty of 3*l.* 3*s.* To

<sup>1</sup> Report of Commission of Inquiry on Irish Education, 1825, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Commissioners of Education, 1809, p. 24. It should be stated that the rule which excluded Protestants from the schools was not expunged until 1803.



the discredit of the Incorporated Society, it has to be stated that in the matter of these payments faith was not kept either with the masters or the children. "We are concerned to state," say the Commissioners of Education in 1807-(9), "that a large proportion of the masters of children apprenticed do not receive the last part of the apprentice-fee, and the children the bounty for faithful service." Though all that had been known of the Charter schools up to 1807-9 was discreditable, yet the Commissioners of Inquiry seem to have entertained the hope that the schools might yet be made efficient establishments for the instruction of "poor and destitute [Protestant] children, bringing them up to habits of industry and enabling them to become useful members of society." This hope appears to have been based upon the accounts given of the schools by Dr. Beaufort and his secretary, Mr. Corneille, who were appointed by the Education Board to inspect them in 1807-9. The accounts of those gentlemen were subsequently proved to have been inaccurate and misleading in almost every essential particular. Not that they had been guilty of wilful misrepresentation, for both gentlemen were incapable of lending themselves to any transaction of a discreditable or dishonest nature; but that they had simply been imposed upon during their tour of inspection, "deceived," as the Royal Commissioners of 1825 put it, "either by the masters, or misled by the kindness of their own dispositions."<sup>3</sup> In fact, when Dr. Beaufort and Mr. Corneille visited the schools they found everything looking pleasant; the children made no complaint, and the masters painted everything *couleur de rose*. These worthy gentlemen were satisfied with appearances, and went away "extremely favourably" impressed with the state of the schools. "The children," says Dr. Beaufort, accordingly "were trained up in health, cleanliness, and good order," . . . "were

<sup>3</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825, p. 11.

reasonably well taught to read and write," and learnt "their duty to God and man."

In 1825 a royal commission was issued to inquire into the condition of the schools. The commissioners appointed were Thomas Frankland Lewis, John Leslie Foster, William Grant, Thomas Glassford, and Anthony Richard Blake. Those commissioners were not content to found their report of the schools upon the accounts of any individuals, however respectable; they determined to see things for themselves. Accordingly, various members of the commission were deputed to visit various schools, and thus a knowledge of almost all the establishments was acquired by the personal inspection of the commissioners themselves. By this means not only were the inaccuracies of Dr. Beaufort and Mr. Corneille discovered, but the way in which those gentlemen had been imposed upon was found out. Dr. Beaufort had reported of the school at Ardtraccan that "the master pays great attention to the education of the boys, and there appears no complaint of mismanagement," yet in 1810, within two years from the time of his visit, the commissioners tell us that this very master and his wife "were dismissed for neglect of duty." The Monivea nursery was praised by Dr. Beaufort as being well regulated; yet in 1810 the master "was dismissed for neglect." Mr. Corneille reported the school at Castle Dermot as being generally satisfactory in 1808. But the master was dismissed in the very next year (1809) for "neglect of duty."

Mr. Corneille stated that the school at Clontarf "appeared to be well regulated." "The master," he said, "attends to the duties of it himself, and seems a very zealous, diligent, and proper person in his station." This master (who had been appointed in 1798) was dismissed in 1812 for "neglect and severity." Mr. Corneille expressed himself greatly pleased at finding the Innisshannon school "so well conducted;" yet the master of this school was afterwards dismissed for



“neglect of duty.” At Shannon Grove Mr. Corneille “saw everything to praise and nothing to condemn. . . . The master and mistress, as the catechist informed me, conducted the school with the ‘greatest care and attention.’” Subsequently, in 1817, Mr. Thackeray, a clergyman of the Established Church, who had been appointed by the Incorporated Society to visit the school, stated (and his testimony is quoted with approval by the Royal Commissioners) that “no part [of this school] is in the state of neatness in which it should be kept, and some parts of it are filthy. The state of slovenliness in which I saw the whole seems without any excuse. . . . The qualifications of the master do not fit him for the duty of education.” The master was the same in 1817 as when Mr. Corneille paid his visit: but the mistress had been changed.<sup>4</sup>

With reference to the way in which Dr. Beaufort and Mr. Corneille had been taken in, the following incident of the inspection of the Royal Commissioners may, perhaps, serve to throw some light on the subject.

On the 2nd October, 1824, two of the Royal Commissioners visited the school at Stradbally, where there were eighty-three boys. They found matters looking upon the whole fairly well. They called up the children, and examined them as to their treatment by the masters, in the absence of all parties connected with the establishment, and the children, being so interrogated, made not the slightest complaint. Despite these answers, the commissioners did not feel fully satisfied with the state of things at the school, and, accordingly, they resolved to send one of their members again to inspect it.

On the 9th October, the commissioner deputed for the purpose called and inspected the school at Stradbally. He adopted a course similar to that taken by his colleagues on the occasion of their visit on the 2nd October. He examined the children in the absence of

<sup>4</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825, p. 11.

all persons connected with the school. I shall state what took place at this second examination in the words of the Royal Commissioners. On being called aside and interrogated, the children were "at first silent, but on being told that the commissioner present came from the Government, to inquire into the state of the school, and would protect them if they had any just ground of complaint, the whole school immediately came forward and said that they were very cruelly used, but were afraid to speak, for that they had complained once to the catechist, and that the boys who complained had been 'half killed' in consequence, and it was only on receiving a full assurance that the commissioner who was present would protect them, that they were induced to make any disclosures. Upon being asked why they had not complained to the commissioners on the first visit, they said they had taken them for 'common visitors,' and that upon the second occasion if it had not been mentioned expressly that the commissioner came from the Government, they would not have dared to complain to him either. From the evidence taken on this occasion, it was sufficiently proved that about three weeks before the first visit one boy had been flogged with a leathern strap nine times in one day, his clothes being taken down each time, and that he received on the whole 100 lashes, all for 'a sum in long division.' On the same day another boy appears to have received 67 lashes on account of another sum in arithmetic; another boy, only 13 years old, had received 17 stripes with a rope. On the 8th October, the day before the second visit, eight of the boys had been so severely punished that their persons were found by the commissioner in a shocking state of laceration and contusion. The offence with which these boys were charged by the usher was 'looking at two policemen playing at ball in the boys' ball-alley,' and he stated that the catechist recommended him to flog the boys. This, however, was denied by the catechist, and was, we have no doubt,



utterly false." . . . The instruments of punishment " [used upon those occasions of chastisement] were a leathern cat and a rope, and the branches of some elm-trees." The commissioners state that all those punishments were inflicted by the usher, the master having taken no interest whatever in the conduct of the school, being "fully occupied in the management of three farms, containing together nearly 130 acres, upon which the boys were occasionally made to work." The education of the boys, unfortunately, had been sadly neglected. "They were found able to repeat the catechism . . . but attached little or no meaning to the words they repeated. . . . They had never heard of St. Paul, and half of them had no idea whether the word Europe meant a man, a place, or a thing; and only three boys in the school could name the four quarters of the world."

This is a specimen of the means employed by the Royal Commissioners to get at the truth respecting the Charter schools, and an example of the facts they brought to light.

Having thoroughly inquired into the whole working of the system, and spared no pains to learn the precise truth respecting its management from 1800 down to 1820-25, the commissioners sum up the results of their investigations and inquiries, by declaring the condition of the schools during all those years to have been "far from satisfactory." "It will be found," they say, "that, however, in some cases there may have been cause for approbation, yet in a much greater degree was there grounds for animadversion and complaint. In a majority of cases the masters took little share in the instruction of the children, their time being occupied in the management of their farms. Some of the houses were kept in a slovenly and neglected manner, and the children were in many cases ill-fed and badly clothed, and affected with diseases which by ordinary care and attention might have been easily cured. They were not brought up in

habits of cleanliness and decency, and their hours of instruction and recreation were infringed by their being obliged to work for the benefit of the master. The manner of instruction appears to have been imperfect, and the children had made but little progress in Scriptural knowledge. They were neglected in many cases by the catechists, and still more by the local committees, who seldom attended to visit the schools. The children are described as sullen and dogged, and in some cases appear to have been treated with extreme severity. A large proportion of the children apprenticed are known to have eloped from their places, and it was difficult in some places to find masters who would take children from these schools.”<sup>5</sup>

Thus it will be observed that the main features by which the schools of the Incorporated Society were distinguished between 1733 and 1787, continued still to mark them from 1787 down to 1820-25.

I fancy most people will think that the time had now come when Parliament might release itself from further responsibility with reference to the support of the Charter schools. So, at all events, thought the Royal Commissioners of 1825. “Independent of the objections,” they say, “which, as it appears to us, may justly be made to the principle on which this society was established, we think that its constitution and management are each so defective, that no hope of any permanent improvement in the schools can reasonably be entertained.”<sup>6</sup>

In conclusion, the Royal Commissioners recommended the discontinuance of Parliamentary grants for the keeping up the schools, pointing out that the total expenditure of the Incorporated Society during its ninety years’ existence, had been 1,612,138*l.*, of which 1,027,715*l.* was obtained from Parliament.<sup>7</sup>

This suggestion of the commissioners was not acted

<sup>5</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 30.



upon. Indeed, in the year after their report a grant of 19,500*l.* was voted for the schools.<sup>8</sup>

The next grant, and the last, was made in 1832; it amounted to 5700*l.* Then finally terminated Parliamentary responsibility for the maintenance of an educational system which, from the time of its foundation in 1733 down to its repudiation by Parliament in 1833, had, to use the words of John Howard, been “a disgrace to Protestantism”—“a disgrace to all society.”

An eminent historian of our own day—one the charms of whose style allure and fascinate, no matter how much his statements may at times astonish and offend—has described the Charter schools as “the best conceived educational institutions which existed in the world.”<sup>9</sup> I do not desire to enter into a controversy upon this subject with so distinguished a writer as the author of the “English in Ireland.” I prefer, having set forth all the facts connected with the foundation and management of those “educational institutions,” to leave it to others to say whether those facts warrant the description which Mr. Froude has given of them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Endowed Schools, Ireland, 1857-58, p. 92.

<sup>9</sup> Froude, “English in Ireland,” last edition, vol. ii. p. 491.

<sup>1</sup> In the first volume of his history of the “English in Ireland in the eighteenth century,” Mr. Froude describes the Charter schools as being “probably the very best system of education which has ever been devised in modern times.” In supporting them he tells us, that, the “Irish gentry were, for the first time, and last time, really and thoroughly discharging their duties to the people committed to them.” The “education,” he says, “was admirable.” . . . “Boys and girls alike were fed, lodged, clothed, and apprenticed.” Admission to the schools, he goes on to say, was to “a poor man’s son or daughter, equivalent to ensuring their fortunes.” In fine, he declares that, at a very small cost, the poor children of Ireland who went to the Charter schools were “rescued from the utmost misery that could spring from poverty, ignorance, and wickedness . . . educated . . . and put in the way of being good and happy” (vol. i. pp. 576-81).

On the other hand, in the second volume of the same work, Mr. Froude says that “within a few years of their establishment the Charter schools had ceased to grow. Private benefactions fell off, and

though Parliament made no difficulty in voting money, the annual grants were swallowed up by peculation. The industrial training, so excellent in conception, degenerated by negligence into a system in which the children became the slaves of the masters, and grew up in rags and starvation. As the numbers fell off, infant nurseries were established, the society observing that parents were more willing to part with their children when very young. These nurseries, from a report of one of the managers to the House of Commons [apparently in 1761], appear at last to have been merely foundling asylums, twenty infants having been found at one of them exposed among the carpenter's shavings." The "masters and mistresses," Mr. Froude observes, "plundered the funds, starved the children, and made the industrial system an excuse for using the pupils as slaves to fill their own pockets." Finally, Mr. Froude declares the schools to have been a "conspicuous and monstrous failure" (vol. ii. p. 12 n.; and pp. 491-93).

Before passing away from the subject of the Charter schools, I desire to add that there are at present in Ireland, twenty-two schools belonging to the Incorporated Society, which, judging from the report of the Endowed Schools' Commissioners of 1879-81, are upon the whole in a satisfactory condition. The schools appear to have become more educational and less proselytizing, though they retain their essentially Protestant Episcopalian character. The number of pupils at present upon the rolls of all the schools of the Incorporated Society amount to 677, of which 27 are Catholics, 40 Presbyterians, and 7 belonging to other forms of dissent; the rest are members of the Disestablished Church.—Report of Endowed Schools' Commissioners, 1880-81, p. 88 *et seq.*, &c.; and see generally, Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825; Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1854-58; Howard on Prisons, 1784, 1788-89; Howard on Lazarettos in Europe, and on Irish Prisons, &c.; Lecky, "History of England in the Eighteenth Century," vol. i. pp. 577, 581; vol. ii. pp. 12, 491-93.



## CHAPTER III.

## OTHER PROSELYTIZING INSTITUTIONS.

DURING the existence of the Charter schools other State institutions of a more or less proselytizing character sprang up in Ireland. As instances of the less proselytizing class, the Hibernian Military School and the Hibernian Marine School may be mentioned; as instances of the more, the "Society for Discouraging Vice, and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion," and the "Royal London Hibernian Society," the "Baptist Society," and the "Society for Promoting the Education of the Irish, through the medium of their own Language."

In 1769 the Hibernian Military School was incorporated by letters patent, for the purpose of "maintaining, educating, apprenticing, or placing in the army, the orphans and other children of soldiers in Ireland." In 1818 a charter was granted providing that the children should be taught "to read, especially the Holy Scriptures, and should be instructed in the principles of the Protestant religion, as established in Ireland"—a provision which remained in force until 1846, when Catholic pupils were at last admitted, and allowed to receive religious instruction from the clergy of their own church, specially appointed for the purpose. The Hibernian Military School, which is situated in the Phoenix Park, has in the main been always a well-managed institution. The account given by the Education Commissioners in 1810 of the condition of the children brought up in it, affords an agreeable contrast to

what we have been reading in the last chapter about the Charter schools. "The children [in the Hibernian School]," say the Commissioners, "appear, with very few exceptions, to be healthy, active, cheerful, and singularly free from scrofulous complaints, . . . which have of late years become so common in most of our charity schools."

The proselytizing operations of the Hibernian Military School seem never to have been of an extensive or energetic character. Of course all the children entering the establishment were at first compelled to conform to the religion of the Irish Protestant Episcopalian Church—scarcely a just regulation considering that the majority of the Irish soldiers in the English army were Catholics, but beyond this, no effort seems to have been essayed to make proselytes; no exertions used to draw Catholic children into the school in order to make them Protestants; and no attempt outside of the school to tamper with the religion of the people—soldiers or civilians.

The Commissioners of 1854-58 reported in favourable terms of the Hibernian Military School. "The state of instruction," they said, "and the general order and discipline in the school were remarkably good." So likewise report the Endowed Schools' Commissioners of 1879-80. "The house," says Mr. Moore, "was in every respect well-managed, and scrupulously clean. I examined the boys in the National programme which is adopted, and the answering was on the whole satisfactory. The trades are generally taught with system and regularity."

The Hibernian Marine School was founded in 1775, on religious principles similar to those of the Military School, for the purpose of "maintaining, educating, and apprenticing the orphans and children of decayed seamen in the Royal Navy and merchant service." This establishment does not seem, upon the whole, to have had such a successful career as the military school. The assistant commissioner who visited it in



1857, said that he was "forcibly struck by the contrast presented by that noble and flourishing institution [the Military School], to the decayed and melancholy aspect of the Marine School."

However, the Commissioners of 1879-80 say, "a great advance has been made since 1857;" and Mr. Moore reports, "the answering [of the pupils] in the school in reading, spelling, and elementary arithmetic, was fairly good. The discipline was not quite so rigid as it should be in such an institution. The house is kept in very good order."<sup>1</sup>

In 1792 an institution very much better entitled to the appellation "proselytizing" than either the Royal Hibernian Military School, or the Marine School, was established. On the 2nd of October in that year, three gentlemen, members of the then Established Church, struck by the "rapid progress which infidelity and immorality" were making throughout the kingdom [of Ireland], and deeming it to be the duty of every man who had the "welfare of his country or the honour of his God at heart to exert all his powers to stem the baneful torrent," met for the purpose of considering the best means to save the land from the irreligious deluge which threatened to submerge it.

How to "discountenance vice, and to promote the cause of religion and piety" was the question which exercised the minds of those gentlemen, and they came to the conclusion that a "work" so "great" could not be achieved by "separate" individual effort. Being of that opinion, they "resolved" to "associate." This resolution was carried out, and the "Association for Discountenancing Vice, and Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion" formed. The next point for consideration was the principles on which the society should be based, and the mode in which its work should be

<sup>1</sup> For account of Hibernian Military and Marine Schools, see Reports of Commissioners of Inquiry on Irish Education, 1825-27, and 1854-58, and Endowed Schools' Commissioners, 1879-80.

done. Its promoters seem to have been of opinion that "enthusiasm" was a mistake, and accordingly, to "guard against this danger," they declared that it should be "established as a fundamental principle" of the corporation, that "nothing should be attempted" in its management "contrary to the doctrine and discipline of the Established Church," or "calculated in the smallest degree to lead to a separation from the same."<sup>2</sup> The step thus taken to "guard against enthusiasm" appears to have been very effectual, for between 1792 and 1800 the society made marvellously little progress, the total amount of funds subscribed by its non-enthusiastic supporters during those eight years being 1989*l.* 13*s.* 8*d.*

As it had been resolved that enthusiasm was a mistake, and as the affairs of the association—whether for want of enthusiasm or not—had hitherto made but very little progress, it was now determined to demand—by way, doubtless, of a substitute for enthusiasm—a Parliamentary grant. A Parliamentary grant was accordingly asked for and obtained. In 1800 the society was incorporated by an Act of the Legislature, and in 1801 a grant of 300*l.*, soon to be amply increased, was voted by Parliament for its support.

Thus encouraged, it put forth fresh vigour. Religious works were distributed over the country, premiums were given for catechetical examinations, and a portion of the funds was set apart for the support of educational institutions. An effort was made to put into working order the parish schools established by Henry VIII.; and the clergymen of the Church of England throughout the country were promised moral and material assistance if they would endeavour to rehabilitate and carry on these obsolete institutions.

In 1806-8 the Society, still adhering to its Protestant Episcopalian character, evinced a more or less

<sup>2</sup> Resolutions and Regulations of Society; Report of Royal Commissioners, 1825, p. 31.



liberal disposition in framing regulations for the management of the schools placed in connexion with it. It was, of course, a *sine quâ non* that the masters of them should be members of the Established Church. It was furthermore an essential rule that the catechism of the Church of England, and none other, should be used; and, in addition, the reading of the Scriptures formed a prominent feature in the curriculum of instruction. But the schools were thrown open to members of all persuasions, and whilst every pupil was bound to read the Bible, no pupil, save a member of the Church of England, was obliged to attend the catechetical class.

The Irish Catholics—pining for knowledge, but so long prevented from acquiring it, save upon conditions which made its acquisition obnoxious and reproachful—were eager to rush into any educational establishments where some guarantee, however slight, was given that their religious views would not be tampered with.

The schools established in connexion with the “Society for Discountenancing Vice” appeared to offer some such guarantee. They were, undoubtedly, Protestant schools; but Catholic children were not bound to attend religious instructions in them.

It seemed “on the cards” that a fair primary education might be obtained in these establishments without danger to Catholic faith. At all events, some of the Catholic clergy and laity in the country appear to have thought it better that they should get a fair trial, than that the unfortunate Papist children should continue to run about the streets and roads in ignorance and idleness. Such a trial was accordingly resolved upon, and Catholic children in considerable numbers attended the schools.

The Society for several years seems to have kept faith fairly well with the Catholics. The Bible, the Catholic pupils were always compelled to read, but from instruction in the Church of England catechism they were exempted. In addition, it may be stated

that the rule which provided for the appointment of Church of England masters only, was in a few cases relaxed, while the rule which excluded all catechisms from use, except the catechism of the English Church, was in several instances permitted to be infringed. The result of this "laxity" in the management of the schools, however incompatible with the principles on which they had been founded, does not appear to have been injurious to their progress as educational establishments. Indeed, it tended in many cases to encourage the attendance of Catholic children, and to increase the total number of scholars on the rolls.

According to returns published by the society, it would appear that in 1820, out of a total of 8828 pupils attending 119 schools, 4368 were Catholics; and that in 1824, out of a total of 15,922, 6344 belonged to the same religious persuasion. The schools seem also to have been upon the whole satisfactorily managed during this time. Thus the Royal Commissioners of 1825 inform us that they "appeared generally to be of a very orderly and highly respectable description."<sup>3</sup>

So it would seem that between 1800 and 1820-24 the institutions in the main did fairly well. In these latter years, however, the Society appears to have come to the determination that a stricter discipline should be adopted; that the rules which had been made to prevent the inroads of Popery should be more rigorously enforced; while those regarded by Catholics as safeguards against Protestant proselytism, should be relaxed. As a consequence of this determination the society withdrew its financial support from several schools conducted by Catholic teachers, and in some cases—not in many, but in a sufficient number to raise suspicion and distrust—permitted, and doubtless encouraged, the attendance of Catholic children at the catechetical classes—an opportunity so far apparently

<sup>3</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825, p. 33.



availed of by the little Papists that they occasionally carried off the prizes in religious instruction from their Church of England fellow-pupils.

Another rule which Catholics regarded as a safeguard against proselytism, was allowed to be infringed. One of the duties undertaken by the Society was to disseminate religious books and tracts over the country. But it had been provided that those books and tracts should not be of a controversial character; a provision which for some time seems to have been faithfully observed. This rule was now violated, and in several cases books of a "highly controversial character"<sup>4</sup> were circulated.

The effect produced upon the popular mind in Ireland by these changes, at a time when the country was profoundly agitated by the struggle for the Catholic Emancipation, can well be conceived. The withdrawal of support from schools conducted by Catholic masters, the circulation of Protestant tracts, and the attempts—the number of which might have been exaggerated—made to instruct Catholic children in the Church of England catechism, quickly marked the Society as a mere proselytizing institution.

It may be permitted to speculate as to the reasons why the society abandoned the moderate lines on which for a time it had proceeded, and adopted a more decidedly proselytizing policy.

The "lax" policy at first adopted had not proved effectual in "discountenancing" the principal "vice" which it had been formed to destroy, viz. Popery; or in promoting the only kind of "religion" which it cared to advance—that of the Church of England.

Papist children came to the schools; they learned to read and write, and regularly attended to Biblical lessons, but they did not all the while become members of the English Church. They learned much that would fit them for becoming good citizens; but nothing which seemed sufficient to make them good Protestant

<sup>4</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825, p. 35.

Episcopalian Christians. The main end in view—the conversion of the Irish Catholic children to the English Church—had not been attained by the adoption of this policy, though the subsidiary one of teaching them to read and write had. The Society, therefore, came to the conclusion that the policy should be changed, and a system of vigorous proselytism, as opposed to educational effort, put in force. The change of policy was soon followed by a change in the attitude of the Catholics. The Society's schools—at first, availed of—were now denounced from one end of the country to the other; the fact that they were proselytizing institutions, which could not live a day, if the Parliamentary grants voted for their support were discontinued, was loudly proclaimed.

The result of the agitation thus raised was, firstly, the withdrawal of the Catholic children *en masse*; and secondly, the discontinuance of Parliamentary grants, which between 1801 and 1824 had amounted to nearly 80,000*l.*<sup>5</sup> On the withdrawal of the Catholic children and the discontinuance of the grants, the schools immediately collapsed.

A contemporary institution of the “Association for Discountenancing Vice” in the latter years of its Irish-schools-experiment, was the “London Hibernian Society.” This society was established in 1806-8 by some London citizens for the purpose of promoting “pure religion” in Ireland.

The members of the London Hibernian Society held strong views upon the Irish question of those days, and had very decided opinions as to the best way of dealing with it. The Irish question in their judgment was this: “The great body of the Irish wandered like sheep having no faithful shepherd to lead them. Legendary tales, pilgrimages, penances, superstitions, offerings, priestly domination, the notorious habit of reconciling sanctimonious accents and attitudes with abandoned practices, and all that shocks and disgusts

<sup>5</sup> Wyse, House of Commons, March 6th, 1832.



in the mummary of the mass-house." These were the things amiss in Ireland in the years 1806-8; and they did not fail, we are informed, to "fix a mournful sentiment in the hearts of enlightened and pious observers" like the members of the London Hibernian Society.<sup>6</sup> The Irish people were enveloped in the darkness of moral death, and the supreme question of the hour was how to let the "Light of Life" in upon them. All attempts hitherto made in that direction had failed. Why? Because the "barrier of Popery" stood in the way. This "barrier" had, in the first instance, to be thrown down—Popery had at the outset to be "reduced"—and then, but not till then, all other things would be added unto the unhappy inhabitants of the Green Isle. Once "blessed with the Light of Life," which was then "stored in force" in the Charter schools, the Association for Discountenancing Vice, and in the London Hibernian Society, the people of Ireland would become "tranquil and loyal, pious and virtuous." The "reduction" of Popery, then, and the diffusion over the land of the "Light of Life," were the essential requisites for the pacification and sanctification of Ireland; and for their attainment the London Hibernian Society had determined to set to work. The means decided on for effecting the end thus in view were the "dispersion of the Holy Scriptures and religious tracts, and the formation and support of schools." These, as we know, had been the means previously adopted by kindred institutions for attaining similar ends; but, apparently, in the opinion of the London Hibernian Society, the failure was attributable in a great measure to want of vigour on the part of their fellow-labourers in the vineyards of Christianity. Those labourers, they said, had, doubtless, acted with much "prudence," which was well; but they had shown perhaps a little too

<sup>6</sup> Report of Deputation sent by Society to Ireland in 1808, and adopted; and Report of Royal Commission on Irish Education, 1825, p. 66.

much "forbearance," which was not quite so well. They had "abstained from all invectives against Popery." That was a mistake. They had also "abstained from every attempt to make proselytes." That was another mistake.

The London Hibernian Society was determined to be "prudent," and to be "forbearing"—to "a certain extent." But "frequent opportunities" for "disclosing to the Catholic youth the systems of both Churches [England and Rome] would occur," and those "opportunities" should be utilized to the Society to the "amplest extent."

Having thus resolved to go forth and do battle with Popery in Ireland, the Society had next to consider in what part of the country lay the "most legitimate field" for their labours, and they came to the conclusion that this "field" lay in the south. On the south then their soldiers were ordered to march, the duties of every man being pointed out in the words of the following stirring proclamation:—

"On every hand the determination should be to detach, by the power of truth and of superior piety, as many as possible from the folds of counterfeit shepherds, but to adopt no measure that tends to diminish the flocks of the vigilant and faithful; to make perpetual inroads on the kingdom of Satan, but by no means to divide and disturb the family of Jesus Christ."<sup>7</sup> The subjects of King Satan in Ireland, in those days, were the Papists; while the "family of Jesus Christ" consisted exclusively of the members and supporters of the religion which patronized the Charter schools, the Association for Discountenancing Vice, and the London Hibernian Society.

Most people will, I fancy, think that the report<sup>8</sup> from which I have quoted, was not very well calcu-

<sup>7</sup> Report of Deputation sent to Ireland by the London Hibernian Society in 1808. Report of Royal Commission on Irish Education, 1825, p. 66.

<sup>8</sup> *Ante*, pp. 82, 83.



lated to conciliate the Irish people, or to induce them to embrace the Protestant faith. However, some amends for its unwisdom were made in the regulations afterwards published for the management of the Society's schools.

These regulations provided that the schools, though directly controlled by clergymen of the Church of England, should be thrown open to members of all religious persuasions; that the masters (who were to receive result-fees) should be selected solely with a view to their competency as teachers; and that ministers of all religions should be invited to visit the schools. The course of instruction was to consist of reading, writing, arithmetic, lessons in the Bible, and the Irish language; and it was laid down as a general rule that no teacher should obtrude on the attention of his pupils the peculiarities of his own religious denomination.

If these regulations had been honestly carried out the London Hibernian Society might have done a work of real good in Ireland. But they were not, nor was there the slightest intention that they should be, honestly carried out. They were simply set as a trap to catch the Irish Catholic youth, not with the object of educating them—a trap so set would have been well set—but of turning them, by processes which were discreditable, into members of the English Church. The system adopted was as follows:—Masters for the schools were usually picked from the “lowest ranks” of the peasantry,<sup>9</sup> not with a view to their competency as teachers, but to their pliability as proselytizing instruments. Those men were found in ignorance, and as found so practically they remained. That they could read we have some evidence; that they could write, or that they knew anything of arithmetic, or possessed the slightest acquaintance with the other subjects prescribed in the course of instruction, we have none. That the children were taught to read we

<sup>9</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825, p. 81.

also have some evidence ; that they were ever taught anything else we have none.<sup>1</sup>

The reading-lessons of masters and children were confined exclusively to one book—the Bible. A society established for the sole purpose of imparting Biblical knowledge may render much service to the community among whom its operations are conducted ; but the instruction, to be serviceable, must, I venture to submit, be intelligently given—given in a way calculated to inspire veneration for the Book, and to implant its truths in the minds and hearts of those taught. Biblical knowledge was not so imparted in the schools of the London Hibernian Society. The plan adopted in these institutions was merely to cram as much Bible-extract into the heads of the children as they could carry until the inspectors came round, when it was once and for all, in the language of the Society's prospectus, “dispersed,” the master being paid so much per quantum of extract thus given off. “The great object of the schools,” say the Royal Commissioners of 1825, “and that to which their attention is almost exclusively given, is the reading of the Bible, and committing those portions of Scripture to memory which are to be repeated to the inspectors at the next quarterly examination ; masters to be paid according to the proficiency of the pupils in these Bible lessons.”<sup>2</sup>

By degrees the masters developed into preachers, in which capacity they were sent throughout the country to “shed the Light of Life.” These “missionaries”—for the most part ignorant, illiterate, and truculent—did little credit to Protestantism in Ireland. Indeed, the sole effect of their operations was to make the Church in whose interests they worked—and which was already sufficiently unpopular—an object

<sup>1</sup> “In most of the schools there is a want of the useful requisites ; and writing and arithmetic appear to be less attended to than in any other class of schools.”—Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Royal Commission on Irish Education, Report, pp. 68, 81.



of contempt and repugnance in the land. Often they themselves were subjected to rough treatment at the hands of the peasantry among whom they came, and in whose minds their presence served but to stir up the bitter memories of wrongs and insults daily heaped upon those who professed the faith of the nation—a faith, to use the language of Shiel, “endeared by suffering, and fastened by persecution to the affections of the people.”<sup>3</sup>

It is scarcely necessary to add that the London Hibernian Society, with its sham schools and its missionaries, proved a disastrous failure. It made no “inroads on the kingdom of Satan, it left “Popery”

<sup>3</sup> One of the most painful scenes I ever witnessed was an attack made upon a proselytizing preacher in my native county, now some twenty years ago. The circumstances of the attack were these: In an intensely Catholic district in the West of Ireland—perhaps there were not altogether twelve Protestants in the locality, while the Catholics could be counted by thousands—the resident landlords refused to grant to the parish priest a site for a chapel. So circumstanced, the parish priest built a small house on wheels, like a gypsy’s caravan, wherein he celebrated mass. The house, or “ark,” as this makeshift church came to be called, was barely sufficient to accommodate the priest and the little boys who “served mass,” while the congregation knelt in the roads or fields around. To suit the convenience of his parishioners, the priest moved this “ark” on the Sunday mornings from point to point in the parish. He was sometimes “attacked for blocking up the passage on the high road, and an order was once made to compel him to remove the ‘ark,’ whereupon he rolled it about from spot to spot until at last he was driven to place it in the tideway on the beach, where the people knelt upon the shingle.”

It is scarcely necessary to say that the peasantry of this district did not regard with very friendly feelings either the English Government, or the religion which was incorporated with it. To this neighbourhood, with the excellent judgment and good taste for which the directors of Irish proselytizing institutions were remarkable, a missionary was sent. The scene I witnessed, was the flight of this man, running literally for his life, and chased by an infuriated mob of peasants, maddened by the thought that while they were prevented from raising a roof under which to worship according to their belief, this creature was encouraged, by the very individuals who subjected them to petty and galling persecutions, to go throughout the country vilifying the national religion. See *Munster News*, January 8th.

wholly unreduced, and instead of “dispersing” the Scriptures with any effect over the country, was itself “dispersed” with very much effect, after an unprofitable existence of some thirty years.

Founded upon the same principles as the London Hibernian Association, and worked by the same means, was the “Baptist Society,” established in 1814. It expired about the same time as the London Hibernian Society, its labours having been attended with the same results.

Four years after the formation of the Baptist Society, a more respectable proselytizing institution was established, viz. “The Irish Society for promoting the Education of the native Irish through the medium of their own Language.”

At the commencement of the present century a considerable proportion of the Irish people, despite the Act of Henry VIII. for suppressing the Irish tongue, remained enthusiastically attached to their native language. Out of a total population of 3,059,281 in the provinces of Munster and Connaught, more than 2,000,000 spoke Irish, and of this number 500,000 spoke nothing else; with reference to the remaining 1,059,000 or more, though able to transact business at markets and fairs in broken English, the language invariably used by them in their homes and in daily intercourse amongst friends and acquaintances was Gaelic: in fact they could not carry on a sustained conversation in any other tongue. This knowledge of Irish was not confined to the provinces of Munster and Connaught. It prevailed in Leinster, extending over the counties of Louth, Meath, West Meath, Kilkenny, Longford, Carlow, and part of Wexford; and in Ulster, where half the inhabitants of Tyrone and Donegal, and many amongst the peasantry of Cavan and Monaghan, habitually spoke the ancient language of the country.

Finding this to be the case, a number of Dublin gentlemen—members of the Church of England—came to the conclusion that a wiser policy than



attempting to suppress the Irish tongue, would be to use it as a popular vehicle for conveying to the people information calculated to work their conversion to the Protestant faith. With this object the "Irish Society for promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the medium of their own Language," was formed.

The organization—which was supported by voluntary subscriptions, and helped substantially by the British and Foreign Bible Association<sup>4</sup> and the London Hibernian Society—does not seem to have troubled itself very much about the education generally of the people, its energies being mainly devoted to the subject of religious instruction by the dissemination of the Scriptures printed in Irish.

This new undertaking would appear to have been so far successful in its operations that the peasantry, who were unwilling to take the Bible from the hands of strangers when printed in English, received it willingly, and often eagerly, from the same quarter when printed in their own language.

"What do you conceive are the practical inducements that cause any common person to wish to learn from you to read the Irish character?" the secretary of the Society was asked before the Royal Commission of 1825. He answered, "I think the chief inducement is the attachment of the people to their ancient language, [an attachment] which exists in Ireland to a degree of enthusiasm, and, perhaps, is as strong a feeling as any other prejudice they possess."<sup>5</sup>

But the net results of the Society's labours were the same as had been those of all kindred establishments. As a proselytizing institution, it utterly failed, with-

<sup>4</sup> It was stated before the Royal Commissioners of 1825 that the British and Foreign Bible Society had expended 80,000*l.* in editing the Irish Scriptures. See First Report of Royal Commissioners, Appendix 250, p. 743.

<sup>5</sup> First Report of Royal Commission on Irish Education, 1825, Appendix 250.

out, however, so far as I have been able to gather, provoking any of those bitter feelings of hostility against the Protestant religion which had been stirred up by all its predecessors ; and to assert of an Irish Protestant proselytizing society that it did no harm to the Protestant religion in Ireland, is saying much in its favour. This much can at all events be said of the “Irish Society for promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the medium of their own Language.”



## CHAPTER IV.

## NONCONFORMIST SCHOOLS.

THE first attempt at the establishment in Ireland of schools on the voluntary system was made by the Quakers.

In 1764 Mr. John Handcock, a member of the Society of Friends, bequeathed a sum of 1000*l.* to be laid out in the purchase of lands, the rents arising from which were to be devoted to the support of a school for the education of children belonging to his own persuasion. Lands were accordingly purchased, and upon them a school-house was built at a cost of 1300*l.*, which amount was raised by private subscription among Mr. Handcock's co-religionists. The school—a boarding-school for the children of the less wealthy members of the Society of Friends, some of the scholars being free, and others paying a small annual sum—was opened in 1774, near the town of Lisburn, the first master being John Gaugh, the author of a well-known treatise on arithmetic.

Mr. Handcock's good example was followed by the Quakers of the Queen's County, who in 1786 built a school in the town of Mountmellick, "wherein children of Friends in poor circumstances dwelled, and were lodged, clothed, and instructed in the usual branches of learning, and in the principles of truth as professed by Friends."<sup>1</sup>

In 1796 Mr. Robert Grubb, also a member of the

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Rules for the government of Schools*; Report of Royal Commission on Irish Schools, 1857-58, vol. iii. p. 202.

Society of Friends, devised a site and bequeathed funds for the erection and support of a boarding-school for girls of his own persuasion in the town of Clonmel, County Tipperary; and, through the benevolence of the same individual, another Quaker school—a school for the children of well-to-do Friends—was established in Waterford in 1798.

The history of those Quaker institutions, from the time of their commencement down to the present day, may briefly be summed up in the following words of the Royal Commissioners of 1857-58.

“The Friends’ schools are remarkable for neatness, order, cleanliness, economy, and attention to health, which prevail in them; for the business-like management of the trust funds, the judicious expenditure of the income, and the zealous and efficient nature of the local supervision exercised by the members of the community.” The Royal Commissioners add, “The graduation of charges in proportion to the means of the parent indicates a kind and watchful care in securing the greatest benefit from the endowment to those most in need of receiving it.”<sup>2</sup>

Since 1858 the school at Clonmel has been discontinued. The number of schools in existence at the present time are as follows:—

	Pupils.
1. Lisburn . . . . .	54
2. Waterford . . . . .	48 <sup>3</sup>
3. Mountmellick . . . . .	38
4. Brookfield . . . . .	56

Mr. Moore reported the condition of all these schools as “highly satisfactory.”<sup>4</sup>

The next Nonconformist educational enterprise to be noticed in order of time is the Belfast Academy. In 1785, the Presbyterians of Belfast raised, by way of

<sup>2</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1857-58, p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> 15 of the number were Protestants, 1 being an Episcopalian, and 1 a Methodist.

<sup>4</sup> Report of Endowed School Commission, 1879-80.



local subscriptions, considerable sums of money for the purpose of founding a great intermediate school for the benefit of Presbyterian children. The money being collected, it was all spent in purchasing a site and erecting a building, so that nothing was left for maintaining and working the school when built. An endowment had been expected from Parliament, but Parliament disappointed the too sanguine expectations of the hopeful Presbyterians, who were apparently unwilling to act upon the principle of the Quakers, and to dispense altogether with State aid, and rely upon their own individual resources.

For a short time the patrons and trustees in whom the school-property was vested attended to the welfare of the institution, and pupils came gradually in; but in 1792 they grew remiss, and "from that date suffered many years to elapse without holding a single meeting." The result was, that by the end of 1822 the Academy had fallen into a very sad condition. "The classes for the higher sciences were discontinued, the school-building had become decayed; and for want of a permanent fund for repairs part of the school-property had to be sold to meet the deficiency, and the remainder was burdened with a debt of 700*l*." <sup>5</sup>

After 1822, attempts were made at various times to procure money, by voluntary subscription or otherwise, for placing the Academy in an efficient state, but without success. The Royal Commissioners of 1857-58 described the state of the institution at the time of their investigations thus: "The buildings, at present, are in a state of dilapidation which is discreditable to the enterprising town where they are situate." <sup>6</sup>

It may, however, be stated that the Assistant-Commissioner, who visited the Academy, and reported the building as "dilapidated and ill-suited to school purposes," said that the state of instruction among

<sup>5</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1857-58, p. 139.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 139.

such pupils as attended was "favourable." An attempt is, I believe, being made to revive this institution. The Commissioners of 1879-80 reported that "it was not absolutely closed," and that the school-work was carried on in two rooms temporarily erected for the purpose; the number of pupils amounting to eighteen.

In 1807-8 another effort was made by the northern Presbyterians to found a great intermediate school. For this purpose a sum of not less than 25,000*l.* was raised by voluntary contribution, 16,000*l.* of which was contributed by the inhabitants of Belfast, and 5000*l.* obtained through the patronage of the Marquis of Hastings from India; the rest being subscribed by persons in Ireland and England. As in the case of the Belfast Academy, so in that of the new enterprise, the whole of the money subscribed was expended in buildings and plant, none being left to "go on with," or as a reserve to meet contingent emergencies.

However, its promoters were not quite so unfortunate as their co-religionists of the Academy had been.

Parliament came to their aid; and they contrived, moreover, to obtain the patronage of many distinguished and influential personages, among whom, strange as the statement may seem in writing of a Presbyterian establishment, were not a few bishops.

In 1810 an Act of Parliament was passed for the incorporation and regulation of this institution. By this Act his Grace the Lord Primate, the Marquess of Donegal, the Marquess of Downshire, the Bishop of Down and Connor, the Bishop of Dromore, and upwards of seventy of the principal subscribers by name, were constituted a corporation, and empowered to take land, at a rental, however, which should not exceed the sum of 2500*l.* per annum.

The proprietors for the time being, or any twenty-one of them, were enabled to make bye-laws for the government of the institution, subject to the approbation of the Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council of



Ireland, and for the election of a president, vice-president, managers, visitors, secretary, and auditors.

In addition to the appointment of eight visitors, who were to be elected, it was provided that the Primate of all Ireland for the time being, the Marquess of Donegal, and the Marquesses of Donegal in succession; the Bishop of Dromore, and his successors; the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin; the Moderator of the Synod of the General Assembly of Ulster; the representatives of Belfast, and of the counties of Down and Antrim in Parliament; and the Sovereign<sup>7</sup> of Belfast,—should be visitors of the institution, with powers, authority, and jurisdiction, co-extensive with those of the eight elective visitors.

Thus was the Belfast Academical Institution founded. It was opened in 1814, and for the next three years received from Parliament an annual grant of 1500*l*.

The religious principles on which the Society was based were non-sectarian.

It was stated in the inaugural address that the managers, in their choice of teachers, and the admission of pupils, would be perfectly unbiassed by religious distinctions; for, said the address, “of nothing are the Boards more desirous than that pupils of all religious denominations should communicate by frequent and friendly intercourse in the common business of education; by which means a new turn might be given to the national character and habits, and all the children of Ireland should know and love each other.”<sup>8</sup>

The institution was divided into two branches, comprising a collegiate and a school department. The first was under the direction of nine professors, representing the following faculties:—mathematics, logic and belles lettres, moral philosophy, natural philosophy, Latin and Greek, Hebrew, anatomy and physiology, divinity, and Church history; in connexion

<sup>7</sup> The chief municipal officer.

<sup>8</sup> Inaugural Address of Belfast Academical Institution, as quoted in Fourth Report of Royal Commission on Irish Education, 1826, p. 7.

with the second, five schools, under an equal number of masters, were opened for instruction in (1) classics, (2) English, (3) mathematics, (4) writing, and (5) French.

The nine professors formed a Board of Faculty, whose business it was to superintend the literary and moral concerns of the collegiate department, each professor being in his turn elected president for one year.

In the school department the five masters formed a similar board, called the Board of Masters, and were entrusted with similar powers.

In case of any differences arising, either in the Board of Faculty or the Board of Masters, the question was to be submitted to the Joint Boards of Managers and Visitors (whose authority was paramount), especially summoned for that purpose.

From 1814 up to 1830 the Belfast Academical Institution seems to have prospered.

Professors and masters of the highest qualifications were appointed to the respective departments, and an honest and a successful effort appears, upon the whole, to have been made to conduct the institution in accordance with the non-sectarian and liberal principles on which it was based, *pace* that all the professors except one, and all the masters except two, were Presbyterians.

However, essentially Presbyterian as the management was, no attempt appears to have been made to interfere with the religious convictions of the Catholic and Church of England students who attended either the college or the schools.<sup>9</sup> I think the evidence of Dr. Crolly, the Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, is worth quoting on this subject.

“Can you inform us,” Dr. Crolly was asked by the Royal Commissioners of 1825-27, “whether at present there are any young men of the Roman Catholic

<sup>9</sup> Evidence of the Catholic and Church of England Bishops of Down and Connor, Appendix 29 of Fourth Report of Commission on Irish education, 1825-27.



persuasion attending the institution?" He answered, "A considerable number . . . and I know there was one candidate for Holy Orders, whom I have sent to the College of Maynooth from that institution."

The examination was continued thus:—

Q. We should wish particularly for your opinion as to whether there is any objection on your part to young men who are ultimately to be sent to Maynooth, receiving education in the first instance at the Belfast Institution?—A. There is no objection on my part.

Q. Is there any practical danger of their religious principles being interfered with?—A. I do not think there is.

Q. Have you ever heard it made a subject of complaint from any Roman Catholic that the attendance of Roman Catholics at the institution was attended with any danger to their faith?—A. I have never heard of any complaint of the kind.

\* \* \* \* \*

Q. Are you personally acquainted with several of the professors?—A. Yes; with all of them.

Q. Have any of those persons ever conducted themselves in any way offensively towards persons of the Roman Catholic community?—A. No; quite the contrary. Some of the Protestants requested that I would provide copies of a Catholic version of the Scriptures, for the use of their Roman Catholic pupils; I think they were ministers of the Presbyterian Church; I believe that they paid a proper and respectful attention to the religious principles of their Catholic scholars.

Q. In what manner did you act upon their request?—A. I complied with it immediately.

Q. Did you supply copies of the Roman Catholic version of the Scriptures to those boys?—A. Yes; all the boys belonging to my congregation who attend the institution have the Roman Catholic version of the Sacred Scriptures. I provided a very cheap edition some time ago, and have now a stereotype edition of the same work.

Q. With notes to it?—A. Yes; I did not feel myself at liberty to make any alteration.

Q. Was a considerable edition printed of it?—A. A great number; I have disposed of eight thousand copies, through the assistance of a bookseller who is a Protestant himself."

In conclusion Dr. Crolly was asked, "In general do you think it desirable or otherwise that Roman

Catholics should mix with Protestants in general education where proper guards are taken for the integrity of their religious principles?" He replied, "I think it must be an effectual means of suppressing the spirit of party which has unfortunately prevailed in this country, particularly if proper precautions were taken against any undue influence or preponderating powers on one side or the other."

"We understand you as being favourable to the system of united education as tending to extinguish party animosities, and generating kindly feelings?" "That is my opinion."<sup>1</sup> Thus it will be seen that Dr. Crolly was favourably disposed towards the Belfast Academical Institution—pleased alike with the principles on which it was founded, and the manner in which it was worked.

Unfortunately the Synod of Ulster did not regard the institution in quite so favourable a light as Dr. Crolly did.

In 1824 differences arose between the Synod and the Board of Faculty of the Collegiate Department, which terminated about 1830 in a manner prejudicial to the welfare of the Academical Institution. It will be necessary to state how those differences arose. It should be understood, that the Presbyterians of Ireland are divided into four principal bodies, viz. the Synod of Ulster, the Seceding Synod, the Presbytery of Antrim, and the Synod of Munster. Of these the oldest and most important body would seem to be the Synod of Ulster. In 1825 it comprised fifteen presbyteries and about 202 ministers. Next to the Synod of Ulster in importance comes the Seceding Synod, which, at the same date, comprised 10 presbyteries and 108 ministers. The congregations comprising the Seceding Synod separated, or rather were forced to separate, from the Synod of Ulster in 1721 on a question of discipline. The question was this.

<sup>1</sup> See Fourth Report of Royal Commission on Irish Education, 1826, Appendix 29, p. 180.



The majority of the members of the Synod of Ulster expressed their adherence to the principle, established in Scotland by Principal Robertson, that in appointments to the ministry the presbyteries should ordain whatever persons the patron of the living presented, regardless of the wishes or votes of the congregations. The minority, on the other hand, determined to stand by the older practice, which gave to the congregations a right to veto the nomination of the patron. No mode of settling the differences which had thus arisen having been arrived at, the minority were compelled to withdraw from the Synod, and so doing, formed themselves into a new body, corresponding to the Secession Church of Scotland, and called the Seceding Synod. Between the Synod of Ulster and the Seceding Synod, there was another matter of difference deserving of notice. It was this. The Synod of Ulster obliged its candidates for the ministry either to sign the Westminster Confession of Faith, or to state distinctly the points on which they objected to it. The Seceding Synod, on the other hand, compelled its candidates to sign the Confession peremptorily. It may be added that at the time to which I am now referring there were about thirty-five ministers in the Synod of Ulster who professed Arian principles. But in the ministry of the Seceding Synod there were no Arians.

The congregations composing the Presbytery of Antrim were at one time comprised within the Synod of Ulster, but were obliged to withdraw from it in 1726 on account of their Arian predilections. In 1825 this body consisted of ten ministers, the majority of whom were Arians. The Synod of Munster comprised the same number of congregations and ministers as the Presbytery of Antrim, and was like it Arian in doctrine.

At the time of the opening of the Academical Institution, its promoters were desirous of establishing a close connexion between it and the Presbyterian

Church, and for this reason they invited the Synod of Ulster to found a professorship of divinity and Hebrew in the collegiate department; which the Synod did. A similar invitation was sent by the institution to the Seceding Synod, and similarly responded to. The other Presbyterian bodies did not found (and were apparently not invited to found) any such professorships; and their divinity students attended the lectures of the professors appointed by the Seceding Synod and that of Ulster.

For some time the arrangements thus made worked smoothly and well. Students destined for the Presbyterian ministry, instead of being obliged, as had hitherto been the case, to pursue their studies under many disadvantages and inconveniences in Scotch or foreign colleges, obtained at their own doors the benefits of an excellent education and training. So matters progressed until 1823, when the attention of the Seceding Synod was directed to the alleged prevalence of Arian influences and principles in the institution. The question thus raised was discussed at the usual annual meeting of the Synod in that year, when a motion in the following terms was made and unanimously carried:—"We deeply regret the introduction of professors reputed to be of Arian principles into the Institution, which principles we strongly detest." Having adopted this resolution the Seceding Synod seem for the rest to have let the matter drop, feeling apparently, on reflection, that there was practically no need for alarm. However, the Synod of Ulster, whose attention had also been drawn to the subject, took a different view of the situation.

At this time the leading men in the Synod of Ulster were Dr. Montgomery, Mr. Carlile, and Dr. Cooke. The two first were men of liberal views, but suspected of a leaning towards Arianism. The latter was a very able, honest man who held narrow and intolerant views. All three were favourably disposed



towards the Academical Institution, as they preferred that students intended for the ministry, as well indeed as Presbyterian youths generally, should be instructed at home.

When the charge of Arianism was brought against the Academical Institution, Dr. Montgomery and Mr. Carlile were inclined to regard the matter lightly. They seem to have felt that there were little or no grounds for the charge, and that the raising of any discussions on the subject might lead to controversies calculated to injuriously affect the welfare of the institution. Dr. Cooke, however, looked at the question more seriously. He thought there were good grounds for the charge, and that, in fact, the institution was rapidly becoming a "seminary of Arianism." So thinking, he deemed it right to advise the taking of steps for protecting the faith of the orthodox Presbyterian students, both in the college and the schools; and, mainly at his instigation, the following protective measure was proposed by the Synod: that a committee consisting of members of that body should be appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the moral fitness of every candidate for any of the professorial chairs; that the Board of Faculty should be required to forward to the committee the recommendatory testimonials and qualifying certificates of the candidate, and all other particulars respecting him; that the committee should then decide whether the candidate was a desirable one or not; and that their decision should be of paramount weight in determining the choice of the Board of Faculty.

The practical effect of these proposals was simply to give the Synod a right of veto in the election of all candidates for professorial chairs in the college.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Cooke in his evidence before the Royal Commissioners of 1826 said "that if he had contemplated the introduction of so many Arian professors into the institution, he and his friends would never have connected themselves with it. Though the institution was at its opening declared to be open to all, still," said Dr. Cooke, "we [i.e.

Board was, not unnaturally, unwilling to invest the Synod with such powers. The college would, they felt, be to all intents and purposes placed under the almost absolute control of the synod, a concession to which other Presbyterian bodies might very reasonably object.

The Moderator of the Synod, the Board said, had a vote in the election of professors, and could, besides, exercise his influence in bringing about the rejection of any candidate to whose appointment he was opposed. They were willing that the Synod should have absolute power in the appointment of the professors of divinity and history, but beyond this they were not disposed to make any further concessions. Ultimately, after some correspondence had passed between the two bodies on the subject, a compromise to the following effect was arrived at:—

It was agreed that the Synod should have absolute power in the election of one professor of divinity and history; that in the case of other professors the demands of the Synod should be complied with to the extent that the certificates of qualification should be forwarded to their committee, and that their views should be respectfully and carefully considered, but that the election of candidates should finally be determined by the votes of the members of the Institution, however much those votes might be opposed to the sentiments and desires of the Synod or the committee. Another condition on which the Synod insisted was agreed to, viz. that no member of any denomination holding a pastoral charge should be appointed to any of the professorial chairs—ecclesiastical or lay. The object of this latter condition was to prevent the appointment of clerical professors, who, though they might refrain from teaching unorthodox doctrines in the college,

the Synod of Ulster] naturally expected our approbation would always be an object in elections.”—Dr. Cooke’s Evidence, Fourth Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1826, Appendix 24, p. 158.



might not be equally circumspect in preaching to their flocks outside.

With this compromise the differences between the Synod and the Board of Faculty were for a time arranged; but the affairs of the college continued to be carried on after it had been arrived at much as they had been carried on before; that is to say, the management of the department remained practically in the hands of men holding Arian views.

One of the four vice-presidents was an Arian; several of the managers and visitors were Arians. The professor of Greek and Latin, the professor of Hebrew, and head-master of the classical school, the lecturer on elocution, and the master of the English school, were all Arians.<sup>3</sup>

This condition of things—so obnoxious to the majority in the Synod of Ulster—seems to have been purely accidental. The best men who came were appointed, and the best men happened to be Arians. That those men used their positions in the college to disseminate amongst the students their peculiar religious views—and this was the gravamen of the charge brought against them by the Synod—I do not think there is sufficient evidence to prove. In fact the weight of evidence is the other way; it shows that whatever the professors thought on the subject of Arianism, they kept their opinions to themselves so far as the students under their charge were concerned. We have the evidence of both the Catholic and Protestant Bishops of Down and Connor testifying to the fair and liberal spirit in which the professors discharged their duties, and to their non-interference with the religious convictions of Catholic and Church of England students.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Cooke, however, and those members of the Synod who were of his mind, appear to have felt that, apart from the question whether

<sup>3</sup> Fourth Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1826, p. 19. See also evidence of Dr. Cooke, Appendix 24, p. 152.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Arian doctrines were at the moment being actively propagated or not, considerable danger to orthodox religion must eventually arise in an establishment governed chiefly by Arian heads. Anyhow, he was resolved that as the Institution was likely to remain under Arian control he would no longer support it, and, furthermore, he was determined to exert his influence in inducing the Synod of Ulster to follow his example. Events soon came about which made him master of the situation.

In 1830 a dispute arose in the Synod, upon subjects unconnected with the Institution, and which related purely to the position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, between Dr. Cooke and Dr. Montgomery. The result of the controversy that followed was that Dr. Montgomery and his supporters—viz. the party in the Synod which was most favourably disposed towards the existing management of the Academical Institution—were obliged to withdraw from the former body, leaving Dr. Cooke in a position of supreme command in its councils.<sup>5</sup> The Synod soon afterwards severed itself from the collegiate department, and ultimately founded a separate theological college, for which they were fortunate enough to obtain a Parliamentary grant. The collegiate department, (which suffered very much by the action of the Synod of Ulster,) continued also in receipt of a Parliamentary grant until the opening of the Queen's College in Belfast in 1849. This grant was then withdrawn, whereupon the department ceased to exist.

The schools, which, as well as the college, had been adversely affected by the opposition of the Synod of Ulster, remained in an unsatisfactory state between the years 1830 and 1849; in the latter year, however, they

<sup>5</sup> The members who separated themselves from the Synod of Ulster, in consequence of this controversy, resolved themselves into a new body, called Non-Subscribing Presbyterians. The followers of Dr. Cooke, that is to say, the great majority of the members of the Synod, thenceforth adopted the title of the General Assembly.



improved—under the patronage of the Queen's College—but have fallen away since, mainly in consequence of the springing up of denominational schools. For instance, the Catholics have now their own college, the Methodists theirs, and recently a Church of England school has been founded.

In 1878-81 there were on the rolls of the Academical Schools 230 pupils, whose "answering in various subjects" Mr. Mahaffy reported "excellent."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> On the subject of the Belfast Academical Institution, see Reports and Evidence, Royal Commissioners, Irish Education, 1825-27, 1854-58, and 1878-81.

## CHAPTER V.

## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

FROM the time of Elizabeth up to 1782 the Irish Catholics were, save during a brief period in the reign of James II., beaten utterly to the ground. I do not know that I can give a better picture of their state in the middle of the eighteenth century than by quoting the words uttered in 1758 by an Irish judge in his judicial capacity. A young Catholic lady who had been pressed by her Protestant friends to conform to the Established religion, took refuge from their importunities in the house of a Mr. Saul, who braved the law, and sheltered her. For so doing Mr. Saul was prosecuted, and on the occasion of his prosecution, the judge, addressing him, said that "the laws did not presume a Papist to exist in the kingdom, nor could they breathe without the connivance of government."<sup>1</sup> A long disquisition on the penal code—which would be foreign to the present work—could not, I think, convey to the reader's mind a more accurate picture of the state of the Papists in the eighteenth century than this very pithy sentence does. In such a condition of affairs I need hardly state that there were no Catholic schools worthy of the name from Elizabeth's time until the relaxation of the penal laws.

Prior to the reign of William and Anne one of

<sup>1</sup> "Past and Present Policy of England towards Ireland," p. 81, supposed to be written by Charles Greville (London, Moxon, 1845). Lord Melbourne referred to this case in the House of Lords in 1837.



four courses had been usually resorted to by Irish Catholics for educational purposes. Those who were rich enough sent their children abroad; others furtively sought instruction from fugitive priests or laymen on the roadsides, by the hedgeways, and in the mountain-passes. Many assembled at a neighbouring gentleman's house, where a tutor was engaged to teach the children of the family, and whose services were freely given, and eagerly accepted by the youth of the district. A few attended such of the Protestant government schools as offered some guarantees (as, for instance, the appointment of Catholic teachers) that their religious convictions would not be tampered with. But, after the Revolution government resolved to make the resort to any one of these expedients impracticable in the future. One of two alternatives was thenceforth to be presented to the Irish Catholics, viz. they must enter the Protestant schools to be educated as Protestants, or remain in ignorance. It was decreed by Parliament that no Catholic should, under heavy penalties, go abroad himself, or send another abroad, to be educated, or in any wise aid or assist in the maintenance of foreign educational establishments or of those who had gone to them. At home no Catholic was to be permitted to keep a school himself, or to instruct in private houses any children other than the children of such houses. Finally, without risking the penalties of high treason for the second offence, no Catholic could act as usher or teacher in any Protestant schools in the country.<sup>2</sup> In order that "no pretence" might be

<sup>2</sup> The statutes referred to in the text were 7 William III. cap. 4, 8 Anne, cap. 38, secs. 21, 22. The first [statute] having recited that "many subjects of this kingdom [Ireland]" had been accustomed to send their children, and those entrusted to their care, to "France, Spain, and other foreign parts, to be educated, instructed and brought up, to the damage of the established religion, and the loss of their allegiance to the kings and queens of the realm," provided, to use the language of the marginal note, that (sec. 2) "he who goes himself or sends any other beyond the seas to be trained up in Popery,"

given to Papists for saying that there were not sufficient educational establishments in the country for

or "conveys or sends over money for their maintenance, or as charity for relief of religious houses," and being convicted thereof, shall be "disabled to sue in law or equity, or to be guardian, executor or administrator, or take a legacy or deed of gift, or bear office, and shall [besides] forfeit goods and lands for life." Sec. 9, having recited the mischiefs of tolerating Popish school-masters, which was "one great reason of the natives of this kingdom continuing ignorant of the principles of the true religion," and being strangers to the Scriptures, and "neglecting to conform themselves to the laws," provided that no Papist should teach "school publicly, or in private houses, except children of the family," subject to a penalty of 20*l.*, and three months' imprisonment. The 10th section of this Act provided that, "to the intent that no pretence be made or used, that there are not sufficient numbers of schools in this realm to instruct and reform the youth thereof in the English language and other literature, be it further enacted that one Act of Parliament made in the reign of the late King Henry VIII., called *an Act for the English order, habit and language*, whereby it is, among other things, enacted and provided that every incumbent of each parish within this kingdom shall keep or cause to be kept, within the place, territory or parish where he shall have rule, &c., a school to learn English; and also one other Act of the reign of the late Queen Elizabeth, entitled, *an Act for the erection of Free Schools*, wherein it is enacted and provided that a public Latin free school shall be constantly maintained and kept within each diocese in this kingdom, which have generally been maintained and kept, but have not had the desired effect, by reason of Irish Popish schools being too much connived at; and all other acts and statutes now in force in this realm concerning schools shall from henceforth be strictly observed and put in execution, according to the intent and design, and for the more effectual doing thereof the justices of his Majesty's Court of King's Bench each term, and the judges of assize in their respective circuits, and the justices of the peace in general sessions of peace, are required to give this and the said former Acts in charge from time to time to the several grand juries to be then empanelled and charged, and to be very circumspect in seeing the same put in due execution." The 16th section of the 8 Anne, cap. 3, having recited that the 9th section of the Act of William had proved ineffectual, provided that "whatever person of the Popish religion shall publicly teach school, or instruct youth in learning in any private house within this realm, or shall be entertained to instruct youth in learning as usher, under-master, or assistant, by any Protestant school-master, shall be esteemed and taken as a Popish clergyman, to be prosecuted as such, and to incur such pains, penalties, and forfeitures as any Popish regular convict is liable unto by the laws and statutes of this



their needs, it was provided that additional means should be taken to render the schools of Henry and Elizabeth more successful than they had hitherto proved.

These statutes were effective in excluding Catholic assistant-teachers and pupils from the Erasmus Smith schools and kindred institutions; but they were not effective in the accomplishment of their main object, namely, the destruction of the faith and nationality of the Irish people. They shrank *en masse* now more than ever from English educational establishments, and resorted to every expedient in their endeavours to evade or brave the laws which proscribed their religion and took away their liberties. Many a time, in those dark days, the smuggling craft which frequented the Irish southern coasts, carried as part of their freight, over the seas Irish youths, who went to be "educated and brought up" in the Popish seminaries scattered throughout the Catholic countries of Europe. At home Catholic priests risked life and limb to stand by faith and fatherland; often wandering through the country, sometimes disguised in the garb of herds, tending the flocks of Catholic farmers in the day, and, when evening came, seated by the fireside under the shelter of some friendly and sympathetic roof, teaching the peasants of the surrounding neighbourhood to read, write, spell, and, perchance, telling them—what they were ready enough to believe, and had too much reason for believing—that Rome was their friend, and England their enemy. Coercion had done its work. At no period since the landing of the Normans down to our own times had the seeds of disaffection been so plentifully sown in Ireland as during the reigns of William III. and Anne; and we are all even now reaping the bountiful harvest

realm." [The penalties which Popish priests incurred were imprisonment and transportation for entering into or residing within the realm after a certain day, while a second offence of this kind was punished as high treason.]

which sprang from them. The history of the Revolution, which to Englishmen brings back glorious and happy memories, still, after the lapse of centuries, only stirs up bitter and hateful recollections in the Irish mind. This fact ought to be remembered by those who ask, why should not Ireland be to England as Yorkshire is? The reason is plain. England and Yorkshire have in the main a common history, Ireland and England have not.

In 1781 the first step towards the relaxation of the restrictive laws, which for ninety years had been imposed upon Irish Catholics with reference to the subject of education, was taken by Parliament. An Act<sup>3</sup> was then passed, which, having recited that several of the laws in force relative to the education of Papists were too severe, and moreover had not produced the desired effect, repealed so much of the statutes of William and Anne as prohibited Catholics from teaching in schools. But this partial repeal of the obnoxious statutes was accompanied by limitations and restrictions which deprived the measure of all grace, and rendered it, in effect, worthless; for it was provided that no Catholic should be permitted to teach or keep school without having previously obtained the licence of the ordinary, that is to say of the Protestant Bishop of the diocese; and that licence might at any moment be arbitrarily recalled.

The Catholics do not seem to have used this statute to any extent; a matter of not much surprise. Indeed, considering the character of the times, it would have been an act of questionable wisdom on their part to have erected schools which were to be placed practically under the control of the Protestant Bishop of the diocese. The measure of 1781 remained accordingly a dead letter.

In 1785 John Howard, as we have already seen, visited Ireland, and revealed the scandals of the Charter schools. Having shown how badly the existing systems

<sup>3</sup> 21 and 22 George III. cap. 62.



worked, the great philanthropist gave his own views on the method on which educational establishments in Ireland ought to be conducted. "I hope," he says, "I shall not be thought, as a Protestant dissenter, indifferent to the Protestant cause, when I express my wish that these [religious] distinctions [between Catholic and Protestant] were less regarded in bestowing the advantages of education, and that the increase of Protestantism were chiefly trusted to the dissemination of knowledge and sound morals."<sup>4</sup> The writings and suggestions of Howard led to several discussions, both in and out of Parliament, on the whole question of education, and finally, in 1788, a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the subject. Before this committee, as we know, the statements of Howard were substantiated, and *the unsoundness of the existing systems* exposed. The Parliamentary investigations then initiated were followed by another important step—the appointment of commissioners to inquire into and report upon the condition of all the schools then in receipt of State aid. The report made by the commissioners in 1791 condemned the State seminaries, confirmed Howard's charges, and practically adopted his suggestions in favour of mixed education, and the dissemination of knowledge without proselytism. "It is our opinion," say the commissioners, "that the children of Roman Catholics and Protestants should be admitted indiscriminately into the schools; and that the clergy of each persuasion should attend for the purpose of instructing the children in their respective communions in the principles of religion."<sup>5</sup> The commissioners further proposed that a Board of Control should be formed, with the power of directing from time to time the plans of education to be pursued in schools on public and private foundations, with ample facilities

<sup>4</sup> Howard, "Account of Lazarettos in Europe," &c., p. 119.

<sup>5</sup> Report of Commissioners of 1791, as quoted in Report of Royal Commissioners of 1854-58, p. 18.

for insuring that such directions should be carried out, and that the general management of the schools should be carefully superintended. Finally, they said, that no distinction should be made in any of the schools between scholars of different religious persuasions. The labours of this commission bore some fruit.

In 1792 an Act was passed removing all the restrictions which had been imposed upon Catholics with reference to the subject of education, thus placing them, so far, on a level with their Protestant fellow-countrymen,<sup>6</sup> always excepting that State endowments were, save in the single case of Maynooth, wholly reserved for Protestant schools and colleges. The rights conferred by this Act were quickly exercised.

In 1793 a Catholic college was founded in Carlow by Dr. O'Keefe, the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. This college was divided into two departments, one department for the instruction of students intended for the ministry, and the other for lay pupils. The lay department of Carlow College has always enjoyed an excellent reputation as an intermediate school, and is to-day a flourishing institution.

In 1795 Maynooth College, entirely devoted to the education of students intended for the priesthood, was established and endowed by Parliament.

Finally, in 1802, a system of primary schools was founded by the Christian Brothers. The Christian Brothers, it may be stated, compose, not a monastic order, as is sometimes thought, but a congregation united by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, to superiors. In addition, they take a vow to teach children gratuitously during their lives. Mr. Rice, the superior of this congregation, submitted to Pope Pius VI. a plan for the education of the Irish poor, and the Pope approving it, a number of schools were quickly opened for the instruction of "poor Irish boys." With reference to the principles on

<sup>6</sup> 32 George III. cap. 12.



which these schools have been based, and the manner in which they have been worked, I cannot, I think, do better than place before my readers the opinions of the Royal Commissioners of 1854-58 and 1878-81.

The knowledge communicated in these schools [say the former] embraces not only reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography and book-keeping, but also an acquaintance with such branches of mathematical science as are suited to the tastes and talents of the pupils, and to the stations in life they are destined to occupy. Geometry, mensuration, drawing and mechanics, become special objects of attention. As to the manner of communicating knowledge, the most approved methods have been carefully reduced to practice. But it is to the communication of religious knowledge that this institution is chiefly devoted. To this object the members direct their main energies. The teachers are all under religious obligations; they are in the first instance carefully selected and trained, and they are placed under a strict system of organization and discipline.<sup>7</sup>

The assistant-commissioners (of 1854-58), who held a personal inspection of the schools, speak of them thus :—

MR. CRAWFORD,—The most efficient schools in my opinion are those managed by the community of Christian Brothers; and I attribute this efficiency to the excellence of their system, the training of teachers, and their zeal in the cause of education.

MR. PENNEFATHER,—In the school under the management of the community of the Christian Brothers, which I was directed to visit, I found the teaching efficient, and the masters zealously devoted to their work.

DR. McBLAIN,—I was much impressed with the general aspect presented by these schools, and particularly with their discipline and order, combined with the cheerfulness and docility of the pupils. The boys educated in the Christian Brothers' schools have in general attained an unusual degree of proficiency in the different branches of learning in which they are instructed. The superiority of these schools is, doubtless, in a great measure to be ascribed to the extraordinary personal influence exerted by the teachers over the pupils—an influence based on the distinction that these teachers have devoted their lives to the cause of education, for no private

<sup>7</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Endowed Schools, Ireland 1854-58, p. 131.

or personal gain or reward, but solely in discharge of a sacred and self-imposed duty. In addition to this cause, the Christian Brothers who teach in the schools appear to have been well-trained for the business of instruction; not merely that they are themselves scholars, but that they have acquired a great aptitude in the art of teaching, and no ordinary skill in devising the most efficient method for the organization and discipline of these schools.<sup>8</sup>

In 1881 there were 170 Christian Brothers' schools in Ireland, attended by 31,614 pupils, of whom 31,596 were Catholics, 15 Protestant Episcopalians, and 2 Methodists; there was 1 Presbyterian pupil.<sup>9</sup>

As to the state of efficiency of these schools, the Royal Commissioners of 1878-81 say, "While the Brothers devoted their principal energies to elementary education, they gave advanced instruction to boys showing special abilities, and many of their pupils were thus fitted for high positions in after-life. . . . The programme of instruction, though differing in detail, was very similar to that of the National Board, where advanced subjects were taught. [Mr. Moore] found the boys, as a rule, well and intelligently instructed, especially in Euclid and algebra, which were much better taught by the Christian Brothers than in the National schools. The reading-books contained extracts of a religious nature unfitting them for use in a mixed school. The school-buildings by far were the best which Mr. Moore inspected. The Brothers seemed to have studied the science of teaching. Their abilities as teachers were of the highest order, and the discipline maintained was almost perfect."<sup>1</sup>

Calmly reviewing the whole history of Irish schools of the last century and the beginning of the present, I do not think there are any which have, upon the whole, passed so well through the ordeal of investigation as the Christian Brothers' schools, and the schools of the Quakers.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 132.

<sup>9</sup> General Report, Irish Census, 1881-82, p. 66.

<sup>1</sup> Report of Endowed Schools' Commission, 1878-81, p. 125.



## CHAPTER VI.

## KILDARE STREET SOCIETY.

FROM the days of the Tudors to the days of the Guelphs, the Ascendency party in Ireland had practically their own way on the subject of education, and indeed on every other subject, and the consequence was that the people were left in a state of woeful ignorance. Nor was this all; intense hatred of English rule, and of Protestantism, as an appendage of that rule, had been the unlooked-for result.

In 1811 there were Protestants in Ireland who not only regarded this result with regret, but strongly condemned the policy which had been instrumental in bringing it about.

Sufficient, they thought, had been done for conscience's sake in the way of attempting to worry the Irish into the Protestant religion. The alternative of Protestantism or ignorance had been, they reasoned, presented to the Catholics quite long enough. Was it just, was it wise that it should be presented any longer? Was there the slightest chance that, having held out so long, and in days when their fortunes were darker, and their hopes more overcast than now, the Irish Catholics would ultimately succumb to even the most sustained proselytizing efforts? and if they did not succumb, was their lot to be one of perpetual ignorance? It might be a cause of regret to have Catholic subjects in the kingdom, but it would be a matter of much more serious moment to have those subjects—constituting as they did the vast

majority of the Irish people—in a state of ignorance and discontent. Ignorant and discontented the Irish Catholics now were, and it was but too clear that ignorant and discontented they must remain so long as education was denied them, unless upon the condition of religious and national apostasy. The time had come, in the opinion of those Protestants when a really honest and persevering effort should be made to educate the Irish Catholics without further attempting to convert them to Protestantism. The difficulty was how to devise for this purpose a scheme with which Catholics would be content, and which Parliament might approve of and support. What the former desired was a system of denominational education. But denominational education which required the payment of Parliamentary grants for the maintenance of schools placed under exclusively Catholic control was out of the question. No English Government would listen to such a proposal. So much being clear, the only practical course, by the adoption of which the Catholic youth of the country might be effectually rescued from ignorance, pointed in the direction of a system of mixed schools from which the subject of religious instruction should be entirely eliminated.

But Irish Protestants—both Churchmen and Non-conformists—objected to the elimination of religious instruction from a course of educational training, and so far they occupied common ground with their Catholic fellow-citizens, while as to the nature of the religious instruction they differed very much. The former considered that the Bible should form the basis of every system of education, and with schools from which the Bible was excluded it was evident enough they would have nothing to do. The latter, on the other hand, believed that the Scriptural instruction on which Protestants so much insisted, meant nothing more or less than the reading of the Bible with a Protestant gloss; and to this they objected in a system of mixed education.



A compromise scheme, to meet the wishes of the Protestants, and to get over the objections of the Catholics, was suggested, viz. that the Bible should be read without any gloss—Catholic or Protestant—or, as the phrase went, “without note or comment.” This scheme was not in accordance with the religious principles held by Catholics, who believed that the placing of the Bible in the hands of the young children, varying from five to fifteen years of age, and permitting them to read it, without any guidance or instruction, would be productive of no good result. A better course, they thought, would be the separate religious instruction of the children in accordance with the principles of their respective persuasions. The point, however, was one on which the Catholics did not desire to stand out, and they were willing to consent to the proposal of the Bible being read without note or comment, provided guarantees were given that the rule would be faithfully carried out, and that the Scriptures should not be used for mere proselytizing purposes, as they hitherto had been.

These guarantees were promised, and the Protestants acquiescing, the suggested compromise was adopted. The Managing Boards of all the schools hitherto established had been exclusively composed of Protestants. The Catholics now demanded that members of their Church jointly with Protestants, should be appointed on the direction of the new schools; and this demand was conceded. Thus, all preliminary difficulties were disposed of, and eleven years after the Union, the association, at first known by the name of “The Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland,” and subsequently by that of the “Kildare Street Society,” was formed on the principles of combined moral and literary instruction, coupled with the reading of the Bible “without note or comment.”

Between 1811 and 1814-15 the Society received no grant from Parliament. But the Commissioners of

Education having reported in 1812 that the system was the only one that had the slightest chance of success amongst the Catholics, Parliament voted a grant of 6980*l.* (finally raised to 30,000*l.*) in its aid during the session of 1814-15. In 1817 the Society moved from their somewhat dilapidated quarters in School Street in the Liberties of Dublin to the more genteel locality of Kildare Street. From the date of this change of residence the history of the Kildare Street Society may be said to commence.

The exertions of the Society were mainly directed to the dissemination throughout the country of useful literary books—a requirement utterly neglected by all the preceding educational institutions—and to the maintenance of schools conducted in accordance with its principles. Referring to the books in circulation in Irish schools prior to the establishment of the Kildare Street Society, Dr. Cooke once stated that the works which formed the subject of study in the five schools through which he passed when a boy, were: “The Seven Champions of Christendom;” “The Destruction of Troy;” “Hero and Leander;” “Gesta Romanorum;” “The Seven Wise Masters;” “The Chinese Tales;” the Romance called “Parismos, and Parismenos;” “Don Beleane of Greece;” “The History of Captain Freeney, a Robber;” “Valentine and Orson;” “The Irish Rogues and Rapparees;” and “The History of Redmond O’Hanlon,” a notorious highwayman. A great many books of this class remained in circulation in the schools of Ireland so late as the Royal Commission of 1825. The following list of books in use at that date was returned to the Commissioners: “The Irish Rogues and Rapparees;” “The Life of Captain Freeney;” “The Life of Redmond O’Hanlon;” “The History of Captain Grant, a Gentleman Highwayman;” “The Feast of Love;” “The Effects of Love;” “The Economy of Beauty;” “The School of Delights;” “Nocturnal Revels;” “The Chevalier de Faublas;”



“The Monk;” “The Life of Lady Lucy;” “The Life of Moll Flanders;” “Fanny Meadows;” “The Pleasant Art of Money-Catching;” “The Devil and Doctor Faustus;” “Tristram Shandy;” “The Arabian Nights,” &c. One of the Royal Commissioners of 1825, having visited a school in the County Sligo, observed a child holding the New Testament in its hands, and sitting between two other children, one of whom was supplied with “The Forty Thieves,” and the other with “The Pleasant Art of Money-Catching,” while a fourth, at a little distance, was perusing “The Mutiny Act,” and all were reading aloud their respective volumes at the same moment.

The class-books placed in circulation by the Kildare Street Society were as follows:—“Voyages and travels in every region of the world; arts and sciences of every description connected with manufactures, mechanics, trade, and agriculture; poetry, history, rural economy, and interesting narratives; almost every species of moral instruction, views of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, illustrated in every department of natural history; historical selections from the Old Testament, and collections from the Psalms and Proverbs.” To these were added lighter books such as an improved edition of “Æsop’s Fables,” and of “Robinson Crusoe, whilst works showing the merits of vaccination, the nature of saving-banks, &c., were also in use.<sup>1</sup>

To return to the history of the Society’s progress. For some years it was worked well and fairly, and its affairs prospered. The schools opened in connexion with it were placed under the control of competent masters, and supplied with the class of books already enumerated. Faith was kept with the Catholics, and in return they zealously supported the schools. O’Connell, appreciating the sad plight in which the Catholics had been placed with reference to education,

<sup>1</sup> See Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825, pp. 43, 44.

and anxious to induce them to make use of the Kildare Street schools, became a member of the Society. Where he went, his co-religionists, even at that comparatively early period of his career, were well inclined to follow; and it was tolerably certain that while his name remained on the roll of members the Catholic youth of Ireland would frequent the Kildare Street schools. Two distinguished Protestants in whom the Catholics had much confidence were also members of the Society—the Duke of Leinster, and Lord Cloncurry. While, however, the great body of Catholics—clergy and laity—and many liberal-minded men amongst Protestants, lent their support to the Kildare Street Society, there was one individual in the country—a young priest at Maynooth—who regarded it from the outset with disfavour and distrust. This priest was Father McHale, known in later years as “John, Archbishop of Tuam.” Father McHale objected to the principles on which the Society was based, and he took this high ground: Ireland, he said, was a Catholic country, and as such the vast bulk of her people were entitled to have a system of education based upon Catholic principles. The Kildare Street Society was not thus based; it was to all intents and purposes based upon Protestant principles. The reading of the Bible “without note or comment” was a Protestant principle. Biblical instruction of this kind might be good or bad. Protestants believed it to be good, and their opinions were entitled to respect. Catholics believed it to be bad, and their opinions were entitled to respect also. Yet what was the case? The opinions of the Protestants were respected and acted upon, while the views of the Catholics, though they constituted more than three-fourths of the whole population of the country, were disregarded. If the Society were really what it pretended to be—a liberal institution for promoting the mixed education of Protestants and Catholics, without trenching upon the religious opinions and predilections of either sect—



the reading of the Bible, without note or comment, ought not to be made compulsory on Catholic children frequenting the schools, as Catholics objected to that practice. If the subject of religious teaching was to be attended to, then Catholic and Protestant children ought to be instructed separately in the tenets of their respective creeds. In this way Catholic and Protestant views would be met. But, he argued, the Society was not what it pretended to be. Fair and liberal in outward appearance, it was in reality nothing more or less than a proselytizing institution. For a time it might continue to wear the mask of unsectarianism and liberality, but sooner or later the mask would be removed, and then the Catholics would find that they had been deceived.

Though holding such views, Father McHale was, apparently, for a time resolved not to interfere with the action of the Society, or to disturb the unanimity of Catholic and liberal Protestant public opinion respecting its character, and the results which were likely to flow from its operations. He was determined at the outset to raise his voice neither for nor against the institution. But he had made up his mind silently to watch its progress, and patiently to await the fulfilment of his expectations.

Father McHale had not very long to wait before the Kildare Street Society was betrayed into conduct that afforded ample grounds of justification for his suspicions of its real aims. In an evil moment the Society connected itself with three notoriously proselytizing institutions—the London Hibernian Association; the Society for Discountenancing Vice; and the Baptist Society—going so far as actually to apply a portion of its funds to the support of the schools belonging to those most deservedly unpopular establishments. This occurred in 1820. McHale saw at a glance that the moment had come for him to strike, and he struck with promptness and vigour. In a series of letters written from Maynooth, under the



*nom de plume* of "Hieraphilos," he assailed the society in principle and detail. The mask, he said, had at last been removed, and the association stood revealed as, (what he had always known it to be,) a proselytizing institution. The public money which had been voted by Parliament for its support on the faith that the religious convictions of Catholics should not be tampered with in any of its schools, had now actually been applied to the maintenance of institutions whose unquestionable object was the upsetting of Catholicism in Ireland. Could Catholics any longer shut their eyes to the true character of the Society, and to the real objects which it had in view? McHale's letters were accompanied by events of serious moment. The Duke of Leinster, Lord Cloncurry, and O'Connell, withdrew from the association, because they felt that a departure was taken from the liberal principles on which it was originally founded. The Catholic clergy followed the lead of McHale, and were supported by O'Connell and the laity. However, backed by Parliament and supported by the Protestants—Episcopalian and Presbyterian—the Society withstood the popular assaults for nearly ten years. It then succumbed, going down in the general wreck of proselytism caused by the storm which O'Connell had raised in the great struggle for Emancipation.

Though the Kildare Street Society cannot be acquitted of the charge of proselytism brought against it by McHale and O'Connell, and subsequently by the whole body of Irish Catholics, its proselytism must not be confounded with that of the London Hibernian Society, the Society for Discountenancing Vice, and the Baptist Society. These were from the beginning essentially proselytizing institutions. They were founded for the sole purpose of Protestantizing, not educating, the Irish people. Every school in connexion with them was a proselytizing establishment, and even as such a very ill-conducted one. The Kildare Street Society, on the contrary, was, in



the first instance, honestly founded for educational, not proselytizing purposes. *Its* proselytism was an after-thought, an accidental feature—though a feature which in the end assumed unfortunate prominence.<sup>2</sup> Again, all the schools carried on in connexion with it were not proselytizing establishments. Unhappily, almost half at one time were;<sup>3</sup> but, of the remainder, many were conducted in accordance with the original principles of the Society—and, unlike the London Hibernian, and other schools of its kind, were well managed, and to a considerable extent, fulfilled the functions of good primary educational institutions. However, that half or a quarter of the schools in connexion with the Society, and in receipt of its funds, should have been tainted with proselytism was quite sufficient to justify the objections of the Catholics, and to sustain the charge of breach of trust brought by them against the Committee of Direction.

As a matter of common prudence, as well as of justice and fair play, the Kildare Street Society should have severed all connexion with the London Hibernian Society, the Society for Discountenancing Vice, and the Baptist Society, the moment McHale raised the

<sup>2</sup> “There could be no doubt that, at one time, at its first establishment, the society held out very strong hopes that it would be able to accomplish the objects for which it was constituted—namely, the promulgation of a system of general education. The Catholics, from a sense of the benefits to be derived from such a system, and with the prospect of its accomplishment, gave the society for some time zealous support; but it at last got involved with the schools of another society—the London Hibernian Society—whose avowed object was proselytism, and the result had been a failure of their efforts. . . . It was impossible not to see that the Catholics must be disposed to view their connexion with suspicion, and to withdraw their confidence from the schools of the [Kildare Street] Society.”—Mr. Frankland Lewis (one of the Royal Education Commissioners of 1825) in the House of Commons, September 9th, 1831.

<sup>3</sup> The Royal Commissioners of 1825 reported that there were 30 of the Kildare Street Society's schools in connexion with the Baptist Society; 57 in connexion with the Society for Discountenancing Vice, and 340 in connexion with the Hibernian Society.—Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825, p. 56.

standard of revolt. It should also have reformed and liberalized the constitution of the Managing Board, on which Catholics were not fairly represented. Thus, we find that, prior to the investigations of the Royal Commissioners of 1825, out of the total of thirty-one members composing the Board, there were only two Catholics;<sup>4</sup> at that time, of the eight vice-presidents of the Society, six were members of the Established Church, and only two Catholics. Neither had the appointment of subordinate officials made by the Board been satisfactory from a Catholic point of view, or fair from any point of view. Out of a total of 204 of such appointments made in 1830, 171 were Protestants and only 33 Catholics.<sup>5</sup> It will thus be seen that there were defects in the management of the institution which afforded to Catholics just cause of complaint. Had those defects been remedied, the confidence of Catholics might have been restored and the Society maintained. But no efforts were made to remedy them. Having once entered upon a career of proselytism, the Society declined to retrace its steps. Hence, the Duke of Leinster, Lord Cloncurry, and O'Connell withdrew from it. Hence it fell, and deserved to fall.

I may add that the Kildare Street Society was not at any time supported by the Dignitaries of the Established Church. The schools of the "Association for Discountenancing Vice" were preferred by them. However, it was supported by the general body of the Protestant clergy and gentry. With reference to the feelings of Presbyterians towards the Society, Dr. Cooke said that they "felt a lively interest in its operations;" that, however, they "generally wished for

<sup>4</sup> "Of the general committee," say the Royal Commissioners of 1825, "twenty-one appear to be members of the Established Church, four of the Society of Friends, two Presbyterians and two Roman Catholics. There are two vacancies."—Report, &c., p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Stanley in the House of Commons, September 9th, 1831.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. vi. p. 1257.



catechisms being taught either out of school-hours or by parents at home, but they did not object to the rule of the Society, as they considered it a fair thing to make any reasonable concessions on their parts to advance the general interests of the whole community.”<sup>6</sup>

The proportion in which the different provinces sent pupils to the schools in the years after Catholic opposition had been raised to them, was as follows:—

	Schools.	Pupils.
Ulster . . . .	1021	84,000
Leinster . . . .	247	22,000
Munster . . . .	240	16,000
Connaught . . . .	112	11,000

The gratuities given by the Society were distributed over the provinces thus:—

Ulster . . . . .	£1303
Leinster . . . . .	365
Munster . . . . .	285
Connaught . . . . .	150 <sup>7</sup>

I have now completed the task which I had set myself of giving a sketch of public instruction in Ireland prior to the establishment of the National System of Education. Reflecting upon what I have written, I cannot avoid expressing the opinion, which I believe my readers will share, that the Irish Catholics were not fairly dealt with in the matter of education up to the introduction of Mr. Stanley's scheme of 1831.

<sup>6</sup> Report of Royal Commissioners on Irish Education, 1825, p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> See Hansard, Third Series, vol. vi. p. 1252.

## CHAPTER VII.

## MR. STANLEY'S SCHEME.

ON the 9th September, 1831, Mr. Stanley, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, declared in the House of Commons that the Kildare Street Society was a failure, and that it had become necessary to establish in its stead some other system of public instruction more in harmony with the wishes and feelings of the Irish people. In 1820, when the Irish Catholics were favourably disposed towards the Kildare Street Society, Father McHale, as we have already seen, attacked it in principle and detail. Mr. Stanley now, in 1831, attacked it in principle and detail. The system, he said, was "utterly unfitted for the Irish people." It was based on principles repugnant to them, and carried out in a manner not calculated to command their confidence. A leading principle of the Society was that the Bible should be read every day in the schools, without note or comment. For Protestants, who adopted the Bible as their only rule of faith, nothing seemed fairer than this. But with Catholics, who did not admit the Scriptures as their whole rule in matters of doctrine and discipline, the case was different; and Catholic sentiment, in a country like Ireland, where five-sixths of the population were Catholic, was entitled to consideration and respect. Mr. Stanley did not wish to enter into a discussion as to whether the reading of the Bible, without note or comment, was a system of religious teaching good in itself. That was not the question before the House. The question was simply whether this



system, being obnoxious to the great majority of the Irish people, ought to be any longer forced on the country. At the same time he could not help animadverting on the unwisdom of maintaining at the public expense, and at the risk of incurring the loss of so much charity and good feeling, an educational system in which the religious teaching consisted merely of reading a chapter in the New Testament. Was there any member, Mr. Stanley continued with some warmth, who could call such an education a religious education? And yet the efforts of the Kildare Street Society with reference to religious instruction, were limited to this practice. He would ask any sincere Christian whether he believed that all that was requisite for the religious education of a child was to make him read a chapter of the Bible, without any explanation of it further than what his own imperfect mind might afford? Was there any Protestant father in the empire who would dream of putting a child of five years old down to the Bible and leaving him to draw his own conclusions? In this matter of religious instruction, he thought that honorable members would do well to take a lesson from the evidence given by Dr. Doyle, the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, before the Select Committee of the House appointed in 1830 to inquire into the state of the poor in Ireland. Mr. Stanley felt that he could not better express his own views upon this subject than by quoting the remarks of Dr. Doyle; and this he accordingly proceeded to do:—

Are you acquainted [Dr. Doyle was asked] with the system on which the Kildare Street Society carry on their schools?—Yes [he replied] tolerably well. I witnessed it as it is exemplified in my own schools every day.

Q. In the schools which are managed under your superintendence and conducted upon your rules, do you consider their system to be applicable to the education of both Protestants and Catholics equally?—A. Their system of course is not, because their rule excludes religious instruction, which we require as an essential part of education. Then, as a substitute

for that religious instruction, their system requires the reading of the sacred Scriptures by the children who have acquired suitable proficiency, without note or comment. There are in that system three inconveniences as they regard us : the first is, that it excludes religious instruction in that shape and manner which we think necessary for young and tender minds, namely, catechetical instruction by way of question and answer ; and, in the second place, it is inconsistent with our notions of conveying Scriptural knowledge to give the Scriptures to a child to read, leaving him to form upon the sacred text what notion he pleases. Therefore, as their rule excludes all comment, whether oral or written, upon the Scriptures, we, who maintain that the divine revelation is to be interpreted by the Church, cannot at any time agree with them.

Q. Then your objection to that system is not to the reading of the Scriptures as such, but to the mode in which, and the discipline under which Scripture reading is given?—A. Most certainly not to the reading of the Scriptures themselves, for I prescribe that they be read in all our schools ; and the various memorials presented by the Catholic Bishops of Ireland to successive Lord-Lieutenants and various petitions presented on their behalf to Parliament, show that they have at all times wished for religious instruction as the basis of education in schools ; which religious instruction, in their opinion, should consist in part of reading the sacred Scriptures ; so that upon that subject there can be no doubt what our doctrine and discipline are. We have laboured very much to make it known to every one, and to remove the impression which unfortunately prevails generally in England, that the Catholic priesthood and prelacy were opposed to Scriptural education—than which no greater calumny was ever sought to be affixed upon the character of men.

Having condemned the principles on which the Kildare Street Society was founded as opposed to the national sentiment of the country, Mr. Stanley further directed attention to the manner in which the system was worked. It was evident, he said, that as the Catholics formed five-sixths of the population of Ireland, the masters of the schools, if fairly appointed, ought to be in the proportion of five Catholics to one Protestant. But what was the fact ? The appointments last year had been : 148 male tutors out of which



123 were Protestants, and 25 Catholics; and 56 female tutors, out of which 48 were Protestants and only 8 Catholics; or, to make a general summary, there were 204 appointments, of which 171 were Protestants and only 33 Catholics.

In fine, it was absolutely impossible, he said, that a scheme so based and worked could ever succeed among the Irish people, and it now became the duty of Parliament to frame one that would.

Mr. Stanley then expounded his plan. He proposed that the government should take a vote of 30,000*l.* (being the gross amount granted in 1830 to the Kildare Street Society and the Society for Discountenancing Vice), and that the money should be placed at the disposal of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland for educational purposes. The Lord-Lieutenant was to be empowered to constitute a Board, composed partly of Catholics and partly of Protestants, to superintend and control a system of "national education," based on the following general principles: That the schools should be open to Catholics and Protestants; that four days in the week should be devoted to moral and literary, and one day or two days to separate religious instruction. The teachers were to be appointed by the Board, and the school-books issued under their directions. In fact, the whole working of the system was to be entrusted to them, and they were to be invested with supreme power, subject to one condition; that the system was to be so managed that "even the suspicion of proselytism" should be "banished" from it, and that the "religious beliefs" of the children attending the schools should in "nowise be interfered with."

By the adoption and fair working of a scheme based on such principles, Mr. Stanley felt that relations of kindness and good fellowship would be established between Irish youth of all persuasions, and would result in the disappearance of those religious discords which had so long divided and distracted the country. In conclusion the Irish Secretary wound up a speech

characterized by many expressions of goodwill towards the Irish people, and evincing a keen appreciation of the injustice to which they had been subjected in the matter of education, by moving for a grant of 30,000*l.* in support of a system of schools for Ireland, which should, in fact as well as in theory, be national.

Mr. Stanley's speech was succeeded by a somewhat desultory discussion, in the course of which the principle of the Government proposal was supported by O'Connell and Sheil, as representing the Irish Catholics, but condemned by Mr. Shaw and Mr. James G. Gordon, the champions of the Ascendency party.<sup>1</sup>

O'Connell looked upon the proposed change as the commencement of a new era in Ireland, and sincerely hoped that the promises which were made would be fully realized. He said of Mr. Stanley's speech that it was distinguished by good taste, good feeling, and liberality of sentiment.

Sheil spoke to the same effect. "We thank the Government," he said, "for its determination to leave no vestige of the Kildare Street Society behind; and we will repay them with a gratitude more than commensurate to the extent of the obligation."

On the other hand, Mr. Gordon declared that the effect of the new scheme would be to "rend to the earth the noble fabric of Scriptural education" in Ireland, and he forewarned his Majesty's ministers that they had no assistance to expect from the large, influential and respectable body of men who had hitherto, at so many sacrifices, conducted the existing systems. That body, he said, would be no party to such a compromise of principles as the Government proposal involved. As for Mr. Shaw, he stoutly declared that though he would not resist the present motion, yet if ever such a grant was again proposed he would "oppose it *in toto*."

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Shaw was member for the University of Dublin, Mr. Gordon for the Borough of Dundalk.



The grant in question was ultimately agreed to without a division.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Stanley followed up his speech in the House of Commons by a letter, addressed to the Duke of Leinster, on the 31st of the ensuing October, setting forth more fully the details of the new system. In this letter he dwelt with much emphasis on the necessity of having a fairly-constituted Board. "For the success of the undertaking," he said, "much must depend upon the character of the individuals who compose the Board, and upon the security thereby afforded to the country that, while the interests of religion are not overlooked, the most scrupulous care shall be taken not to interfere with the peculiar tenets of any description of Christian pupils. To attain the first object it appears essential that the Board should be composed of men of high personal character, including exalted individuals in the Church; to attain the latter, that it should consist of individuals professing different religious opinions."<sup>3</sup>

In accordance with the terms of these directions a Board was formed consisting of individuals of "high personal character," and "professing different religious opinions."

The first Board, appointed in December, 1831, was composed of the following members:—

Anglicans—The Duke of Leinster (Chairman), Dr. Whately, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, and Dr. Sadleir.

Presbyterians—The Rev. James Carlile (of the Synod of Ulster), and Mr. Robert Holmes (of the Synod of Munster).

Catholics—Dr. Murray, Catholic Bishop of Dublin, and the Right Hon. J. A. Blake.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. vi. pp. 1249—1305.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Mr. Stanley to the Duke of Leinster. Report of Select Committee on Plan of Education, 1835-37, Ireland, Appendix 1, p. 580.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE NATIONAL BOARD AND THE SYNOD OF ULSTER.

Most people will, doubtless, think that there was not much, in either the Government scheme, or the constitution of the Board appointed to carry it out, to which the Irish Protestants could reasonably object. Their religious scruples were respected; the principle of Scriptural instruction for Protestant children was recognized, and opportunities for imparting it were afforded. In fact the only difference between the Kildare Street system and the Government plan amounted to this: in the one case the reading of the Bible, without note or comment, was made compulsory on all the pupils attending the schools; in the other it was not—in the first, Protestant opinion alone was consulted; in the second an effort was made to meet the views of all sects, and not to offend the susceptibilities of any. With reference to the Board it was, one would have thought, composed in a manner well calculated to inspire Protestant confidence. Mr. Stanley, in speaking of the Kildare Street Society, had said that in a country where five-sixths of the population were Catholics, the teachers, if fairly appointed, ought to have been in the proportion of five Catholics to one Protestant; but out of deference to Protestant opinion in Ireland he had not stood by the principle thus enunciated in forming the Board of the new schools. In its composition the proportion was that of five Protestants to two Catholics, thus apparently affording ample guarantees for the protection of Protestant interests.

Viewing the whole scheme in principle and detail,



it will, I venture to say, be generally considered that the plan ought to have commanded the support, or, at all events, disarmed the opposition of Protestants. This, however, was not the case. From the outset the Government proposal was opposed by almost the whole body of Protestants—Episcopalian and Non-conformist—in Ireland; public meetings were convened to attack it; petitions were presented to Parliament against it; resolutions condemning it were proposed in both Houses; and all this, though a disposition had been evinced both by the Government and the Board to conciliate Protestant opinion, as far as it was possible to do so consistently with the observance of the principles on which the plan had been based. Reference to the proceedings of the Board and the action of the Government will make this matter clear. Thus, in the original draft of Mr. Stanley's letter, the Board was directed to supply the schools with books for moral and literary instruction at half-price, *and books for separate religious instruction at prime cost.* This was a regulation of which the Catholics approved in its entirety; but the Protestants—especially the members of the Synod of Ulster—objected to that portion of it which I have marked in italics. The Board were called together to consider this draft, and Mr. Carlile proposed to strike out the words in italics on the ground that he felt a "conscientious scruple, as a Protestant," that "books exclusively Roman Catholic should be disseminated at the public expense." The Catholic members of the Board had no such objection to the dissemination of the Protestant books, and were desirous of retaining the whole sentence. However, out of deference to the wishes of Mr. Carlile, they ultimately consented to the excision of the italicized words, and excised these words accordingly were.<sup>1</sup> This occurred in December, 1831.

<sup>1</sup> Report of Select Committee, House of Commons, on Education [Ireland], 1835-37, pp. 9 and 42.

At the same meeting it was proposed that copies of the Scriptures, according to the Catholic and Protestant versions, should be issued at prime cost. To this proposal the Catholics agreed; but Mr. Carlile objected to the issuing of the Douay version with notes.

Mr. Carlile's objection was opposed by the Catholics, whereupon he proposed that extracts from the Bible should be prepared under the control of the Board, and used in the schools as part of the moral and literary education of the children. At first the Catholics objected to this suggestion, but they ultimately yielded, and the extracts were prepared under the superintendence of Mr. Carlile himself.

Mr. Stanley's letter also contained a paragraph to the effect that while no books for moral and literary instruction should be used in the schools, except with the sanction of the whole Board, books for separate religious instruction might be so used, *provided the approbation of the members belonging to the same religious persuasion as those for whose benefit the books were intended was obtained*. The Synod of Ulster and other Protestant denominations objected to the italicized words of this paragraph, and suggested as a modification of its terms that the consent of "any individual member" of the Board—no matter of what religious persuasion—should be deemed sufficient for the purpose. The ground of the objection of the Synod of Ulster was this: the body demurred to any one of their members being invested with control over the books of religious instruction to be used in the schools, as contrary to the principles of the Presbyterian Church; for such control invested the individual in question with "a supremacy over the Church," which was an "innovation on its constitutional principles."<sup>2</sup> The modification suggested by the

<sup>2</sup> Minutes of Evidence of Select Committee on Irish Education, 1835-37, p. 85.



Synod was, against the inclinations of the Catholics, accepted.<sup>3</sup>

Again, Mr. Stanley had directed the Board, in considering the applications made to them for the erection of schools, to favour those jointly signed by Catholics and Protestants; and so much importance did he attach to encouraging this joint action on the part of the members of the different persuasions that he added, "where applications proceed exclusively from Protestants, or exclusively from Catholics, it will be proper for the Board to make inquiry into the circumstances which lead to the absence of any names of the persuasion which do not appear." In accordance with these instructions the Board adopted the practice of sending to the persons who had signed one-sided applications a query to the following effect: "Have the clergymen of the different denominations in the neighbourhood of the school been applied to in order to obtain their signatures to this application? if not, state the cause."<sup>4</sup> The Synod of Ulster objected to this query, and insisted that the applications of its members for a grant should be considered on their own merits, apart altogether from the question whether the signatures of the ministers of other persuasions had been asked for or not. The views of the Synod were submitted to the Lord-Lieutenant, with a suggestion from the Board that, as the Presbyterians did not wish it, the query in question should not for the future be pressed upon them, and a decision was ultimately arrived at in conformity with that suggestion.<sup>5</sup>

Another matter in which the Board gave effect to

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. pp. 5—7 (80, 81).

<sup>5</sup> It was the view of Mr. Blake that the query should not be relaxed, and that none save joint applications should be granted; but Mr. Carlile, while quite appreciating the advantage of co-operation between Catholics and Protestants in the establishment of schools, deemed it wise to yield to the demands of the Synod, in order to obtain its support for the system.—Ibid. pp. 65—67, 80, 81

the views of the Synod was the following. According to Mr. Stanley's letter, the schools were to be kept open for moral and literary instruction during four days in the week ; and for separate religious instruction during one day or two days. The Synod of Ulster objected to this regulation on the ground that a sufficient provision was not made for religious teaching, and proposed that the Scriptures should be read in the schools every day. Their proposal was accepted, subject to the limitation that the reading of the Scriptures should take place either on the first or last hour of the day, in order that the hours which were devoted to moral and literary instruction, as apart from religious instruction, might not be broken in upon.

Thus it will be seen that, upon the whole, the Presbyterians had not much reason to complain of the manner in which the Government scheme was being worked. Yet they complained much.

On the 11th January, 1832, a meeting of the Synod of Ulster was held at Cookstown, when resolutions were passed condemning the system. "It is our deliberate opinion and decided conviction," so ran one of the resolutions, "that in a Christian country the Bible, unabridged and un mutilated, should form the basis of national education, as we learn from Deut. vi. 6, Psal. cxix. 9, John xvii. 7, 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15, 16 ; and consequently we cannot accede to any system [such as Mr. Stanley's was] which in the least degree interferes with the unrestricted possession and use of the Scriptures in our schools." Another resolution declared that, in the opinion of the meeting, it was "impracticable for the Legislature ever to combine the conflicting opinions, claims, and interests of Protestants and Roman Catholics, under one system of education, except by concessions of principles on the part of the Presbyterian Church." It was also suggested that in consequence of those difficulties the Government should endow no system of education, but leave every



sect to its own ways and resources.<sup>6</sup> In fine, the meeting determined to petition the House of Commons against the establishment of a system to be worked by “a Supreme Board vested with absolute and despotic power,”—a proposal which they described as “contrary to the soundest principles of political economy, and one which, by its contemplated interference with the integrity and unrestricted use of the Scriptures, was opposed to the positive declaration of the Word of God.”<sup>7</sup> This was the Presbyterian case against the National schools.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 85.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 85.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE ASCENDENCY AND THE "NATIONAL SYSTEM."

THE agitation outside of Parliament on the subject of the National Schools was followed by agitations within. On the 26th of January, 1832, Colonel Rochford, member for West Meath, presented a petition to the House of Commons from the Protestants of Street in the County West Meath against the Government plan, because "Protestant children were deprived of the use of the Bible in the schools." Sir Robert Bateson, member for Derry County, supported the petition, declaring that for the reasons stated, the Protestants of Ireland, of every sect and creed, had joined heart and hand in reprobating the new system.

While these Protestant members thus assailed the Ministerial scheme, O'Connell, representing Catholic opinion, defended it, asserting that its effect would be, not to deprive Protestant children of the use of the Bible, but to prevent the reading of the Bible being forced upon Catholics in a manner they did not like.

On the 28th of February the Earl of Roden, a leading member of the Ascendancy party in Ireland, presented to the House of Lords a petition against the system from the "officiating minister, and Protestant inhabitants of Drumlish in the County Longford; from Middleton in the County Cork; from the landlords, clergy, farmers, and others of Crossmolina, Adrigoole, Maughanaugh, and Kilfian; from the



gentry, clergy, and freeholders of the Baronies of Iffa and Offa West: from the inhabitants of Monastereven; the Presbyterian congregations of Ballykelly and Donaghmore, and from the session and congregation of Newhead." His lordship supported the petition in one of those rattling Orange speeches for which he was famous. He was, he said, one of those who held that there could be no real, sound, moral education, except it was founded upon the "unmutilated Word of God." That Holy Word, pure and unmutilated, was the only fit basis of a system of education for Ireland or any Christian country. He was addressing the fathers of families, persons who loved their children; he was addressing men who felt that the "unmutilated Word of God" was the best inheritance they could bequeath to those who came after them. That was the sentiment which animated the bosoms of two millions and a half of Irish Protestants who possessed the property and intelligence of the country—a body of men sincerely and earnestly attached to the faith and those principles for which their ancestors fought and bled. They, he reminded the House, had long possessed the "unmutilated Word of God," and they were unwilling to part with it for the purpose of serving any objects of political expediency, or trying any political experiments. It seemed to his lordship something quite shocking that a Protestant legislature should tolerate a system of education, which put Catholic children completely out of the pale of Protestant instruction. In fine, the Ascendency champion warned the Government against the course they were pursuing in favouring an unscriptural and unchristian system of education. He warned them not to bring down the wrath of God on this favoured land, by preventing the dissemination of the Scriptures. He appealed to the Bench of Bishops to preserve to the people those Scriptures for which their predecessors had suffered, and not to assist in provoking the indignation of the Almighty by the

rejection of His Word—of that Word “which maketh wise unto salvation.”

Lord Plunket replied to the speech of the Earl of Roden. It was, he asserted, a most unfounded statement that the object of the new system was to prevent the Protestants of Ireland from having access to the Bible. One day, at least, in the week was specially set apart to afford the Protestants an opportunity of reading the Bible in the schools, under the direction of their pastors, from morning until evening if they so desired; and as for the remaining four or five days, Scriptural selections were interspersed with the moral and literary instruction, and besides, on those days the children were encouraged to attend, before or after the stated school-hours, at separate religious teaching from the clergyman of their respective persuasions. As for the statement that the selections from the Bible which were ordered to be read in the schools involved “a mutilation of the Word of God,” why this was the very course proposed by the Commission of Education appointed by a Tory administration in 1812, and which was composed of three bishops, one clergyman (the Provost of Trinity College), and three laymen—all members of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland.<sup>1</sup> Lord Plunket then read some extracts from the report of the Commission, showing that the plan which they proposed was practically that which the National Board had carried out with reference to Biblical selections. Passing to the statement that the Catholic Church was opposed to the reading of the Bible, he said there “never was a greater mistake than to suppose that the Scriptures were withheld from the Roman Catholics. They were fully admitted to that valuable privilege, with the additional benefit, as he must maintain it was, of having them expounded

<sup>1</sup> They were the Archbishops of Armagh and Cashel, the Bishop of Killaloe, Provost Elrington, afterwards Bishop of Ferns; Isaac Corry, Chancellor of Exchequer under Pitt, Mr. Whitelocke, and Mr. Leslie Foster.



to them by notes and comments"—a system of which he thought the right reverend lords would approve. It must be obvious, he said, to every one, that to attain a proper Scriptural knowledge it was essential that the texts of Holy Writ should be expounded and explained, and he reminded his right reverend friends what eminent services had been rendered by Locke in his copious commentaries which had served so much to elucidate the "somewhat abstruse epistles of St. Paul." In conclusion, he asserted that the Government plan was the only workable scheme of education which could be devised for Ireland. Between it and a system of denominational education endowed by the State there was no middle course, and such a system was neither practical nor advisable.

The discussion was continued by the Archbishop of Armagh, who did not object to the principle of Biblical selections adopted by the National Board, but complained of the particular extracts in use as being unfaithful and imperfect. The Earl of Wicklow also raised his voice against the system, into the adoption of which, he said, the Government had been frightened by O'Connell. The Government, said he, had been influenced "by the roar of clamour, and had bent beneath it like a willow beneath the storm." Upon the occasion of the introduction of the scheme in the Commons, a friend of the Earl, as his lordship informed the House, was standing near O'Connell, and ventured to express, to the agitator, surprise at the course taken by Mr. Stanley in proposing such a plan: "If you knew as much as I do," said O'Connell, "you would be still more surprised. Only fourteen days before he left Ireland [Stanley] declared that he meant to support the [Kildare Street] Society." "How then," said the Earl of Wicklow's friend, "came Mr. Stanley to change?" "Oh," replied O'Connell, "we have threatened him into it." "Was this," his lordship asked, "a proper situation for the Government?" The Duke of Richmond, on the part

of Mr. Stanley, denied the statement that the Chief Secretary had been "threatened" into proposing the scheme, and described the Earl of Wicklow's attack on an "absent man" as a fair specimen of "Irish courage." The Duke of Wellington expressed his doubts of the excellence of the Government scheme, and was inclined to think that a system of denominational education would be better—a view which was not shared by the Marquess of Lansdowne and Lord Cloncurry. After a somewhat profitless and aimless discussion, Lord Roden wound up the debate by declaring that all the Government grants ought to be withdrawn from all the schools in Ireland, and that "everybody ought to be left to educate his own children after his own manner."<sup>2</sup>

So terminated the first skirmish on the subject of the new system in the House of Lords.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. x. pp. 851-91.



## CHAPTER X.

## MORE OPPOSITION.

ON the 6th of March, 1832, Mr. Gordon presented three petitions against the ministerial plan. One signed by "a nobleman, several clergymen, and a number of freeholders," all Episcopalian Protestants, in the County Tipperary; another by "twelve ministers of the Established Church, three dissenting ministers, and 250 laymen;" the third by "the minister and congregation of Port Mahon in the County Down." On the same occasion Viscount Acheson, member for Armagh County, presented a petition against the scheme from the Synod of Ulster. The presentation of these petitions was, as in the case of Lord Roden's petitions in the House of Lords, seized by the opponents of the system, as an opportunity of attack. The arguments used in the Commons were identical with those previously used in the Lords, and as in the latter place, so in the former, the opponents of the scheme were exclusively Protestants, and chiefly Irish Protestants.

The Catholic members in the House—by which I mean not only those who were Catholic in creed, but also those who represented Catholic constituencies, and generally took the Catholic side in politics—warmly supported the Government proposal.

Thus Mr. More O'Ferrall, member for Kildare, "thanked the Government for having put the system of National Education on a fair and equal footing." Henry Grattan believed that the effect of that system would be to "reconcile Catholic and Protestant, and

unite them in a lasting bond of union for the promotion of the true interests of Ireland."

Mr. Wyse, member for Tipperary, defended the scheme in an able speech. If, he said, the present plan was objectionable, the only course left to fall back upon was denominational education; and as the Catholics constituted the great majority of the Irish nation, and moreover as they were the poorest and therefore the most in need of State help, the largest proportion of the funds set apart for such a system should be given to them. "What," he asked, "would the Ascendency say to a change of this kind? They called participation, spoliation; and equality, persecution. But what would they say to a system under which the Catholics should get, as in justice they were entitled to get, the lion's share of the fund?" Mr. Wyse thought the Protestants ought to accept Mr. Stanley's scheme, and work in harmony with their Catholic fellow-countrymen.

Sheil regarded the Protestant position as unfair and untenable. The assertion that the Bible had been withheld from the children attending the schools was untrue. Episcopalian Protestants, Presbyterians, Catholics, and even Socinians, received religious instruction according to their respective creeds. The Government had not taken away the Bible. "God forbid the children of Ireland should be deprived of the Bible, for from it came light and happiness here and hereafter."

On the 12th March, 1832, the Archbishop of Armagh presented in the Lords three petitions against the "proposed system of National Education in Ireland;" the first signed by "6900 Irish Protestants of all religious denominations, including one archbishop, two bishops, and many dignitaries and highly respectable clergymen of the Established Church;" the second from the "Protestant Bishop, clergymen, and laymen of the County and City of Waterford;" the third from the "inhabitants of the parish of Boviva in the County Derry."



On the 16th March, Mr. Shaw, member for the University of Dublin, presented four petitions against the system, of which, one was signed by 4000 of "the nobility, gentry, and all the most influential men in the County Cork," and another by an "archbishop, seventeen bishops, and about 13,000 of the clergy and laymen of every Protestant denomination in Ireland."

On the 19th March, Mr. Lefroy presented similar petitions from the Archbishop and clergy of the diocese of Tuam, and the clergy of the diocese of Ardagh; the Bishop and clergy of the diocese of Elphin, and from the clergymen and inhabitants of Drumlish in the County Longford. In supporting the prayer of these petitions Mr. Lefroy declared that a "consistent Protestant government was bound to support whatever plan would be most effectual for direct proselytism."

On the 22nd March, 1832, the Earl of Wicklow took a more practical and decisive method of opposing the Government scheme than any hitherto adopted by his party. He moved that, "inasmuch as by the plan of National education established in Ireland, the Bible is practically excluded from the schools formed under the sanction of his Majesty's Government, this House cannot view this plan with approbation." A long debate ensued, in which all the old arguments as to the "exclusion" and "mutilation" of the Scriptures, and their rejection by the Catholic Church were reproduced, and discussed with heat and acrimony. The Earl of Wicklow denounced the scheme as a "base submission to the clamour of faction," passed to "please demagogues and agitators."

The Bishop of Chester characterized it as "an unhappy compromise of one of the most essential duties of a Protestant government," viz. "the extension of the Holy Scriptures to all men." The Bishop of London saw no necessity for interfering with the Kildare Street Society, and the Bishop of Exeter in an exhaustive "No Popery" speech warned the "throne"

against the fatal consequences affecting its own stability to which the adoption of the new plan might lead. "I will not," said his lordship, "be further stirred up . . . than to warn the counsellors of a gracious prince—all whose thoughts and wishes and intentions are, we know, for the good and happiness of his people—to warn them ere it be too late, while thrones are tottering and crowns are falling round us, while they themselves are reminding us—most properly reminding us—that even now God's judgments are in the earth—to warn them, I say, that He by whom kings reign may be provoked to say again what He once said to a monarch whom He had Himself placed over His own chosen people—'because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king over Israel.'" So spake the Bishop of Exeter, but he had no sooner resumed his seat than up rose the Bishop of Chichester, who, in no wise, apparently, touched by the minatory observations of his brother prelate, expressed his determination to support the Government plan, which in his opinion did not, as its opponents all averred, "exclude the Bible, or give up" Protestant principles. This view was not shared by the Bishop of Bristol, who considered the plan injurious to the Protestant religion; while the Bishop of Llandaff thought that it had been objected to in needlessly strong terms; nevertheless, as the great body of Irish Protestants were opposed to the scheme, and as the interests of that country required a united Protestant opinion, he would vote for the motion of the Earl of Wicklow.

The debate was continued by the Duke of Wellington, who hoped that his Majesty's Government would abandon the plan; by Lord Londonderry, who felt so disgusted at the scheme, as the forerunner of other and more disastrous concessions to the Irish Catholics, that he expressed sorrow for having voted for Catholic emancipation; and by Lord Roden, who saw that the "brave, noble, and devoted Protestant people" of



Ireland were about to be “annihilated” as a religious body, and that accordingly they had made up their minds to take time by the forelock, and were resolved to emigrate as soon as possible. Lord Plunket followed the hot-headed Ascendancy peer, and, in the course of a lengthy speech in defence of the Government scheme, declared that “no act which a perverted ingenuity could devise, or an unscrupulous and factious spirit call into activity, was left unexerted for the purpose of exciting and deluding the Protestant mind.” With reference to the measure: that measure, his lordship said, was intended as a middle course between extreme opinions, and those who planned it wished to have such a selection of the Scripture as would promote morality and religion, and to which neither Catholic nor Protestant could object. Moderate and rational men of all parties, he felt, ought to support the Government in their attempt to soften down long-existing prejudices.

So apparently thought the House of Lords, for the Earl of Wicklow’s motion was rejected by a decisive majority, the numbers being:—

For the motion: Content 60, Proxies 27 = 87.

Against: Non-Content 59, Proxies 66 = 125.

The Irish peers (or peers connected with Ireland) who voted with the Earl of Wicklow were: Thomond, Abercorn, Londonderry, Limerick, Digby, Roden, Clanwilliam, Maryborough, Mayo, Clancarty, Doneraile, Bagot, Courtown, the Bishop of Clogher, and the Archbishop of Armagh. Those peers connected with Ireland who supported the Government were: Lansdowne, Charlemount, Leinster, Plunket, Sligo, Clanricarde, Wellesley, Leitrim, Meath, Westmeath, Downshire, Fortescue, Granard, Dunmore, Bessborough, Athanley, Cork, Headfort, Cloncurry, Templemore, and the Bishop of Killaloe.

Hitherto the supporters of the National system had remained more or less passive. A slight change of

tactics was now initiated, and under somewhat peculiar circumstances.

A meeting had been convened by a number of the inhabitants of Dewsbury, for the purpose of condemning the Government proposal. It was, however, attended by several individuals who were favourable to the scheme. Those individuals opposed the original resolutions which were hostile to Ministers, and, raising a discussion upon the whole question of Irish education, succeeded in negating them, and in procuring the adoption of others, pledging the meeting to petition Parliament in favour of Mr. Stanley's measure.

In accordance with these latter resolutions, Lord Morpeth presented a petition to the House of Commons—the first of its kind—in favour of the National Schools, on the 28th of March, and supported its prayer in an able speech, vindicating the policy of the Government. This petition was followed, on the 2nd of April, by a petition, presented by Mr. Gordon, against the scheme from a “small but influential body of clergymen in Cork,” and on April 9th, by a petition in its favour presented by Mr. Strickland (member for Yorkshire) from 1425 persons in Liversedge in the West Riding; and on the 13th April by another petition, also in its favour, from the Presbyterians, Baptists and Independents “in and within twelve miles of London,” presented by Lord Holland. The opinions of the members of “the three denominations” about London were not shared by the members of the Provincial Synod of Fife, who, on the 7th of May, petitioned against the scheme; nor by the members of the Synod of Galloway, who petitioned against it on the 21st of the same month.

In the discussion which attended the presentation of those petitions O'Connell took part, protesting against the spirit of “canting hypocrisy” by which these “bigoted and intolerant productions” had been inspired. He was extremely sorry, he said, to



see the intelligent people of Scotland led astray upon this subject. They had a right to establish a system of education suitable to their own religious views ; but they had no right to force a system upon Ireland, unsuitable to the habits and religion of the people. The Irish might be wrong, but they sincerely believed that it was not advisable to allow children the unrestricted use of the Bible. They thought it introduced a familiarity inconsistent with the respect due to the sacred volume. Such were their opinions, and whether they were correct or incorrect, they had a right to be consulted in the education of their children, and he would put it to honourable members from Scotland whether they would allow the clergy of another creed to interfere with their clergymen, and prevent them from teaching the children of Scotland according to their own creed and method.<sup>1</sup> Nothing came of this discussion, nor indeed did anything come of the others.

The first petition from Ireland in favour of the Government plan, was presented on the 2nd July, 1832, by Lord Plunket, from the "ministers and elders of the South Presbytery of Dublin." Upon this occasion Lord Plunket stated that the new scheme was succeeding, despite all the opposition with which it had been met. Applications to the Board for assistance in the establishment of schools were rapidly pouring in, especially from the Catholics, and already, though the system had been in working order for only six months, not less than 120,000 children were attending the schools ; a greater number than had for a similar number of years been educated under the Kildare Street Society.<sup>2</sup>

On the following day, the Earl of Belhaven presented a petition in favour of the scheme from the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, stating their "approval" of the "National plan of education,

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xii. 1137-38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. vol. xiii. 1182.

adopted by the Government for the instruction, religious as well as otherwise, of the poor classes of Ireland, both Protestant and Catholic." Finally, on the 23rd of July, Mr. Spring-Rice forced the hands of the opponents of the schools by moving "that a sum of 37,500*l.* be granted in aid of the funds, to be appropriated to the new system of education in Ireland." True to his promise made six months before, Mr. Gordon opposed the grant. A dull debate, in which the familiar statements as to the "exclusion and mutilation" of the Bible were reproduced and discussed, ensued. A division was then taken with the following result:—

For the grant	.	.	.	.	68
Against	.	.	.	.	17
					—
Majority for Ministers					51

The minority consisted of: Mr. Gordon, Lord Encombe, the Right Hon. H. Goulbourn, Mr. Hodgson, Mr. W. Holmes, Sir Robert Inglis, Dr. Thomas Lefroy, Mr. A. Lefroy, Mr. W. G. Peel, Spencer Perceval, Colonel Perceval, Sir G. Rose, H. Ross, the Hon. G. Ryder, Lord Sandon, Mr. J. Young, Sir G. Hayes (teller), and Colonel Sibthorp.

This defeat, coupled with the previous defeat of Lord Roden in the House of Lords, tended not a little to "take the heart" out of the opponents of the scheme in Parliament. However, Lord Roden had not yet lost all hope of effecting some modification, at least, in it, more favourable to Protestant interests. On the 19th of March, 1833, he presented a petition against the scheme from "the ministers, elders, and Presbyterians of Ballymena," and from the "members of the Protestant Conservative Society of Ireland," and supported its prayer, in a long and characteristic speech. He denounced the new Board in the presence of one of its most distinguished members—Archbishop Whately—as a "motley crew," a "heterogeneous mass," a "cage" if not of "unclean," of "many-



coloured birds." It was formed, he said, "in obedience to the dictates of the Romish hierarchy," at whose bidding that "Book which was so long the safeguard of England was now withheld from the people." "These, my lords, I consider as awful times," he said, "awful with respect to Ireland, and awful, give me leave to say, with respect to England too. The times indeed are awful when the rulers of the people consent to sacrifice the Book of Truth at the shrine of error and prejudice."

Archbishop Whately followed, and in an effective speech replied to all the arguments which had from the first been used against the National Schools. These arguments resolved themselves into three main charges, as we have already seen, (1) that the Bible was excluded from the schools; (2) that it was mutilated; (3) that the selections taken from it to be read as part of the moral and literary instructions of the children were unfaithful, imperfect, and garbled to favour the Church of Rome. As to the exclusion of the Bible, the Archbishop said they certainly did not compel the children to read the Bible; for his part he did not wish to compel anybody to read the Bible. That would savour of persecution, and to do so would neither be of any service to religion, nor consistent with the proper spirit of Christianity; but they had made it imperative in all their schools that a certain portion of the week should be set apart for religious instruction, namely, some one day besides Sunday. Those who had any scruple against such instruction had it in their power to withdraw themselves, and any clergyman of the neighbourhood might appoint a day in the week in which the children of his own denomination might read nothing but the Scriptures or the homilies of the Church. If the clergymen were willing to attend and instruct them, the Protestant children might read the Bible one hour a day for five days in the week, and read nothing but the Bible for the other two days; "and," added the Archbishop, "I

would ask how many of your lordships' children—how many even of your lordships read the Bible so much?"

With reference to the "mutilation" of the Scriptures, he always understood, he said, that a "mutilation" meant a work being given as complete while it really was not so. But this was not the case in the National Schools, no more than it was the case in Church of England schools, where Mrs. Trimmer's selections from the Bible had been in constant use. As for the charge that the selections of the Board were unfaithful and imperfect, and garbled to favour the Church of Rome, he referred to the constitution of that body as refutation of the statement. There were, he said, Protestant clergymen of the three kingdoms on the Board, all brought up at different universities. The Rev. James Carlile, a Scotchman of the Edinburgh University, Dr. Sadleir, an Irishman of Trinity College, Dublin, and himself, an Englishman of Oxford. Was it to be supposed that they would all agree in garbling the Scriptures to favour the Church of Rome? He could not, he said, go through all the accusations which were daily brought against the Commissioners, and especially against himself, in the Dublin newspapers. From what had come under his notice he could say that five or six libels appeared in those journals every week. "A system of terrorism was regularly acted upon." He had seen a letter from a Protestant prelate to a clergyman in his diocese, commanding him on his canonical obedience to withhold his support from the schools. In fact, those who had endeavoured to aid in the introduction of this system had met with the most severe persecution, their motives had been impugned, and their characters attacked. This was a species of "mutilation" to which he strongly objected—a practical mutilation of the Scriptures which made men resist that important precept: "Do unto others as you would be done by." The Bishop of Exeter followed the Archbishop of Dublin, raising lustily, as he was ever ready to raise, the "No



Popery" cry. Next came the Bishop of Bristol, who supported his brother of Exeter, and was backed up by the Earl of Wicklow. Next came Lords Plunket and Cloncurry, and the Marquess of Lansdowne, all of whom defended the Government scheme. Lord Roden wound up the discussion, which was unproductive of any practical results, and which terminated the attacks upon the National System in Parliament.

But though the attacks in Parliament ceased after this discussion, the agitation against the system was kept up in the country, until finally a select committee of the House of Commons was appointed in 1835 to inquire into its working.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE ARRAIGNMENT OF THE NATIONAL BOARD.

BEFORE the Committee referred to in the last chapter the National Board and the Government were practically arraigned on the three main charges already mentioned.<sup>1</sup> Distinguished members of the Protestant and Catholic Churches in Ireland, and prominent men of all parties and creeds, were examined; in fact, a most searching investigation into the direction and management of the whole system was made.

No one connected with the "National" schools was so thoroughly put upon his trial before this Committee as Mr. Carlile. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that between 1831 and 1835 Mr. Carlile was the National system. All that was done in carrying out the scheme, was done under his superintendence. He initiated and controlled almost everything. He was the Central Commissioner, residing at the head offices in Dublin. He was always on the spot. As he tells us himself, he "saw everything that was going on."<sup>2</sup> All the books which were published by the Board were edited by him, many were prepared by him alone, and others by men whom he appointed for the purpose. The following list of books and their compilers will show this:—

1. "First Book of Lessons;" prepared by Mr. Carlile.

<sup>1</sup> Ante, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Carlile, Evidence given before the Select Committee of 1835-37 on the National System, p. 560.



2. "Second Book of Lessons;" Mr. Carlile.
3. "Third Book of Lessons;" Mr. Carlile.
4. "Fourth Book of Lessons;" Mr. Carlile.
5. "Fifth Book of Lessons;" Mr. Carlile.
6. "The Art of Reading;" Messrs. Spalding and Rintoul, Scotch Presbyterians, appointed by Mr. Carlile.
7. "Biographical Sketch of the English Poets;" Mr. Cross, an Englishman, appointed by Mr. Carlile.
8. "Extracts from the English Poets;" Mr. Cross.
9. "Literary Class Book," Dr. Sullivan of Ulster, appointed by Mr. Carlile.

In addition to those books two supplements to the "Second Book of Lessons," a supplement to the "Fourth Book of Lessons," and a book of lessons for girls, were prepared by Archbishop Whately, and edited by Mr. Carlile.

The Scriptural selections had been prepared by Mr. Carlile alone. He had from time to time submitted the proofs to his colleagues, who, however, rarely made any alterations in his work, so that practically the selections were issued from the press as they had been arranged by the Central Commissioner. Therefore, if the Bible had been mutilated to favour the doctrines of Rome, and if the National System generally had been used for the purpose of damaging the Protestant and advancing the Catholic religion in Ireland, then Mr. Carlile was chiefly to blame; Archbishop Whately, Dr. Sadleir, Mr. Holmes, the Duke of Leinster, and the whole literary staff employed by Mr. Carlile, being, of course, *participes criminis*.

Upon the question of the exclusion of the Bible under the system, no fresh light was thrown by any of the witnesses examined before the Committee.

The facts as stated by Lord Plunket and Archbishop Whately in the speeches to which I have already referred, were proved; viz. that the Bible was allowed to be read in the schools for one hour every day in the week, and for as many hours as the

Protestant pastors desired on one whole day in the week. Whether, having regard to this regulation, it could fairly be said that the Bible was excluded from the new educational institutions is a point which my readers will be able to decide for themselves.

Respecting the charge that the Scriptures were mutilated, and that selections were taken from them to favour the Church of Rome, it will be necessary for me to cite some quotations from the minutes of the evidence given before the Committee.

Dr. Elrington, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity in Trinity College, having stated that there were several "false doctrinal translations in the Scriptural extracts," was asked to favour the Committee with a sample. He did so. Firstly, he quoted the following verse from Genesis which formed one of the Biblical selections :—

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between her seed and thy seed; it shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for his heel.

Appended to this extract was the following note, of which Dr. Elrington complained :—

THE "WOMAN."—So divers of the Fathers read this place, conformably to the Latin; others read it *ipsum*, viz. the seed; the sense is the same; for it is by her seed, Jesus Christ, that the woman crushes the serpent's head.

Dr. Elrington objected to this note, because it referred the crushing of the serpent's head to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was examined, or rather, cross-examined, on the subject by Lord Stanley thus :—

LORD STANLEY,—Have the goodness to point out the passage in the translation [the extract] or in the note in which the crushing the serpent's head is attributed directly or indirectly to the Virgin Mary?

DR. ELRINGTON,—It is referred to the Virgin Mary in the books of instruction prescribed by the National Board.

LORD STANLEY,—Will you have the goodness to point out any single passage in which the person to crush the serpent's head is referred directly or indirectly to the Virgin Mary?



Dr. ELRINGTON,—I cannot in the Scripture extract—but who is the “she” then?

Lord STANLEY,—You have stated this note as a note which directly refers to the Virgin Mary as being the person who was to crush the serpent’s head; where is the passage in which you find that reference?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—I am not obliged to find that in this book [the book of extracts].

Lord STANLEY,—Your point is that this is a passage which renders this a most dangerous and mischievous book; having selected one passage in the New Testament, you now select another in the Old, and state that it refers to the Virgin Mary as the person who is to crush the serpent’s head?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—I do. [He then again read the note in full.]

Lord STANLEY,—What woman is referred to in the passage to which that is a note?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—There is no woman referred to.

Lord STANLEY,—Have the goodness to read the verse in Genesis on which that is a note.

Dr. ELRINGTON read, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between her seed and thy seed; and it shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for his heel.”

Lord STANLEY,—Who is the woman who was referred to by that expression, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between her seed and thy seed”—who is the woman to whom that passage refers?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—“The woman” there refers to Eve.

Lord STANLEY,—Have you any doubt of that?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—No.

Lord STANLEY,—Has anybody any doubt about that?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—No.

Lord STANLEY,—To whom does the word “she” then refer?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—To the Virgin Mary.

Lord STANLEY,—“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between her seed and thy seed”—whose seed is that?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—It was Eve’s seed.

Lord STANLEY,—Whom does the word *ipsa*, “she”—supposing that to be the translation—refer to?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—The Roman Catholic Church has decided that it refers to the Virgin Mary.

Lord STANLEY,—Where do you find in that note reference to the Virgin Mary when you say “I will put enmity between

thee and the woman, and between her seed and thy seed; it shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for his heel"?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—I object to this translation; I object to the introduction of the translation "she;" I believe it to be a false translation, and upon it has been founded what I conceive to be a false doctrine.

Lord STANLEY,—Suppose the passage *ipsa* to be the right translation, by what possible construction can that word *ipsa* in that passage be referred to the Virgin Mary?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—Greater scholars than I am have referred it to her.

Lord STANLEY,—According to the plain meaning of the word when you say that "the woman" means Eve, and the words "her seed" immediately follow, what possible construction can apply that word "her" to any person except Eve?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—The construction has been applied to it; it is not I who invent the construction; it is a fact."

Lord STANLEY,—Your objection to that note is that the note gave a false impression, and gave a reference to the Virgin Mary as being the person to crush the serpent's head?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—That the note established on an equivalent authority to this, at least, and the Roman Catholics would say on better authority, a doctrine which I conceive to be false.

Lord STANLEY,—Admitting the translation to be a correct one, do you conceive that any person reading that note would attribute the word to any person except Eve?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—I am no judge; because before ever I saw the note, I was perfectly aware of the reference made by the Roman Catholic Church to it; it struck me at once as a reference, therefore I am no fair judge.<sup>3</sup>

Having now stated, in his own words, Dr. Elrington's complaint, I shall set forth, in his own words too, Mr. Carlile's explanation.

When we agreed [says Mr. Carlile] to issue Scripture extracts there were several books presented, but which did not correspond with the principles which it was necessary to adopt; I found it necessary to make a trial myself whether I could prepare Scripture extracts which would be satisfactory to the board, and I commenced with the book of Genesis. I was altogether unaware how far the Roman Catholics would go along with us, and had therefore to feel my way with great delicacy. I came to this passage in which it is said in our

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of Evidence, Select Committee on the National System, 1835-37, pp. 136, 137.



translation "it shall bruise"—in the Douay it is "she shall bruise." I never thought of any other female than Eve; I never thought of the Virgin Mary; Eve being the only female who had been mentioned; and I found what I considered a reasonable note in the Douay version, in which it is said that some of the fathers read it so, but it was not matter of consequence, that the woman could only be said to bruise the head of the serpent through her seed. I resolved to put the authorized version into the text, giving this note. I found this acceptable to the whole board; in the meantime, however, I was informed that this word "she" [in the Douay version] had been applied by some of the Roman Catholics to the Virgin Mary; and I took the first opportunity of asking Dr. Murray whether he was desirous this note should be retained; he said, "Not at all; take it out if you please;" and it would have been removed, but we were in the meantime denounced in Parliament, and at a meeting in the Strand [Exeter Hall] [it was stated] that we had inserted this note for the purpose of teaching the worship of the Virgin Mary without any kind of explanation. Dr. Murray then wrote me upon it, that he did not care about the note, but it would be necessary, if it was withdrawn, to state simply that *ipsa* was the reading in one or two MSS. and adopted by some of the Fathers. This charge, however, had gone out widely against us; we determined to leave the matter in abeyance till the book was ready for publication, which was, perhaps half a year afterwards, and finding the public mind still excited upon it, we thought it better to let it stand, and let the public know the full extent of what we had ever intended to do, than to let it be supposed something else had been meditated.\*

So far as regards the extract from Genesis and the Douay note.

Another objectionable extract quoted by Dr. Elrington was the following:—

This is my body which is given for you. This cup is the New Testament in my blood which is about to be shed for you.

Dr. Elrington objected to the use of the word "about" because it favoured the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. He was asked in what way the doctrine was favoured by the use of the word, and answered,—

\* Ibid. pp. 64, 65.

It has been a subject of controversy from the first publication of the Rheims Testament to the present day, and that identical passage was objected to by every Protestant from that time to the present, so that it is not a new thought of mine. A statement of why it is objected to would lead me into a long controversy; it is briefly this: It is objected that the translators retain the present tense, "This is my body which is given," for the purpose of confirming their doctrine of Transubstantiation, while they put the other part as to the blood in the future tense, that it may refer directly without figure to the bloody sacrifice, as they call it.

Dr. Elrington was again cross-examined by Lord Stanley.

LORD STANLEY,—Do you think that controversy is one which the children would enter into; that any explanation of that passage, as it should appear in either version, would be given to the children in the schools?

DR. ELRINGTON,—I think it is very likely that the difference of the translation might strike any Protestant child hearing the lesson of St. Luke read in church if he had not a Bible of his own; but in the next place, whether it might or not, I could not put what I considered a false translation into the hands of any child. I conceive that is a false translation.

LORD STANLEY,—Have the goodness to tell the Committee from what version that translation "about to be shed" is taken.

DR. ELRINGTON,—I cannot tell that. The [English] version is "which shall be shed;" they have put it here "about to be shed."

Mr. Carlile does not seem to have been examined with reference to this extract, but it seems probable that he inserted the words "about to be shed" as a compromise reading between the Douay and authorized versions. The Catholics, he possibly thought, might object to the English version, and the Protestants to the Douay. Therefore he adopted a translation of his own, which was not to be found in either, and which, doubtless, he deemed equally accurate in substance.

I shall give one more extract illustrating the nature of the objections to the Biblical selections of Mr. Carlile, cited by Dr. Elrington, viz. "The first man



is of the earth earthy, the second man from heaven heavenly."

Dr. Elrington objected to this extract, because it "compromised" the belief in the Divinity of our Lord, and for this reason. In the authorized version, he pointed out that the words were: "the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second is the *Lord* from heaven;" but in the National Schools' extract the word "*Lord*" was omitted, and, as Dr. Elrington suggested, to favour the Unitarian view, out of deference to Mr. Holmes. Dr. Elrington was cross-examined with respect to this subject by Lord Stanley thus:—

LORD STANLEY,—You state your objection to this passage [is] that the word "Lord" is omitted. Have the goodness to turn to the passage [as it is quoted] at the top of page 150, and read it.

Dr. Elrington turned to the passage, and read, "the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second is the Lord from heaven."

LORD STANLEY,—Is the word "Lord" introduced there or not?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—Yes; then all I can say is, that passage occurs twice. I read this day the passage I gave.

LORD STANLEY,—Is there any note upon that?

Dr. ELRINGTON,—Yes; "the Lord from heaven, or, according to a large proportion of the ancient MSS. which have been examined, the second Man from heaven."

Lord Stanley did not ask any more questions, but Serjeant Jackson (one of the leading members of the Ascendency party), apparently feeling that Dr. Elrington had been "hit," and determined to set him up again, re-examined his co-religionist thus:—

Serjeant JACKSON,—Would it not furnish an additional objection to your mind, that this passage is translated in one way in one part, and in a different way in another?

Dr. ELRINGTON (very frankly),—I cannot say that it would.<sup>s</sup>

Serjeant Jackson did not continue the examination.

The Very Rev. Dr. Murray, Protestant Dean of Ardagh, was also examined with reference to the Scriptural selections. He cited the following extract,

<sup>s</sup> Ibid. p. 137.

saying that it was “as great a perversion of Scripture as ever” he “had read in all [his] life.”

*And Melchizedec, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, being a priest of the most High God. And he blessed him, and said,—Blessed be Abram by the most High God.”*

Dr. Murray said that the italicized words of this translation were contrary to the authorized version, and favoured by the Douay. In the former the words are, “And Melchizedec, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; *and he* was priest of the most High God,” &c.; in the latter, “And Melchizedec, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; *for* he was priest of the most High God,” &c.

The Archdeacon of Ardagh regarded this as a very serious matter, because the Douay version was meant to support the Catholic service of the Mass, by showing that Melchizedec sacrificed to God in bread and wine as a priest; and though the words in the extract were not the same as those in the Douay Bible, still the same meaning was implied.

The witness was examined upon this matter by Mr. Wyse, Mr. Robert Vernon Smith, Viscount Ebrington, and Mr. Gladstone as follows:—

Mr. WYSE,—Do you conceive the word “being” as at all synonymous with “for” in the Douay version?

Dr. MURRAY,—The original word “for” is not in the Hebrew at all; the causal particle *for* is not in the Hebrew text, nor in the Septuagint, nor in the citation from them by Epiphanius; this “for” was not even in the ancient Latin version, but it is now in the Vulgate. Hieron in his Hebrew Question has it not, nor in his Epistle to Enagius, where he quotes the text in Hebrew and translates the words in Latin, “and he was the priest.” The editor of this book [Carlile] knew that this word was not in the original, and he might have left it out altogether, and still the meaning would have been the same as the authorized version; but he alters it, to make it bear on the Romish doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass.

Mr. WYSE,—Do you conceive the expression “he being the priest” is more nearly synonymous with “he was the priest” or “for he was the priest”?

Dr. MURRAY,—“For he was the priest.”



Mr. WYSE,—On what ground do you state that?

Dr. MURRAY,—Because he brought forth bread and wine, “being the priest of the most high God.”

Mr. ROBERT VERNON SMITH,—If I were to say I have been examining a witness, and he was a clergyman of the Church of England; or if I were to say I have been examining a witness, he being a clergyman of the Church of England, where would be the difference between these two modes of expression?

Dr. MURRAY,—The difference between these two modes of expression is that “being” unites the character with the bread and wine.

Mr. Vernon Smith repeated his former question, and asked Dr. Murray if he saw any difference between the two modes of expression.

Dr. MURRAY,—It would just depend on what follows; “being a clergyman of the Church of England,” what did he do?

Mr. VERNON SMITH,—Are you to draw your sense from what follows?

Dr. MURRAY,—This expression that he blessed him, being a priest of the most high God: he entertained Abram as a king, and blessed him.

Mr. VERNON SMITH,—Have you not a full stop at God?

Dr. MURRAY,—There is in both sentences.

Mr. VERNON SMITH,—Does not that disconnect the sentences?

Dr. MURRAY,—It does in some sense.

Viscount EBRINGTON,—Is there a full stop in the Bible [the authorized version] at that place?

Dr. MURRAY,—There is.

Mr. GLADSTONE,—Is not the word “was” in the Bible [authorized version] printed in italics?

Dr. MURRAY,—Yes.

Mr. GLADSTONE,—Are the committee to understand that the word “was” was not in the Hebrew?

Dr. MURRAY,—Yes; the literal interpretation is, “He, the priest.”

Mr. GLADSTONE,—Do you complain of the extracts on the ground of the mistranslation of the passage, because the participle “being” is introduced, instead of the word “was” [the word “was”] not being itself in the original?

Dr. MURRAY,—Yes; because the inspired Apostle [Paul] in the [1st verse of the 7th chap. of the] Epistle to the Hebrews, explains the passage [thus]: “for this Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abram returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him.” There is

not a word of bread and wine there introduced, which shows that the bread and wine had nothing to do with his priestly office. I prove the meaning of this passage in the Old Testament [to be that Melchisedec blessed Abram as a king, not as a priest] from the 7th Hebrews.

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*

Serjeant JACKSON,—Has the doctrine [of the sacrifice of the Mass] been reasoned upon with reference to that very passage, and sustained by Roman Catholics in part by that passage?

Dr. MURRAY,—I have never had a discussion with a Roman Catholic priest or layman, but that passage was brought to prove the sacrifice of the Mass; it is a favourite subject.

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Viscount EBRINGTON,—Do the Roman Catholics with whom you have discussed these points, attach any importance to the difference between the Douay and the authorized version of this passage? do they conceive that the Douay version assists their interpretation?

Dr. MURRAY,—They do; the Douay putting “for” instead of “and.”

Mr. VERNON SMITH,—Have you ever discussed with a Roman Catholic clergyman the sense you have given to this extract?

Dr. MURRAY,—No; I was always intimate with Roman Catholic clergymen till the anti-tithe business commenced. I have not been since; but I have understood that is their idea.

Serjeant JACKSON [who saw an opportunity of making, as he thought, a point, though an utterly irrelevant point],—Before the anti-tithe agitation commenced you lived in considerable influence with the Roman Catholic clergymen?

Dr. MURRAY,—Yes; very great.

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Serjeant JACKSON,—Since that agitation has been set on foot, your communications have been interrupted?

Dr. MURRAY,—Completely; if a man wants to starve you out of the country, you cannot be very intimate with him.

I shall give but one more instance of the alleged objectionable character of the Scriptural extracts:—

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven things; thou shalt not adore nor worship them.

The Rev. C. Boyton, a Fellow of Dublin University, objected to this extract because it was a departure from the authorized version, made for the purpose of favouring the “errors” of the Catholic Church,



“with regard to images.” The reading of the authorized version, Mr. Boyton pointed out, was, “Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven images; thou shalt not bow down to them.” Mr. Boyton maintained that there was no justification for this departure. He was examined by Lord Stanley and Viscount Ebrington thus:—

LORD STANLEY,—Is not the Greek γλυπτόν “any graven thing”?

MR. BOYTON,—In the Greek it is εἶδωλον: your lordship will see the nature of the objection when I read this to you.

Mr. Boyton then read the following extract from Dr. Doyle’s “Abridgment of the Christian Catechism:”—

Q. Why do Protestants, or those of new religions, instead of “graven things” translate “graven images”?

A. Because they have a will to corrupt the text, in hope by so doing to persuade ignorant people that Catholics are idolaters and break the first commandment by making and worshipping images.

Q. How do you know they corrupt the text?

A. Because the Hebrew word is *Pesel*, which signifies a graven thing; the Greek is εἶδωλον, an idol, and the Latin *Sculptile*, a graven thing; therefore the word “image” is mere corruption.

Having quoted the extract from Dr. Doyle’s book, Mr. Boyton stated fully the nature of his objection. A Protestant child, he said, would be much handicapped in discussing this question with a Catholic child, by the fact that an Educational Board on which a Protestant Archbishop sat had adopted a reading of the text in harmony with Catholic doctrine. As long as the Protestant and Catholic versions differed, the Protestant child could always say that the Catholic version was wrong; but when the Protestant version was precisely the same as the Catholic, then the case of the Catholic child became unanswerable. He could put the book into the hand of his little Protestant friend and say, “There the word ‘graven thing,’ which Dr. Doyle says is right, is used in an extract

published under the authority of Dr. Whately." To afford the Catholic child an opportunity of using an argument of this nature was, Mr. Boyton thought, placing the Protestant child at a very great disadvantage. Having offered this explanation, Mr. Boyton's examination was resumed as follows:—

VISCOUNT EBRINGTON,—You feel no doubt which is the accurate translation?

MR. BOYTON,—I think "image" translates the word better than "graven thing."

LORD STANLEY,—Did you not state that the Hebrew word meant a "graven thing"?

MR. BOYTON,—Yes.

LORD STANLEY,—Why then should you not adopt that if it is a fair translation?

MR. BOYTON,—Because I think the other more accords with the meaning of the commandment, and the meaning commonly attached now to the English word "image." I have not a doubt that the meaning of the commandment was to forbid this very species of worship we call the worship of images; and that in the minds of children of both denominations the word "graven thing" does not imply the meaning of the commandment.

LORD STANLEY,—You admit that "graven thing" is the more literal of the two?

MR. BOYTON,—I think that "image" is not in the original.

LORD STANLEY,—And that "graven thing" is the literal translation from the Hebrew?

MR. BOYTON,—Yes.

Mr. Boyton, having given the answer, next passed to a criticism of the words, "Thou shalt not adore nor worship them." These words, he said, were contrary to the reading of the authorized version, which was, "Thou shalt never bow down to them." The words "bow down" in the authorized version "came home" to the Catholic "practice," and hence they were dropped, and the expression "adore or worship," not to be found in the original Hebrew, substituted out of deference to Catholic feeling. The "tendency," he added, of such an alteration was to "assert the Roman Catholic doctrine." Mr. Boyton having given this explanation, Lord Stanley asked him, "When you



say the 'tendency is to assert the Roman Catholic doctrine,' you mean that terms are used which would not be considered as militating with the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church?" Mr. Boyton replied, "I think so." The subject was then dropped.

I have now given representative samples of the "mutilation" of the Scriptures, and the "garbling" of them to favour the doctrines of the Church of Rome, and I leave it to my readers to say how far those samples can be taken as supporting the charge brought by the Irish Protestant Episcopalians against the National Board.

Besides the objections to the Scriptural extracts, which were shared in by all the Protestant Episcopalian ecclesiastics examined before the committee, Dr. Murray took exception, in an especial manner, to the historical books used in the schools. History, he considered, was "garbled," as well as the Bible, to favour the views of Rome. In the "Modern History of Europe," the history of the seventh and eighth centuries was very imperfectly treated. No mention whatever was made of the most important event of the period, but an account of Mohammedanism and the Saracens given instead. The most important event of the seventh and eighth centuries, Dr. Murray considered, was the declaration of Gregory the Great, that the "man who assumed the title of Universal Bishop was the forerunner of Anti-Christ." "I speak boldly," said Gregory; "whoever calls himself, or desires to be called by others, the Universal Bishop or Priest is the forerunner of Anti-Christ." Despite this declaration, Gregory's successor, Boniface III., "assumed the title, and all the Bishops of Rome since have adopted it." "And how did Boniface come by this title?" asked Dr. Murray (who was supplied with copious notes from which he read during his examination, not a little probably to the surprise of the committee, who were scarcely prepared for an historical disquisition)—"the title was conferred upon him by the usurper

Phocas, that abominable tyrant who waded to the imperial throne through the blood of Mauritius. Now not one word about all this is said in the National Schools' history. Why? Because the Roman Catholics are led to believe that the title of Universal Bishop was conferred upon the Popes from the time of St. Peter, whereas here is a Pope, a good man, denying that, and saying that the man who assumed it was the forerunner of Anti-Christ, and the next but one to himself takes it from that most abominable tyrant, Phocas." Having so delivered himself, the Doctor was examined by the Committee thus:—

CHAIRMAN,—Is what you have read [for the Doctor read his notes *in extenso*, and the committee were puzzled to know whether he had been giving them an historical extract, or reading his own composition] taken from history?

Dr. MURRAY,—Yes, it is taken from history, in my own words. It is taken from Gibbon and other works.

Mr. WYSE,—From whom are your words taken?

Dr. MURRAY,—I have read several histories, the same will be found in Gibbon and other works.

Mr. LEFROY,—Do you intend to convey the impression which you have derived from reading?

Dr. MURRAY,—Yes.

Mr. WYSE,—Was the last sentence a quotation?

Dr. MURRAY,—No.

Mr. Serjeant JACKSON,—Did you make these memoranda with a view to give your evidence in a more distinct way to the committee?

Dr. MURRAY,—Yes, to save time.

Viscount EBRINGTON,—Your complaint is that in the [National Schools'] history the mention of that event is omitted?

Dr. MURRAY,—That there ought to have been a notice taken of it: that that is practising deception on the Roman Catholics of Ireland: that is matter of history.

Mr. WYSE,—Can you furnish the epistle of Gregory from which you have taken the passage?

Dr. MURRAY,—Yes, it is the 28th of his epistles to the emperor.

Mr. WYSE,—What emperor?

Dr. MURRAY,—I cannot say, I took it from the Latin.



Mr. WYSE,—Are you aware of that passage being controverted by the Roman Catholics?

Dr. MURRAY,—I am not aware of that; it is in Gregory's works.<sup>6</sup>

Another important omission from the National Schools' "History of Europe," was, Dr. Murray pointed out, the manner in which the origin of the temporal power of the Pope had been overlooked. Dr. Murray gave the following version of the matter:—

The Emperor Leo, the Isaurian, unable to bear any longer the excessive height to which the Greeks carried their superstitious attachment to the worship of images, determined by the most vigorous proceedings to root out this growing evil. He issued a decree against image-worship. The Pope [Gregory] "rebelled" against his master, excommunicated him, caused his deputies to be murdered at Ravenna, and sought the help of Pepin, who was then in some situation under the king.

<sup>6</sup> Another version, perhaps I may state, of the events referred to by Dr. Murray is as follows:—During the pontificate of Gregory the Great [590—604], John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople, assumed the title of Universal Bishop. To this Gregory objected on the ground—taking what was possibly a mistaken view of the import of the title—that the assumption of it by any one bishop would detract from the character and power of the episcopate. It was a law of the Church that every bishop possessed supreme jurisdiction within his own diocese, and, that, the functions of all bishops, *qua* bishops, were co-extensive and identical. But Gregory, nevertheless, asserted the subjection of all bishops to the Bishop of Rome. "If any fault," he says, "is found in bishops, I know not what bishop is not subject to the Apostolical See. But when no fault requires [the interposition of that See], we are all equal on the principle of humility." The meaning of Gregory, Hallam expounds thus: "*universalis ecclesiæ episcopus*," but not "*episcopus universalis*," that is, he [the Bishop of Rome] has no immediate jurisdiction in the dioceses of other bishops, though he can correct them for the undue exercise of their own. ("Middle Ages," vol. ii. p. 161. n.; see also Epist. of Gregory, lib. ix. 49.) Of Gregory Hallam says, "Upon the whole, the Papal power had made no decided progress in France, or, perhaps, anywhere beyond Italy, till the pontificate of Gregory I." "Gregory," he adds, "dwelt more than his predecessors upon the power of the keys being exclusively, or, at least, principally, committed to St. Peter." ("Middle Ages," vol. ii. p. 160.) With reference to the statement that Phocas conferred the title of Universal Bishop on Boniface, Hallam doubts it very much. So that upon the whole this subject was not quite so simple a one as Dr. Murray supposed.

Pepin, knowing that the Pope was in distress, sent him the following query, "whether it was lawful to dethrone an inefficient king, and put an efficient one on the throne." The Pope answered favourably. Pepin marched across the Alps; rescued the Pope from the grasp of his lawful sovereign, conferred upon him the Dukedom of Rome, the Exarchate of Ravenna and part of Lombardy. But the Pope still found himself in difficulties, and once more appealed to Pepin, whereupon Pepin came again, and gave the Pope more territory.

This [said Dr. Murray] was the great origin of the temporal power of the Pope . . . and there is not one word about it in this history.

Cross-examined by Mr. Wyse, as to whether those facts were not controverted, the Doctor said he never heard that they were.

Have you read the Abbé Fleury upon the subject?

I think I have read extracts from his work; I have not the work myself.

Are you aware, that it does not give full credence to the narrative as told by you?

I am not.

How many volumes would you require to state the facts on those subjects?

Just a page and a half.

Dr. Murray also objected to the manner in which Irish history was treated in the National Schools. He objected specially to the manner in which the English invasion of Ireland was dealt with. "When," he said, [the Board] "undertakes to give a history of Europe for Irishmen, they ought to have brought in something about the history of Ireland, or I do not know what is to be the use of it." The Doctor then gave the Committee an account of how the English invasion of Ireland was brought about and how it resulted. It was, he said in effect, an Anglo-Papal invasion. From the time of St. Patrick the Irish Church had been "free and unshackled." It had no connexion with England, and it differed on points of importance from Rome. Henry II. and Pope Adrian determined to subdue the Irish nation and Church. The first work on which Henry determined



was to reduce the Irish Church to obedience to the Roman Pontiff. Accordingly, he procured a council of the Irish clergy to be held at Cashel in 1172, and the council, under the combined influence and intrigues of Henry and the Pope, put an end to the independence of the "ancient Irish Church." "That ominous apostasy," said Dr. Murray, quoting with approval the words of the Irish historian O'Driscoll, "has been followed by a series of calamities hardly to be equalled in the world. From the days of St. Patrick to the Council of Cashel, Ireland had a bright and glorious career; from the sitting of this council to our own time, the lot of Ireland has been unmingled evil, and all her history a tale of woe." "There," said Dr. Murray—"there are the materials for the history of Ireland."

Lastly, the Archdeacon of Ardagh referred to the account given in the Schools' history of the Protestant Reformation, and complained of it as being inaccurate and indeed almost preposterous. He read the following extract for the Committee: "This age [the sixteenth century], so fertile in great events, was also the age of the Protestant Reformation, in which the Protestant Churches separated from the Church of Rome; an event which still continues to influence the political affairs of Europe." "There," said the Archdeacon, "[the Reformation] is considered as a mere political movement, while anybody who knows the Reformation knows it was the gracious influence of the Spirit of God upon the people which produced that most important event."

Mr. WYSE,—Those are your opinions; but are you not aware that a large mass of the Irish people are of a very different opinion from you upon the subject of the Reformation?

Dr. MURRAY,—If they are, it is for the want of proper information on the subject. I think they have been taught that the Reformation was produced by Luther and lust, and the indulgence of everything that was bad.

Mr. WYSE,—Your opinion is asked whether the mass of the

Irish people do not entertain a very different idea from yourself on that subject?

Dr. MURRAY,—I mentioned what were the Roman Catholic ideas on the subject.

The CHAIRMAN,—Would you consider, in a book for united education, it would have been possible to have inserted the sentiment you have stated—that it was “the Holy Spirit of God operating upon the people which produced that most important event”?

Dr. MURRAY,—No; but if we know that the Roman Catholics assign a false reason, we should remove their error.

Mr. WYSE,—There is no reason stated in the passage?

Dr. MURRAY,—That “it still continues to influence the political affairs of Europe.”

Mr. WYSE,— . . . That is the result. . . There is [nothing] in this sentence intimating the cause [of the Reformation]. Would you think that, in introducing the subject in a history of this description, it would be proper to state only the cause which, in the opinion of Protestants, produced the Reformation, without also stating the cause which, in the opinion of the Roman Catholics, produced it?

Dr. MURRAY,—That is what I complain of—not stating the opinion of both.

Mr. WYSE,—Do you think that could be done in a few sentences?

Dr. MURRAY,—I think it could have been done in as few as I have done.

Mr. WYSE,—Do you not think it better to state facts, leaving the causes to the opinions of others?

Dr. MURRAY,—I deny that those are facts. There is an insinuation there that it was political. That is the impression conveyed to my mind.’

This concluded Dr. Murray’s historical examination.

I have now placed before my readers the case of the Episcopalian Protestants of Ireland against the National system as it was submitted to the Select Committee of 1835-37. The case of the Presbyterians was substantially the same. Dr. Cooke, who was examined before the Committee, considered that the system “put a stigma on the Word of God, as a book unsuited to the instruction of youth.” Against its “mutilation” and restrictive use he vehemently protested.

’ Ibid. p. 344, *et seq.*



“I hold that [the mutilation and restriction of the Bible] to be an invasion of God’s prerogative, and a contradiction of that liberty wherewith He has made us free ; and that neither kings nor ecclesiastics have any power to deny me the use of what God has given me.”

He objected, moreover, to the admission of Catholic priests to the schools, saying that many of the priests of Rome were “heretical ;” that many of them “held false doctrine ;” that many of them were “schismatical,” and “very bad in other forms of worship or morals.”

But one of the strongest objections of all advanced by Dr. Cooke was to the rule which provided for the setting apart one day every week for religious instruction—an objection which, as Mr. Carlile subsequently pointed out to the Committee, was somewhat inconsistent with the original position taken up by the Synod of Ulster, viz. that sufficient time was not devoted to religious instruction.

Dr. Cooke objected also to the rule which provided that the pastors of the respective persuasions should fix the time for religious instruction. That was a matter which, he thought, ought to be left to the parents.

He objected likewise to the control exercised by the Board over the books. In fact, nothing in the system seems to have pleased the eminent Presbyterian divine. Dr. Cooke was, in fact, a man pre-eminently opposed to compromises ; and as a compromise, and above all a compromise with Rome, he disliked and was disposed to give no quarter to the National Schools.<sup>8</sup>

Having shown the position taken up by the Irish Protestants with reference to the National System, I shall in the next chapter consider that assumed by the Catholics respecting it.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. pp. 430-54, *et seq.* ; and Mr. Sullivan’s Evidence, p. 572.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE CATHOLICS AND THE NATIONAL SYSTEM.

FROM what I have now written respecting Lord Stanley's plan my readers will observe that the Protestants of Ireland, as a body, were opposed to it between the years 1831 and 1837. During the same period the Catholics, as a body, favoured it. To them it seemed a vast improvement on all preceding systems. Their religious convictions were no longer tampered with; their moral and literary training was no longer neglected. They seem to have recognized the fact that the educational problem could only be solved by the adoption of a compromise scheme, and they considered that, upon the whole, Lord Stanley's plan, as such, was fair and workable. Such was the opinion of the main body of Catholics. But from this opinion there was one dissentient—John MacHale—who in 1834 had been raised to the Archbishopric of Tuam.

We have already seen how Father MacHale, not sharing the views or participating in the hopes of his fellow-priests and co-religionists, had from the outset regarded the Kildare Street Society with distrust, and how ultimately he had openly assailed it. What the priest at Maynooth had thought of the Kildare Street Society, the Archbishop of Tuam thought of the National System. Dr. MacHale's opinion of the National Schools was that they were specious and plausible in appearance; in reality insidious and un-



sound ; in form a concession, in substance a snare ; national in name, anti-national in fact.

As, however, he had for several years refrained from openly expressing his opinion of the Kildare Street Society, so for several years he refrained from openly expressing his opinion of the National Schools ; and for the same reasons. He was unwilling to oppose the current of public opinion, and indisposed to condemn, at the very start, a proposal which O'Connell had countenanced and commended. Accordingly, he determined once more to assume a position of watchful neutrality, and to await the development of events. He waited for seven years, and then in a series of letters addressed to Lord John Russell, the first of which was dated February 12th, 1838, attacked the system as he had attacked the Kildare Street Society.

He had distrusted the Government plan, he said, from the beginning, but was resolved to take no step which would leave him open to the charge of having striven to prevent its obtaining a fair trial. It had now had a fair trial, and was proved to be undeserving of the confidence and support of the Irish people. The Irish a people had never asked for a system of this kind ; they wanted separate, not mixed, education. Mixed education might be all very well for a country where the population was mixed ; but could it be said that the population of Ireland was mixed ? Was it not known that the people of three provinces—especially that portion of the people for whose benefit the system had been invented—were almost exclusively Catholic. How many Protestant children might it be supposed attended the so-called National Schools in his own province of Connaught ? Scarcely any ; and the same observation might truthfully be made respecting the attendance of Protestant children in Munster and Leinster. In Ulster there was a mixed population, no doubt ; but the Protestants of Ulster no more than the Catholics of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught, desired a mixed system. In fact, no

section of the Irish people desired such a system, yet was it thrust upon the country. Why not concede the principle of separate education, in conformity with the unanimous wishes of the whole people? Let the Episcopalian Protestants found and maintain their own schools out of the wealth which had been lavished, and was being lavished, upon them. The tithes of the entire kingdom, and 600,000 acres of Church land, surely formed an ample fund for the education of the small section of Episcopalian Protestants in the country. Let the State make any provision it pleased for the Presbyterians of Ulster, who constituted a still smaller section; but above all let the demands of the Catholics—of the vast bulk of the Irish nation—be conceded. For generations, Protestant educational establishments had been endowed by the State. Most assuredly the time had come for the endowment of Catholic schools in Catholic Ireland.

But setting aside for a moment the question of separate education, and admitting for the sake of argument that the Irish Catholics ought to rest content with a mixed system, was the present system carried on in a manner calculated to inspire their confidence and command their support? Firstly, how was the Managing Board, upon which Lord Stanley had said everything would depend, composed? Were the Catholics fairly represented on it? If so, they ought to be in the proportion of five to one of the Protestants, for of the entire population of the country five-sixths were Catholics. Nevertheless, out of a total of seven members composing this Board, there were but two Catholics. This was bad; worse remained. Though the Board consisted of seven members, the whole work was practically done by two. Who were the two? Dr. Whately and Mr. Carlile. What were they? Protestants and non-Irish. What did the Irish people know of Dr. Whately, that they should repose confidence in him, or in any educational system with which he was connected?



Before his arrival in Ireland he had written a book called the "Errors of Romanism," in which he spoke of the Catholic Church as "a mystery of iniquity," and the —— of Babylon;" called its ministers "adepts in priestcraft;" and described its sacraments as "superstitious charms," its public worship as "a kind of incantation," its practices of piety as "a train of superstitious observances worthy of paganism itself."<sup>1</sup>

And this book Dr. Whately had dedicated to one of the most obnoxious proselytizers in the country—Mr. Blanco White.

But it was said that Dr. Whately had much changed since he wrote the "Errors of Romanism" and dedicated it to his "dear friend" Blanco White. That might be the case, but, as yet, there was no evidence of the fact. On the contrary, there seemed to be some evidence the other way. Quite recently, a book had been issued by the National Board, for use in the schools, entitled "Lessons on the Truth of Christianity." He could not positively assert who wrote that book, but he had a shrewd suspicion that it was penned by the author of the "Errors of Romanism," and if that were the case, then it was clear that Dr. Whately had not changed much since he had given to the world a work whose very title was an insult to a Catholic nation, and whose pages were filled with gross abuse of, and infamous calumnies upon, the Catholic Church.

Of one thing, at all events, he was sure; whoever wrote the book about the "Lessons of Christianity"—"lessons" in which the existence of the Catholic faith was carefully ignored, and in which Christ was reduced to the level of a "mere teacher of a sublime morality," a wise legislator, an extraordinary person who wrought a great revolution in the world—that it was a publication not fit to be circulated amongst the youth of a Catholic and Christian country.

<sup>1</sup> MacHale's Letters, pp. 504, 505. "The Errors of Romanism," by Richard Whately, pp. 11, 12, 111, 112, 311.

Of Mr. Carlile little was known beyond the fact that he had been connected with the Bible Societies—Societies which had transacted their business in a manner not calculated to make them popular institutions in the country. Was it reasonable or fair to expect that the Irish people should take to a National System of education conducted chiefly by an English Protestant bishop and a Scotch Calvinistic minister? Would the English people tolerate an English National System of education, conducted chiefly by a Catholic Bishop and a Catholic priest? Would they tolerate a System in whose schools all the books, religious and non-religious, were prepared or edited by a brace of Romanist ecclesiastics? Was anything more clear than that the English people would not for a twelvemonth put up with a system so directed and controlled? And yet the Irish people were asked to send their children to a set of schools managed by men between whom and them there existed a feeling of national and religious antipathy.

As might be expected from its composition, the career of the Board up to the present had been characterized by concessions to the Protestant party, especially to the Presbyterians of Ulster—concessions which were at once hostile to Catholic interests, and inconsistent with the principles on which the system had been originally based. Thus, one of the regulations was that books for separate instruction prepared by the members of the different denominations should be supplied by the Board to the various schools at prime cost—a regulation but barely just to the Catholics, who were the poorest members of the community, and whose poverty was the result of the infamous laws and iniquitous exactions imposed for the purpose of enriching and exalting the Protestant minority. Mr. Carlile objected to this regulation, and at his instance it was removed.

It was provided that one “whole” day should be set apart for separate religious instruction. The Synod



of Ulster objected to this regulation, and a new rule was framed in 1838 substituting part of a day for the whole. It was provided that the hours for religious instruction should be fixed by the clergymen of the various denominations. The Synod of Ulster objected to the interference of the Catholic clergy in the schools at all. Accordingly they proposed that the hours for religious instruction should be fixed by the parents of the children, and a new regulation was made in accordance with their demands. Was it not plain that the Synod of Ulster were determined to fashion the scheme to their own ends, and that the Board would let them have their way? The Irish Catholics would not, perhaps, see this now, but they would see it clearly enough by-and-by, if a stand were not at once made against the arrogant pretensions of an intolerant faction. He did not know what the rest of Ireland would do. He knew what he himself would do. He knew what would be done in his own diocese. There, at least, it should never be said that Irish and Catholic youths had sought instruction in establishments which were based on un-Irish and un-Catholic principles, and conducted by men who possessed not a single sentiment, aspiration, sympathy or hope in common with the masses of the nation.

Such were the objections of Dr. MacHale to the National Schools.

Dr. MacHale's letters produced a profound sensation in the country. They awakened a spirit of inquiry which had long been permitted to slumber. People began to think that the National System was not so just after all. The Board, they said, was not fairly constituted, and an unreasonable disposition to meet the demands of the Synod of Ulster was evinced. The unfairness which had been exhibited in the composition of the Board was to be found in other departments. Thus, of the subordinate officials appointed up to 1836 out of a total of 15 heads of service and first-class clerks there were only 3 Catholics; out of a total

of 9 second-class clerks there were 4 Catholics; out of a total of 15 third-class clerks there were 9 Catholics; out of a total of 50 other functionaries there were but 21 Catholics. The chief inspector was a Presbyterian. Of 6 head-inspectors 3 were Catholic, 3 Protestant; of 12 first-class inspectors 6 were Catholic, 6 Protestant; of 38 second-class inspectors 17 were Catholic; of 10 sub-inspectors 6 were Catholic. This was most assuredly an unfair proportion. Again, out of 5 professors appointed to the model schools not one was a Catholic, nor an Irishman; 3 were Scotch, 1 was an Englishman, and 1 a German—all were Presbyterians.<sup>2</sup> Thus the teachers who were to instruct Irish and Catholic youths were themselves trained by professors who were not Irish, and who were Protestant; and this was called "National Education."

These were some of the things said, discussed, and pondered over as soon as the public mind had been set a-thinking about the National Schools by the letters of Dr. MacHale. Speeches and thoughts were soon followed by acts. Dr. MacHale had said that, whatever should take place in the rest of Ireland, a stand against the "anti-national" system, as he called it, would at all events be made in Connaught. Such a stand was made in 1839. This defection of almost a whole province occasioned grave alarm to the supporters of the system, and no one appreciated more thoroughly, or was more anxious to avert the dangers which now beset it than Dr. Murray. He used all his influence to counteract the effects of Dr. MacHale's attacks, and was in his efforts supported by the majority of the Catholic hierarchy.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. MacHale, however, did not relax his opposition, and ultimately succeeded in drawing some of the bishops to his side. That such a division of opinion

<sup>2</sup> Subsequently three professors were appointed, of whom two were Catholics. — The Abbé Perraud, "Ireland under English Rule," p. 402; Kavanagh, "Catholic Case stated," p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> Kavanagh, "Catholic Case stated," 371.



among the hierarchy, accompanied as it was by unpleasant and unedifying public controversies,<sup>4</sup> ought, if possible, be put an end to, Dr. MacHale, as well as Dr. Murray, felt. Therefore it was unanimously resolved that the whole question in dispute should be referred to Rome, and referred accordingly the question was in 1839.

Meanwhile, the Synod of Ulster, perceiving the dissensions which had sprung up in the Catholic ranks, determined to take advantage of them. There were but two of the rules of the National Board to which the Synod now objected; the one authorizing the pastors of the various religious denominations to give separate religious instructions in or out of the schools at stated periods as they should think fit, and the other providing that *part* of a day, independently of Sunday (it had been the "whole" day originally, but was altered at the instance of the Synod to "part"), should be set aside for separate religious instructions. To the first of these rules the Synod had all along been vigorously opposed. Dr. Cooke had declared that he would never consent to a "Roman" priest being installed one day, or part of a day, in the week in any school promoted by the Synod of Ulster for the purpose of teaching Catholic children that "Protestants were heretics," and that there was no salvation out of the Roman Church.<sup>5</sup> The Board, however, had hitherto firmly refused to make any alteration in this rule, on the principle that opportunities were equally afforded Presbyterian clergymen to teach Presbyterian children anything they pleased about the Church of Rome. If the Catholic priest chose to teach Catholic children, on the day set apart for separate Catholic instruction, that Protestants were heretics, the Protestant clergyman, when his day came, could teach his flock that Catholics were idolators. These little amenities—if they were indulged in—could only be

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 371.

<sup>5</sup> Perraud, "Ireland under English Rule," p. 389.

prevented by doing away altogether with the rule relating to separate religious instruction—a step which the Board was not yet prepared to take.

So the matter stood towards the end of the year 1839, when the Synod resolved to make a fresh effort to obtain the removal of the obnoxious rule. Having regard to the attacks of Dr. MacHale, they said, it was fast becoming evident that the system would soon have to encounter the hostility of a considerable section of the Catholics; it therefore behoved the Board to conciliate the Presbyterian party. Already the Catholics of Connaught had shown a determination to withdraw the children of the province from the schools. In these circumstances was it not a matter of urgent expediency to concede the Presbyterian demands, in order that the defection of Connaught might be compensated for by the adhesion of Ulster? The case so put seems to have made an impression on the Board, for in January, 1840, the Presbyterian demands were conceded, and the rule giving Catholic priests the right to administer religious instruction to Catholic children in the mixed schools of Ulster was abrogated.

The practical result of this abrogation was to convert such of the National Schools of Ulster, as had been promoted by the Synod, into Presbyterian denominational institutions; for the Catholics, of course, withdrew *en masse* from the schools that their priests were in effect forbidden to enter.

Thus, the efforts of Dr. Cooke had been attended with eminent success. But one objectionable rule yet remained—that which provided for setting aside “part of a day” in each week, independently of Sunday, for the purpose of separate religious instruction. With the disappearance of this rule—and the Presbyterians were not without hope that it might ere long disappear—the Synod of Ulster would have obtained all the changes in the National System which they required. However, Dr. Cooke, the Presbyterian



leader, did not press for the removal of the rule in 1840. He bided his time.

The successful move made by Dr. Cooke in January, 1840, was followed by a move not equally successful on the part of Dr. MacHale in the following February. The Archbishop of Tuam convened a meeting of Catholic prelates in Dublin for the purpose of discussing the system, and considering whether an arrangement might be arrived at with reference to its future working, in which the Catholic hierarchy could unanimously concur. It was resolved at this meeting that three bishops favourable to the National system, and three bishops unfavourable to it, should be appointed to formulate the united Catholic demands. The bishops so appointed were: the Primate, Dr. Crolly, Dr. Ryan, Bishop of Limerick, Dr. Kinsella, Bishop of Ossory (favourable to the system); Dr. MacHale, Dr. Keating, Bishop of Ferns, and Dr. Higgins, Bishop of Ardagh (unfavourable to it). The demands formulated by them were briefly these; (1) that the Catholic bishops and clergy should be the patrons of all the schools—those alike which were exclusively, or almost exclusively frequented by Catholic children, as well as those in which there was a mixed attendance of Catholic and Protestant children; (2) that the patrons should be invested with supreme power in the appointment and dismissal of teachers; (3) that they should exercise absolute control over the books to be used for the moral and religious instruction of Catholic children; (4) that they should fix and regulate the time for the giving of such instruction, without interference on the part of the Board; (5) that the lecturer in religion, morals, and history at the model or training school for teachers should be a Catholic; (6) that a model school should be founded in each province; and (7) that one prelate and two Catholic laymen from each province should be appointed to the Board, the first to be nominated by the Lord-Lieutenant, the latter by all the bishops of the province.

Such were the Catholic demands, as formulated after considerable discussion at the Dublin meeting, presided over by Dr. MacHale in February, 1840.

These demands were promptly presented to the Lord-Lieutenant by Dr. Crolly, Dr. Murray, Dr. Keating, and Dr. MacHale, and all unhesitatingly and firmly refused.<sup>6</sup>

The refusal of the Lord-Lieutenant to grant any of the Catholic demands, coupled with the concessions made to the Synod of Ulster in the preceding month, much strengthened the hands of Dr. MacHale in his opposition to the National Schools. It enabled him to say that, whereas the demands of the Presbyterians for the practical expulsion of the Catholic priests from the mixed schools of Ulster had been conceded, the demands of the Catholic bishops, even to the extent of allowing them to exercise control over the ~~order of the religious instruction of the Catholic~~ children in the schools, and for regulating the time for the giving such instruction, were resolutely refused.

The simple commentary upon both the Presbyterian and Catholic demands is, that both were subversive of the principles on which the National System had been founded. How far the Lord-Lieutenant exercised a wise or just discretion in conceding the demands of one party, and refusing those of the other, is a matter on which I consider it unnecessary to enter. As it was, the occurrence had the effect of stimulating the agitation against the system, and weakening the case of those who supported it.

<sup>6</sup> Kavanagh, "Catholic Case stated," p. 372.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE POPE MAKES PEACE, AND ARCHDEACON STOPFORD MAKES MISCHIEF.

THE whole future of the system seemed now to depend practically upon the decision of the Court of Rome, before whom, as we have already seen, all the questions connected with the working of the schools had been submitted in 1839. Since that time the power of Dr. MacHale had increased. Each day he rose more and more in popular favour. Of the whole hierarchy, he had, without any doubt, the national sentiment of the country at his back; and towards the end of 1840 it was clear that his continued hostility must be attended with consequences very damaging, if not absolutely fatal, to the existence of the schools.

The respect and almost veneration in which Dr. Murray was held by his co-religionists—clerical and lay—had had hitherto the effect of blunting the opposition of Dr. MacHale. It is no exaggeration to say that many Catholics who regarded the system with doubtful favour, had acquiesced in its maintenance simply because Dr. Murray was on the Board. However, after the concession made to Ulster in 1840—preceded as it had been by so many other concessions to the Presbyterians, and followed as it was by the denial of the Catholic claims in 1841—a feeling of doubt began to spring up as to whether Dr. Murray was sufficiently strong to resist the pressure of the Protestant party, and to prevent the system from being completely revolutionized in their interests.

By constant importunities, uncompromising hostility, and the expression of a decided determination to hold aloof from the schools until all he asked was granted, Dr. Cooke had fought the Presbyterian battle with success. It occurred to many that if the Catholic battle were to be fought with a like success, a champion stronger than Dr. Murray and as strong as Dr. Cooke should be placed at the head of the Catholic party; and some people began to ask who was so fitted to lead as the "Lion of the Fold of Judah," as O'Connell had once called the Archbishop of Tuam.

In fact, things had now come to such a pass that it only required a decision of the Court of Rome adverse to the system to unite the vast bulk of the Catholic party upon the side of Dr. MacHale.

The decision of Rome, long anxiously waited for, arrived at last, in January, 1841. It was not adverse to the system. The Pope, mainly influenced no doubt by the representations of Dr. Murray, had, without expressly declaring either for or against the principles of mixed education as applicable to the state of Ireland, decided that the National Schools were entitled to a further trial, and in order that they might the more effectually obtain it, forbade all public controversy respecting them in the future. This decision was, of course, practically against Dr. MacHale. It was only by public controversy that what he deemed the evil of the system could be exposed, and the system itself destroyed. To forbid such controversy was really to save the system from his powerful attacks, and to prolong its existence.

Whilst the Papal decision was thus in the main hostile to the Archbishop of Tuam, it contained one expression of opinion which afforded him some satisfaction, as recognizing a claim which he and others regarded as barely just. The Pope stated that in his judgment the right of ownership to the schools founded by bishops or parish priests should remain in



the hands of the founders<sup>1</sup>—an expression of opinion which, as we shall see later on, led to important results.

These were the principal terms of the Papal decision. That decision was, of course, readily acquiesced in by the whole Catholic hierarchy of Ireland, and all public controversy respecting the National Schools speedily ceased.

For twelve months the Board were left in peace. Then Dr. Cooke renewed his attacks. But one rule—or rather, a remnant of a rule—now remained which caused him discomfort—that providing for the setting apart a portion of one day in the week for separate religious instruction. In 1842 he demanded that this rule should be removed, and his demand was conceded. Thus the “fifty-two Popish holidays,” as the Presbyterians used to call the days set apart for separate religious instruction, were finally abolished. The Synod of Ulster was now thoroughly conciliated; and thenceforth Dr. Cooke, having got all he wanted, became a supporter of the National Schools.

This concession of 1842 to the Presbyterians does not seem to have had the effect of drawing Dr. MacHale from his enforced retirement. He noted the fact, but, in submission to the Papal rescript, did not attempt a renewal of hostilities. Throughout, he seems never to have acted with impatience or rashness in attacking the system. He always appears to have felt that he could afford to wait, that time would tell in his favour, that the longer he left the Board alone the more completely would they, in the end, commit themselves to a policy calculated to serve his purposes. He had waited from 1831 to 1838, and did not then commence his attacks until a careful perusal of the proceedings of the Select Committee of 1837 satisfied him that he had a strong case. After the Papal rescript of 1841, he was yet more disposed than he had been in 1831 to refrain from taking precipitate

<sup>1</sup> Rescript of Cardinal Frasoni, Prefect of the Propaganda, Jan. 16th, 1841.

action, and, therefore, permitted the concession of 1842 to pass without public comment, being resolved to await a further development of events. He waited for three years longer, during which time the system was left unassailed. Then a step was taken by the Board which not only reawakened the hostility of Dr. MacHale, but excited a feeling of distrust among the whole Catholic hierarchy.

According to the original plan as set forth in Lord Stanley's letter of 1831, the property in all the schools for the building of which any aid had been afforded by the Board, was to vest in trustees. This plan had been strictly adhered to since 1831, the trustees being generally chosen from among the founders of the schools. The founders of the Catholic schools were the Catholic clergy; and accordingly the Catholic bishops or parish priests had in all cases hitherto been appointed trustees of these establishments. In 1841, as we have seen, the Pope expressed an opinion that the ownership of the schools should vest in the bishops or parish priests. However, in 1845, immediately after receiving their charter of incorporation, the Board declared that the property in all the schools in connexion with the system—both those then in existence, and any which might thereafter be erected—should thenceforth vest in themselves. Non-compliance with the new rule thus formed was to involve a withdrawal of the grants from the non-complying schools. Against this rule the Catholic clergy protested, refusing to vest their schools in the Board. There was no division of opinion among them now. There was no necessity for a second reference to Rome, for Rome had in 1841<sup>2</sup> expressed a desire, that the ownership of the schools founded by Catholic bishops and priests should vest in the founders. Accordingly, the Board found themselves, for the first time, confronted by a united Catholic opinion, and had to give way, though not to the

<sup>2</sup> Ante, p. 187.



full extent demanded by the bishops and clergy. The surrender of the existing schools, or the forfeiture of their grants, was not insisted on; but the Commissioners determined that no grants should be given for any new schools which were not vested in themselves. So the matter ended, in a manner which was unsatisfactory to all the parties. The irritation of the Catholics at what they regarded as an attempt to deprive them of their property was not allayed; and the desire of the Board to obtain more effectual control of the schools was not gratified.

The confidence of the Catholics in the system, much shaken by this controversy, became still further estranged by an event which occurred two years afterwards. It was provided by one of the original rules, that, during the hours for separate religious instruction, no children, except those belonging to the denomination of the instructing clergyman, should be permitted to attend, without the direction or consent of their parents. The effect of this rule was that patrons or teachers were bound to exclude Catholic children during the time for Protestant religious instruction, and Protestant children during the time for Catholic religious instruction.

The regulation had been devised in order—to use the words of Lord Stanley—that the “very suspicion of proselytism might be banished” from the system. The Protestant Episcopalian party objected to this regulation. They said that no patron or teacher should be compelled to turn children away from religious instruction. The matter was one for the consideration of parents, or, indeed, for the consideration of the children themselves.<sup>3</sup> It was right that no compulsion should be used to detain the children; but on the other hand no compulsion ought to be used to exclude them. They should be permitted to exercise their own discretion in the matter. Even if the

<sup>3</sup> Evidence of Archdeacon Stopford before Royal Commission of 1854, Q. 4536.

parents requested the patrons or teachers to exclude the children on those occasions, it was a question whether the request ought to be complied with. The children ought, in fact, to be left free to go or stay just as they pleased.

Those views were submitted to the Board by the Protestant Archdeacon of Meath, Dr. Stopford, in a series of letters written between 1845 and 1847. At first the Commissioners firmly declined to make any change in the rule in question, but yielding ultimately to the importunities of Dr. Stopford, they consented to the alteration proposed by him, viz. that no compulsion should be placed on patrons or teachers to exclude any children from religious instruction; that, in fact, the matter should be left to the discretion of the parents to withdraw the children, or of the children themselves to go away or remain.

This alteration, made in 1847, much incensed the Catholic party. They said it would lead, and was meant to lead, to proselytism. It would, at all events, arouse the suspicion of proselytism, which Lord Stanley had wisely said ought to be banished. Some of the schools, they stated, were under the patronage of landlords, and if no compulsion was imposed upon teachers or patrons to exclude Catholic children from Protestant religious instruction, the influence of the landlords would be exercised to enforce the attendance of their tenants' children. The rule now altered had been originally adopted as a safeguard and protection for those very tenants, over whom the landlords possessed almost absolute power. With its withdrawal, the faith of hundreds of Catholic peasant youths would be placed at the mercy of proselytizing landowners and their ecclesiastical friends. This was the position taken up by the Catholic hierarchy after the introduction of what came to be called the "Stopford rule."

Not in vain had Dr. MacHale waited patiently for



the development of events calculated to draw the hierarchy to his side. The "Stopford rule" made him master of the situation. Its adoption, coupled with the changes which had already been made in the original plan, seems to have convinced the whole Catholic hierarchy that the only solution of the education question was to be found in the establishment by the State of a system of separate education. This was the view held by Dr. MacHale from the outset, and advanced by him in 1838 and 1840. This was the view which the majority of the hierarchy now felt inclined to adopt and advocate.

During 1848 and 1849 the subject of education did not much occupy the public mind in Ireland. The country was yet suffering from the effects of famine, and great political excitement prevailed. But between 1850 and 1854 the controversy was revived, and the Catholic hierarchy, as a body, for the first time took the field in earnest against the National Schools.

It was about this time that attention was directed to the lesson-books issued by the Board. In an Irish National System of Education the subject of Irish history ought certainly, it was said, to occupy a prominent place. What place did it in fact occupy in the State Schools?

In the "Fifth Book of Lessons"—a book compiled, as stated in the preface, for the purpose of "carrying forward the instruction of the most advanced pupils in the subjects [of history, literature, and science]"<sup>4</sup>—the history of Ireland was disposed of thus: "As to English affairs during this period [from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries], Henry II. had invaded Ireland and received the submission of the Irish kings, and from that time the English kings retained a kind of sovereignty in it till the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the British power was more firmly consolidated."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Preface to "Fifth Book of Lessons" [National Schools], published 1835-36.

<sup>5</sup> "Fifth Book of Lessons," 1835 edition, p. 209.

In this manner was the national history treated in the National Schools. How was the history of Scotland treated? In the same book was written, "Edward I. annexed the principality of Wales to his kingdom, A.D. 1283. He afterwards attempted to do the same with Scotland, but was successfully resisted, particularly by Sir William Wallace. This celebrated patriot repeatedly drove his troops out of the kingdom. He was ultimately taken and basely executed by Edward, and a new effort projected to subdue the Scots. But before the army of Edward entered Scotland he died, leaving his crown and enterprise to his son Edward II. This prince followed up the intention of his father, but was defeated at Bannockburn, and thus the independence of the Scots was established."

This sketch of Scottish history, brief as it was (it was, however, about twice as long as the sketch of Irish history), left little room for doubting the nationality of the author of the "Fifth Book of Lessons." It was perfectly allowable in writing history for Irish youths to speak of Sir William Wallace as a "celebrated patriot," to mention the fact of his being "basely executed by Edward," and to refer with pride to the battle of Bannockburn and the establishment of Scotch independence. These were things that ought to interest Irish youth. But it was not allowable to speak of Art MacMurrough,<sup>6</sup> or Hugh O'Neil,<sup>7</sup> as "patriots," or to state that prior to the Tudor era

<sup>6</sup> Art MacMurrough was king of Leinster during the reign of Richard II. He was a very formidable enemy to English rule in Ireland. He levied exactions on the Pale, and despite all efforts of the English, maintained the independence of his own kingdom. D'Arcy McGee, in his "History of Ireland," speaks of him thus: "In the Irish history of the middle ages—from Brian's era to Hugh O'Neil's—he has no equal for prudence, foresight, perseverance, valour, and success." The Four Masters declare that "he was a good father, and a true friend, a cultivator of knowledge, and a lover of letters." Mr. Kavanagh, late member for Carlow, is a lineal descendant of Art MacMurrough.—Webb, "Compendium of Irish History."

<sup>7</sup> The struggles of Hugh O'Neil, Earl of Tyrone, with the English between 1594 and 1603 are familiar facts of history.



the English had practically lost all hold on the country, and that its ultimate subjugation by Elizabeth was only effected after a sanguinary struggle, in which the generals of the queen had acted with excessive treachery and barbarous cruelty.<sup>8</sup> These were things which it did not concern Irish youths to know. If Irish youths wanted to study history they might read about William Wallace and the Scots. This apparently was Mr. Carlile's notion of the sort of history that ought to be taught in the Irish National Schools.

In the geographical part of the "Second Book of Lessons," the following information was communicated: "On the east of Ireland is England where the Queen lives; many people who live in Ireland were born in England, and we speak the same language, and are called one nation."

The first edition of the "Third Book of Lessons," published in 1835, contained a number of lines "sent to the Irish Harp Society assembled on St. Patrick's Day, by Miss Balfour." They ran thus:—

The harp that, in darkness and silence forsaken,  
Had slumber'd while ages roll'd slowly along,  
Once more in its own native land shall awaken,  
And pour from its chords all the rapture of song.

Unhurt by the mildews that o'er it were stealing,  
Its strings in full chorus shall warble sublime—  
Shall rouse all the ardour of patriot feeling,  
And snatch a bright wreath from the relics of time.

Sweet harp! on some tale of past sorrow while dwelling,  
Still plaintive and sad breathes the murmuring sound,  
The bright, sparkling tear of sad sympathy swelling  
Shall freshen the shamrock that twines thee around.

Sweet harp! o'er thy tones, with fervent devotion,  
We mingle a patriot smile with a tear:  
Not fainter the smiles, not less pure the devotion,  
That waits on the cause that assembles us here.

<sup>8</sup> See vol. ii. Appendix B.

In the same edition was the poem of "The Harper," by Campbell, perhaps better known by its refrain, "Poor dog Tray :"—

On the green banks of Shannon when Sheelagh was nigh,  
No blithe Irish lad was so happy as I ;  
No harp like my own could so cheerily play ;  
And wherever I went was poor dog Tray.

When at last I was forced from my Sheelagh to part,  
She said, while the sorrow was big at her heart,  
Oh ! remember your Sheelagh when far, far away,  
And be kind, my dear Pat, to your poor dog Tray.

The book also contained Mrs. Hemans' "Homes of England," and James Grey's "Scotland," and Southey's "Battle of Blenheim." In the second edition of this Book of Lessons, brought out in 1838 by Archbishop Whately, the lines by Miss Balfour, and the poem of "The Harper," were expunged. Verses containing allusions to "harps," "shamrocks," "patriot smiles," and the "green banks of the Shannon," were not apparently considered safe reading for the youths of the National Schools of Ireland. The "Homes of England," "Scotland," and the "Battle of Blenheim," were of course retained. But it was not only Irish topics or allusions which were interdicted in the National Schools, the words "liberty," "freedom," "love of country," were placed under ban. In the first edition of the "Third Book of Lessons," Campbell's popular poem, "The Downfall of Poland," was inserted,—

When leagued oppression pour'd to Northern wars,  
Her whisker'd pandours and her fierce hussars,  
Hope for a season bid the world farewell,  
And Freedom shriek'd as Kosciusko fell, &c.

Under the heading "Love of Country," Scott's well-known lines commencing,—

Breathes there a man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land ?  
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,  
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,  
From wandering on a foreign strand ?



were also inserted. On the publication of the second edition of this book in 1838, Campbell's poem and Scott's poem were struck out by Archbishop Whately, but the following hymn (which the children were taught regularly to sing) was retained,—

I thank the goodness and the grace  
That on my birth have smiled,  
And made me in these Christian days  
A happy English child, &c.

What was the meaning, the Catholic people asked, of the adoption of those suppressing and expunging processes? Was the National Board afraid to put the ideas of "freedom," "liberty," "love of country," into the heads of Irish youths? and if so, was such a Board fit to be entrusted with the education of the children of Ireland?

No Irish boy was to be permitted to learn the history of his own country; he might barely pronounce her name; but he was to be taught to sing goody-goody hymns with the refrain that he was a "happy English child."

Was this Dr. Whately's idea of what a national system of education for Ireland ought to be? Did he think, or did the Government think, that the Irish people were to be denationalized and anglicized—for such clearly was the end to attain which the National Schools had been founded—by a policy so puerile and absurd? Anyhow, men said, the time had come for making it manifest to the National Board and the Government that the people of Ireland were determined no longer to tolerate a system so hostile to the national sentiment of the country.

In February, 1850, the Board sustained a severe loss in the death of Dr. Crolly, the Catholic Primate of Armagh—a warm supporter of the Schools—and received a blow not less severe in the appointment as his successor in the primacy of Dr. Cullen, who was an uncompromising opponent of mixed education.

Between February and August, 1850, the hostility of the Catholic clergy to the schools increased month by month. In August this hostility found definite and authoritative expression in the decrees passed at the Synod of Thurles, which condemned the National system, and pronounced in favour of separate education.

In 1851 Dr. Cullen addressed a letter to Alderman Boylan, of Dublin, tracing the history of the system, showing the changes which had been introduced, from the concessions made to the Synod of Ulster to the adoption of the Stopford rule, and pointing out in forcible language what he deemed the un-Catholic character of the schools.\*

In 1852 an event, or rather, two events, occurred which diminished the chances of an amicable arrangement being arrived at between the Hierarchy and the Board. Dr. Murray died, and Dr. Cullen became Archbishop of Dublin.

The new Archbishop was untiring in his efforts to damage what he regarded as so many proselytizing institutions. He directed his attacks mainly against the books used in the schools, objecting especially to the Scripture extracts, and condemning strongly Dr. Whately's "Evidences of Christianity."

It was now manifest that a struggle which would not soon be terminated between the Catholic Hierarchy and the National Board had begun.

\* See vol. ii. Appendix C.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION DEMANDED.

It will be recollected that the National Board, as originally composed, consisted of the following members: The Duke of Leinster, Archbishop Whately, Archbishop Murray, the Rev. James Carlile, Dr. Sadleir, Mr. Blake, and Mr. Holmes. By the end of the year 1853 all these members had ceased to be connected with the system. In 1838 Mr. Carlile retired in consequence of some irregularities that had arisen in the training department, and which a committee appointed by the Board to inquire into, had condemned.<sup>1</sup>

In 1841 the Duke of Leinster retired, to make way for his son, the Marquess of Kildare. In 1847 Mr. Holmes retired, disapproving apparently of the form of lease made in that year.<sup>2</sup> In 1848 Mr. Blake died. In 1851 Dr. Sadleir died, and in 1852 Archbishop Murray. In July, 1853, Archbishop Whately retired under the following circumstances.

In 1838, as we have already seen, his Grace had written a book for use in the schools, entitled, "Lessons on the Truth of Christianity." Of this book Archbishop Murray disapproved; and to two chapters of it, which, as alleged, dealt with the subject of Paganism and Christianity, leaving it to the readers to decide

<sup>1</sup> Kavanagh, "Catholic Case stated," p. 254. No blame in the matter attached to Mr. Carlile himself, beyond that of carelessness. The officials under him—who were mostly Scotch, of his own appointment—were the responsible parties, and their error was, so far as I can understand, one of mere negligence.—Letter *penes me*.

<sup>2</sup> Kavanagh, p. 254.

which was the preferable system, he strongly objected. A discussion on the respective merits of Paganism and Christianity was one, he thought, on which the children of the National Schools—or, indeed, any children—should not be invited to enter. The subject was one fit only for the consideration of matured and trained intelligence. In deference to his opinions those two chapters were expunged.<sup>3</sup> However, the book, even without them, was still open to objection from a Catholic point of view, for it dealt with the subject of Christianity purely on rational grounds, appealing simply to private judgment, and ignoring altogether the question of Church authority.<sup>4</sup> But, as the chapters which Archbishop Murray condemned from a Christian point of view generally, were struck out, he was unwilling, in the face of that concession, to appear too exacting in his opposition, and accordingly consented to the adoption of the work by the Board, on condition that it should be used for the purpose of separate religious instruction only.<sup>5</sup> This condition was accepted, and the book was placed in circulation. We have seen that Archbishop MacHale denounced the “Lessons on the Truth of Christianity” from the moment of its publication. He does not seem to have believed that the condition on which Dr. Murray had consented to its adoption by the Board would be faithfully observed. For a time the book might not be forced on Catholic children, but in the end he seems to have thought it would, and the proper mode of dealing with the work, in his view, was to have it suppressed at once.

When the differences between the members of the

<sup>3</sup> Evidence of Dean Meyler before Select Committee of the House of Lords on the National System of Education, Ireland, 1854, Q. 2088.

<sup>4</sup> See Evidence of Dean Meyler before Select Committee of House of Lords on National System of Education, Ireland, Q. 2200.

<sup>5</sup> Dean Meyler said of the book that it was a “very fair book for Protestants to read, as it contained their principles in a very fair and candid manner.”—Select Committee (Lords) on the National System of Education, Ireland, Q. 2096.



Catholic Hierarchy on the subject of the National System were submitted to Rome in 1841, the attention of the Pope was directed to Dr. Whately's book. The Pope strongly disapproved of it, and felt disposed unequivocally to condemn a system of education for Catholic youths under which such a work was used. It was, however, explained to his Holiness, at the instance of Dr. Murray, that the book would not be read by Catholic children; that in fact it was a Protestant publication intended for use during the separate religious instruction of Protestant youths, and no more. His Holiness was satisfied with this explanation, and offered no further opposition to the book.

In 1843, Dr. Whately wrote another book, entitled, "Christian Evidences," and in it he inserted apparently some of the matter contained in the chapters which had been expunged from the "Lessons."<sup>6</sup> This second work seems to have been adopted by the Board without any discussion.<sup>7</sup> However, neither the "Lessons" nor the "Christian Evidences" was much used up to 1850; the former might have been read during the separate religious instruction of Protestant children, but no effort was made to force it on the Catholic youths.

In 1850 a new departure was taken, and an effort for the first time essayed to press both the "Lessons," and "Christian Evidences" into use among Catholics. The attention of the Catholic bishops was at once directed to both publications. They protested against the attempt which was being made to bring the books into general use. The public mind was soon agitated upon the subject. The alarming cry of

<sup>6</sup> Evidence of Master Murphy before Select Committee on National Education, Ireland, Q. 8842.

<sup>7</sup> Dr Murray was not present when it was sanctioned, and there is reason for believing that his attention was not drawn to it, otherwise he would never have consented to its use. See Evidence of Mr. MacDonald before Select Committee (Lords) on National Education, Ireland, Q. 1868, *et seq.*; see also Evidence of Master Murphy, *ibid.* Q. 8842.

“proselytism in the National Schools” was raised. The books were soon brought under the notice of the Commissioners, and a resolution was ultimately passed, in 1853, prohibiting their use for the future.

Upon the occasion of the passing of this resolution, Archbishop Whately retired from the Board.

I cannot avoid saying that I regard the attempt to bring the “Lessons on the Truth of Christianity” into general use in the schools as not fair to the Catholics, considering the conditions on which Dr. Murray had consented to the adoption of the book; while the introduction of the work on “Christian Evidences” was eminently imprudent. The objections to it were not confined exclusively to Catholics, but were shared largely by Protestants; this will appear by the following extract from the evidence given by Mr. MacDonald, who succeeded Mr. Carlile as Presbyterian Commissioner, before a Select Committee of the Lords in 1854:—

Q. Have you heard any objections made to the use of [the “Christian Evidences”] as being a book not well adapted for children of so young an age as are generally brought up in the National schools?

A. That is, I think, the strongest practical objection made against the book; Roman Catholics conceive that it is a book written entirely in a Protestant spirit, and that it is a book written upon a subject which ought not to be introduced into poor schools attended by children, boys and girls, between the ages of ten and fifteen, especially in a country like Ireland, where infidelity is happily unknown amongst the poor, and where it may be considered as very unwise to introduce the question of Christian evidences, inasmuch as the children have no doubts upon the subject.

The MARQUESS OF SALISBURY,—Is that opinion confined to Roman Catholics, or do Protestants partake in it?

Mr. MACDONALD,—I think it is partaken very largely by Protestants; I think the generality of fair men before whom the question was put, would say that it was not a wise proceeding to introduce a book of “Christian Evidences” into schools for the reading of poor children between ten and fifteen years of age.

The MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE,—You stated that these books



[the "Lessons on the Truth of Christianity," and the "Christian Evidences"] have been objected to by Protestants; do you recollect whether they have been objected to by clergymen of the Church of England at any time?

Mr. MACDONALD,—I have heard clergymen of the Church of England discuss the matter, and they have certainly expressed surprise that the book [the "Christian Evidences"] was ever introduced into the system, and I think they have taken the double ground that the book appeared to them to be written in a thoroughly Protestant spirit, and as such objectionable for our purposes, though very much admired by them; and secondly they did not think it a judicious thing to introduce any book of Christian evidences, whether written in a Protestant or Roman Catholic spirit, into poor schools attended by children of Irish peasants, who have no sort of doubt upon the subject of Christianity.<sup>s</sup>

The hostility of the Catholics was not appeased by the withdrawal of Archbishop Whately's books from the schools, or the retirement of Archbishop Whately himself from the Board. They had by this time—1854—completely lost confidence in the system, and directed their efforts either to overthrow it, or bring about radical changes in its working. The spirit of conciliation and compromise which had to a considerable extent been evinced during Dr. Murray's time, existed no more. The Catholics were now resolved to make the National System—if it were to be maintained—a Catholic system, as the Protestants had tried in the past, and were still trying, to make it a Protestant one.

One of their main objections at the time was to the composition of the Board. They contended

<sup>s</sup> Ibid. Q. 1877-79. It may be worth stating here that, on the establishment of the National System, Mr. Carlile had submitted to him for use in the schools a number of Catholic books, which he adopted. Of them, Mr. Carlile said, "These books, to the credit of the Roman Catholics be it said, contained a larger portion of religious instruction of a kind altogether unobjectionable to Protestants, than any school-books I had met with; and after the alteration of a single page, and of some insulated expressions, they received the sanction of the Board."—Letter to the *Times*, quoted in Evidence of Mr. Cross, Select Committee on National Education, Ireland, Q. 11.

that Catholics were not yet fairly represented on it. Of the seven members originally appointed, five were Protestants; and of seventeen members appointed between 1838 and 1853, eleven were Protestants.<sup>9</sup> This preponderance of the Protestant element was, they said, unfair, considering that the large majority of the children educated in the schools were Catholic, and little calculated to inspire the confidence of the people, and satisfy them of the really national character of the system. They also reiterated the charge of proselytism. The alleged proselytism was, it would seem, confined mainly to the north. Constant efforts, it was said, were made in the Presbyterian schools of Ulster to tamper with the faith of Catholic children; and it was proved that, at least, 1857 of these children attended Scriptural classes conducted by Presbyterian teachers.

These proselytizing practices were reported to the Board by one of their inspectors (Mr. Keenan) in 1855. The Commissioners, however, not only took no notice of the matter, but, with a culpability that cannot too strongly be condemned, suppressed the paragraph in Mr. Keenan's report relating to the subject, thus preventing the fact from being brought to the knowledge of the Government.<sup>1</sup>

Parliament, and the public generally, first became aware of what Mr. Keenan had written with reference

<sup>9</sup> Of the Protestant Commissioners, eight were Anglicans, and two Presbyterians; one was a Unitarian. See Abbé Perraud, "Ireland under English Rule," p. 378.

<sup>1</sup> The suppressed paragraph in Mr. Keenan's report was as follows:—"In all the schools which I visited in Belfast that were taught by Presbyterian teachers, the practice prevailed of giving common religious instruction to all, none of them retiring. Indeed, it is pretty general throughout the Counties of Antrim and Londonderry, but I never observed it to prevail in any other part of the country. By this custom religious instruction is separate as to time, but not as to the distinction of the denominations whilst religious instruction is going on. I have brought these practices under the notice of the Board in my various reports."—*The Nation*, April 28th, 1860; see also Hansard, vol. 151, p. 1218.



to the existence of proselytism in the northern schools, when Mr. John Francis Maguire called the attention of the House of Commons to the fact in 1858.<sup>2</sup>

It was also proved, before an inquiry conducted by an Anglican and a Catholic Bishop, that from 1847 to 1855 all the Catholic children attending the Lancastrian Industrial National School in Belfast, had assisted every morning at an explanation of the Scripture by a Presbyterian master, followed by religious hymns. It was further proved that children who had not assisted at these Protestant exercises were deprived of their breakfast, and received neither secular nor industrial instruction during the day.<sup>3</sup>

It was, in fact, demonstrated that attempts at proselytism had been made in the Presbyterian schools of Ulster.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Cardwell and the supporters of the system admitted, in 1860, that 1816 Catholic children were receiving religious instruction from Presbyterian teachers in these schools, but added that the Catholics themselves were in some sense to blame for not exercising greater vigilance in guarding against the practice.<sup>5</sup> They also asserted that, though the children in question had been subjected to proselytizing influences, not a single instance of successful proselytism could be cited. The Catholics rejoined that the members of their persuasion on the Board had certainly not been sufficiently vigilant, but averred that the Catholics of the country could not be held

<sup>2</sup> See Hansard, August 16th, 1860, p. 1402.

<sup>3</sup> Abbé Perraud, "Ireland under English Rule," p. 397.

<sup>4</sup> See Evidence given before Select Committee (H.L.) on National Schools, 1854; particularly the evidence of Dr. Henry (Presbyterian Commissioner between 1838 and 1859), of Mr. McCready (Presbyterian Inspector), of Dr. Cooke, Rev. J. Campbell (Incumbent of Trinity Church, Belfast), Rev. C. King (former Rector of Magnerafeel, Co. Londonderry), Dean Kennedy (Protestant Dean of Clonfert), Mr. A. G. Stapleton, an English gentleman, who made a tour of inspection in 1850. Also speech of Mr. Maguire in the House of Commons on August 16, 1860; and Debates on the subject of Irish Education, in Hansard, vol. 151, pp. 1204, 1237, and vol. 160, pp. 1374—1443.

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, vol. 180, pp. 1374—1443.

responsible for this, the appointments being the appointments of the Government, not theirs. They further declared that the Government had taken care not to consult the public opinion of the country with reference to these appointments, but had chosen pliable or inefficient Catholics, who became little better than mere tools in the hands of their more able Protestant Fellow-Commissioners. That no single instance of a conversion from Catholicism to Presbyterianism in the northern schools could be cited, the Catholics admitted, but alleged that the injury was done in making the attempt. It was not the fault of the Presbyterians that proselytes had not been made.<sup>6</sup> In face of the fact, that 1816 children were receiving religious instruction in Protestant schools from Protestant teachers, could it be said, they asked, that the "suspicion" of proselytism—to the "banishing" of which Lord Stanley had attached so much importance—was removed from the system? The National Schools, they urged, had been tried and had proved a failure, and it was now the duty of the Government to give the Irish people what they had all along demanded, a system of denominational education. The arguments which Dr. MacHale had used in 1838 were employed. A mixed system might, it was said, do well in a country where the population was mixed, but there was not a mixed population in Ireland. In Munster, Leinster, and Connaught, the schools of the Board were attended almost exclusively by Catholics. It was only in Ulster that the system could at all fairly be described as mixed.

In the first-named provinces out of a total of 394,725 pupils attending the schools in 1856-57, 386,298 were Catholics, the remaining 8427 being composed of Angli-

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Denver, the Catholic Bishop of Armagh, stated before the Select Committee of 1854, that he never heard of a successful case of proselytism, though he heard of futile attempts; and Mr. Maguire made a similar admission in the House of Commons in 1860.—Hansard August 16th, 1860.



cans and Presbyterians. The exact numbers as given by Mr. Maguire in the House of Commons on the 16th of August, 1860, were—

	Catholics.	Anglicans.	Presbyterians.
Munster . . .	164,911	1678	109
Leinster . . .	143,956	3812	216
Connaught . . .	77,431	2405	207
	<hr/> 386,298	<hr/> 7,895	<hr/> 532

In the face of such figures it was idle to pretend that the National System had succeeded as a mixed system in the south and west of Ireland. In the north no doubt the case was different. There out of a total of 172,000 pupils, 51,314 were Presbyterians, and 21,147 Anglicans, the rest being Catholics. But it could scarcely be said that the working of the mixed system in Ulster had been followed by satisfactory results. In the northern schools proselytizing practices—which it was the object of the system to prevent—had been resorted to, and in no part of the country did the spirit of religious strife—which it was hoped the mixed system would tend to allay—run higher.

The attacks thus made by the Catholic party on the National Schools between 1854 and 1860 were joined in by the Protestant Episcopalians. The system, they also said, was not national;<sup>7</sup> on the contrary, the nation, disunited on many subjects, were united in their opposition to it. Denominational grants were what the Irish people of all religious persuasions wanted, and were entitled to receive. The Government,<sup>8</sup> however, was resolved to stand by the system. It had not, they

<sup>7</sup> See speeches of Mr. Walpole, Hansard, June 17th, 1856; Mr. (now Lord) Cairns, *ibid.* June 23rd, 1856; Lord Clancarty, *ibid.* August 5th, 1859, and *ibid.* April 30th, 1860; Lord Cork, *ibid.* same date; Mr. Butt, *ibid.* July 17th, 1860; Mr. Whiteside, *ibid.* same date; Mr. Butt, April 19th, 1861; Mr. Lefroy, *ibid.* same date; Mr. Whiteside, May 17th, 1881. Mr. Butt, Mr. Whiteside, and Mr. Lefroy were the principal champions of the Ascendency party in Parliament between 1855 and 1861.

<sup>8</sup> Neither Tories nor Whigs had at any time since its establishment been prepared to overthrow the system.

conceded, fully realized the expectations of its founders. But it was not a failure ; on the contrary it had succeeded to a very large extent.

In founding the schools the Government of Lord Grey had three main purposes in view :—

1. The education of the poorer classes in Ireland ;
2. The prevention of proselytism in the State schools ;
3. The establishment of mixed “ education.”

The first of these purposes—and it was the main purpose—had been fully attained. The number of schools and pupils had gone on increasing year by year. In 1833 the number of schools was 789, the number of pupils on the rolls 107,000. In 1843 the number of schools had increased to 2912, the number of pupils to 355,000. In 1853 the number of schools had further increased to 5023, the number of pupils to 550,000. In 1859 the number of schools had still further increased to 5496, the number of pupils to 570,000.<sup>9</sup> The second purpose had also in the main been achieved. Only with reference to the third could the assertion fairly be made, that the National System had not succeeded.

However, the Government did not despair of the ultimate achievement of this object too.

The justice of some of the complaints urged by the Catholics against the system was recognized. The composition of the Board was admitted to be unfair, and the manner in which subjects relating to Ireland were treated in the school-books un-national.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See speech of Mr. Cardwell, House of Commons, July 17th, and August 16th, 1860. One of the arguments urged in favour of the Kildare Street Society was the increase of the number of its schools and pupils ; but Mr. Stanley then said the Irish “ appetite ” for education was so “ voracious ” that they would frequent any educational establishments.

<sup>1</sup> The inequality of Catholics on the Board Mr. Cardwell spoke of in 1860 as “ a great and just objection.”—Hansard, August 16th, 1860, p. 388 ; see also Abbé Perraud, “ Ireland under English Rule,” p. 413.



It was now resolved that a change should be made in both these respects. Accordingly in 1860 the Catholics were placed on a numerical equality with the Protestants on the Board. The number of Commissioners was increased to twenty, of whom ten were Catholics.

Effect was also given to the objections urged by the Catholics against increasing the number of model schools, and it was decided that for the future none should be erected without consulting Parliament, thus placing a check on the action of the Board. But to the alternative demand of the Catholics that there should be a return to the system as originally founded by Lord Derby, or the establishment of denominational schools instead, the Government gave a decided refusal.<sup>2</sup>

The Catholic party were not reconciled to the National Schools by the concessions of 1860. They still persisted in their alternative demand for denominational education, or a return to the system as originally founded. But the Government adhered firmly to their determination of yielding to the popular outcry neither upon the one point nor the other; and as the question stood in 1860, it practically stands now.

Meanwhile the anticipations entertained by the Government, that a system of mixed education would, through the agency of the National Schools, be ultimately established in Ireland, have not, as yet, been realized. In Leinster, Munster, and Connaught the schools are still practically denominational—being chiefly conducted under the patronage of the Catholic

<sup>2</sup> In March, 1858, Lord Derby, speaking of the changes which had been made in the system, said: "I admit, on my own part, that I much regret, first of all, that as a system of united education, which was intended to be national, it has to a considerable extent failed to realize the expectation of its promoters. I regret that in the great bulk of the schools, contrary to the original intent, there not only is no religious instruction given, but no facilities even are given for separate religious instructions by the ministers of the different religious persuasions, out of school-hours."—Lord Derby, House of Lords, March, 1858.

clergy, and almost exclusively attended by Catholic children. Thus, out of a total of 699,199 pupils on the rolls of all the schools in those provinces for the year 1880, 669,595 were Catholics. Of the rest, 25,534 were Anglicans, 2601 Presbyterians, and 1469 belonging to other non-Catholic denominations.

Further to particularize, the total number of schools in the same provinces under Catholic teachers, in which there was a mixed attendance of Catholic and Protestant pupils, was 1867; the total number under Protestant teachers where there was a like attendance, 129; and the total number under the joint management of Catholic and Protestant teachers, similarly attended, 43.

The number of pupils on the rolls of the 1867 schools under Catholic management was as follows:—

MUNSTER.			
Catholics	.	.	106,371
Anglicans	.	.	2,428
Presbyterians	.	.	105
Others	.	.	58
			<hr/>
			108,962

LEINSTER.			
Catholics	.	.	90,162
Anglicans	.	.	3,129
Presbyterians	.	.	260
Others	.	.	37
			<hr/>
			93,588

CONNAUGHT.			
Catholics	.	.	73,238
Anglicans	.	.	2,655
Presbyterians	.	.	193
Others	.	.	58
			<hr/>
			76,144

The number of pupils on the rolls of the schools under Protestant management:—



MUNSTER.				
Catholics	.	.	.	463
Anglicans	.	.	.	1,693
Presbyterians	.	.	.	245
Others	.	.	.	214
				<hr/>
				2,615
LEINSTER.				
Catholics	.	.	.	845
Anglicans	.	.	.	3,433
Presbyterians	.	.	.	469
Others	.	.	.	112
				<hr/>
				4,859
CONNAUGHT.				
Catholics	.	.	.	815
Anglicans	.	.	.	1,476
Presbyterians	.	.	.	235
Others	.	.	.	83
				<hr/>
				2,609

The number of pupils on the rolls of the schools under joint management of Protestants and Catholics :—

MUNSTER.				
Catholics	.	.	.	1,264
Anglicans	.	.	.	816
Presbyterians	.	.	.	115
Others	.	.	.	103
				<hr/>
				2,298
LEINSTER.				
Catholics	.	.	.	5,327
Anglicans	.	.	.	1,573
Presbyterians	.	.	.	311
Others	.	.	.	200
				<hr/>
				7,411
CONNAUGHT.				
Catholics	.	.	.	45
Anglicans	.	.	.	96
Presbyterians	.	.	.	40
Others	.	.	.	57
				<hr/>
				238

Or, to put the matter another way, the percentage of the total mixed attendance of Catholics and Protestants in the schools under Catholic management was—Munster, Catholics, 97·6 per cent.; Protestants, 2·4 per cent.;—Leinster, Catholics, 96·3 per cent.; Protestants, 3·7 per cent.;—Connaught, Catholics, 96·2; Protestants, 3·8. The like percentage in the schools under Protestant teachers was—Munster, Protestants, 82·3; Catholics, 17·7;—Leinster, Protestant, 82·6; Catholics, 17·4;—Connaught, Protestants, 68·8; Catholics, 31·2.

In the schools under the joint management of Catholic and Protestant teachers, the percentage similarly reckoned was—Munster, Catholics, 55·0; Protestants, 45·0;—Leinster, Catholics, 71·9; Protestants, 28·1;—Connaught, Catholics, 18·9; Protestants, 81·1.

In the same provinces the total number of schools in which the attendance was exclusively Catholic or Protestant was as follows:—

#### SCHOOLS AND PUPILS EXCLUSIVELY CATHOLIC.

	Schools.	Pupils.
Munster . . .	1,094	171,676
Leinster . . .	724	108,452
Connaught . . .	656	110,937
	<hr/> 2,474	<hr/> 391,065

#### SCHOOLS AND PUPILS EXCLUSIVELY PROTESTANT.

	Schools.	Pupils.
Munster . . .	45	{ 2,544 Anglicans 130 Presbyterians 208 other Dissenters
Leinster . . .	80	{ 4,441 Anglicans 357 Presbyterians 204 other Dissenters
Connaught . . .	25	{ 1,250 Anglicans 141 Presbyterians 135 other Dissenters
Total for three	<hr/> 150	<hr/> 9,410



Thus there were in Munster, Leinster, and Connaught, 2624 schools attended exclusively by Catholics *or* Protestants, and 1996 attended by Catholics *and* Protestants. Of the former—which we shall call the “unmixed” schools—2474 were attended by 391,065 Catholic pupils, and 150 by 9410 Protestant pupils. Of the latter, or “mixed schools,” 1867 were under exclusively Catholic teachers, being attended by 269,771 Catholic, and by 1823 Protestant children; 129 were under exclusively Protestant teachers, being attended by 7960 Protestant, and 2123 Catholic children; 43 were under the joint management of Catholic and Protestant teachers. The attendance in them being—Catholics, 6636; Protestants, 3311.

With reference to Ulster; there, out of a total 383,821 pupils on the rolls, 185,462 were Catholics; 113,028 Presbyterians; 76,684 Anglicans; and 8647 members of other Protestant dissenting denominations. The total number of schools in this province under exclusively Catholic teachers, in which there was a mixed attendance of Catholic and Protestant children, was 937; the number under Protestant teachers where there was a like attendance, 1144; the number under the joint management of Catholic and Protestants similarly attended, 55.

The number of the pupils on the rolls of the schools under Catholic management was :—

Catholics . . . .	107,906
Anglicans . . . .	9,171
Presbyterians . . . .	5,642
Others . . . .	275
	<hr/>
	122,994

The number of pupils on the rolls of the schools under Protestant management :—

Catholics . . . . .	23,060
Anglicans . . . . .	45,801
Presbyterians . . . . .	69,226
Others . . . . .	4,881
	<hr/>
	142,968

The number of pupils on the rolls of the schools under joint management :—

Catholics . . . . .	3,944
Anglicans . . . . .	3,603
Presbyterians . . . . .	4,330
Others . . . . .	679
	<hr/>
	12,556

That is to say, the percentage of the total number of Catholics and Protestants on the rolls in the schools under Catholic management was—Catholics, 87·7 per cent.; Protestants, 12·3; the percentage in schools under Protestant teachers—Catholics, 16·1 per cent.; Protestants, 83·9 per cent.: the percentage in schools under joint management—Catholics, 31·4 per cent.; Protestants, 68·6.

In the same province the total number of schools in which the attendance was exclusively Catholic or Protestant was 707, of which 305 were under Catholic teachers, and 402 under Protestant.

The schools under Catholic management were, according to the return on the rolls, attended by 50,547 pupils exclusively Catholic; and those under Protestant teachers, by 54,573 pupils exclusively Protestant, thus composed :—

Presbyterians . . . . .	33,720
Anglicans . . . . .	18,048
Others . . . . .	2,805
	<hr/>
	54,573

It would accordingly seem that in Ulster there were 707 schools attended exclusively by Catholics or Protestants, and 2136 attended by Catholics and Protestants. Of the former, or “unmixed” schools, 305



were Catholic, attended by 50,547 pupils; and 402 Protestant, attended by 54,573 pupils. Of the latter, or "mixed," there were 937 under exclusively Catholic management, attended by 107,906 Catholic, and 15,088 Protestant children; 1144 were under exclusively Protestant management, attended by 119,915 Protestants, and 23,060 Catholics; and 55 were under the joint management of Catholic and Protestant teachers, being attended by 3944 Catholics, and 8612 Protestants.<sup>3</sup>

From these figures it appears that in all the provinces the strong tendency of both Catholics and Protestants is to attend only the schools which are under the management of members of their respective persuasions—in fact, to convert the schools into denominational institutions; and so far as Munster, Leinster, and Connaught are concerned, it may safely be asserted that Lord Stanley's system, as a system of united education, has almost completely failed. In Ulster the case is somewhat different; but even there it would scarcely be accurate to say that the mixed system has been established on any solid foundation.

However, two of the main objects for which the schools were established have been attained. Through them the poorer classes of Irish youths have been enabled (1) to receive the benefits of an excellent primary education with, (2) upon the whole, little danger to their religious convictions. The number of schools in 1859 was, we have seen, 5496; the number of pupils on the rolls, 570,000. In 1880, the number of schools had increased to 7590; the number of pupils on the rolls to 1,083,020,<sup>4</sup> of which 855,057 were Catholics, 115,629 Presbyterians, 102,218 Anglicans, and 10,116 members of other Protestant Dissenting denominations; the percentage of the members of each reli-

<sup>3</sup> Forty-seventh Report of the Commissioners on National Education, Ireland, 1880.

<sup>4</sup> The average daily attendance, however, was only 468,557.

gious persuasion to the total number on the rolls being,—

Catholics . . . . .	79·0
Presbyterians . . . . .	10·7
Anglicans . . . . .	9·4
Others . . . . .	0·9

To sum up what I have written with reference to the National Schools.

Between 1831 and 1838 the system was opposed by the Protestants—Episcopalian and Presbyterian—and supported by the Catholics. The Protestant Episcopalians, in the main, held aloof from the system, while the Presbyterians endeavoured to reform it in their own interests, and so far succeeded in this respect, that between 1831 and 1840 they obtained the following concessions from the Board:—

1. The abrogation of the rule enabling the Board to publish books of religious instruction at prime cost.

2. The abrogation of the rule requiring applications for grants to be signed by clergymen of all denominations in the districts where schools were needed.

3. The amendment of the rule which allowed only one day, or at most two days, in the week to be set apart for religious instruction, to the extent that one or two hours during every day in the week might be devoted to that purpose.

4. The amendment of the rule which provided for the setting apart “one whole day” in the week for religious instruction, to the extent that “part of a day,” instead of a “whole day,” should be so devoted.

5. The abolition of the rule requiring that part of a day should be set aside for religious instruction.

The Presbyterians having obtained most of these concessions prior to 1838, Dr. MacHale then began his attacks on the system.

In the same year Dr. Whately began the work of excising what he apparently considered the dangerous



poems inserted in the class-books by Mr. Carlile, cutting out "The Exile of Erin," "The Harper," the lines of Miss Balfour, Scott's "Breathes there a man," and even lessons descriptive of Irish scenery.<sup>6</sup>

In 1840 the Pope interposed to shelter the system from the attacks of the Archbishop of Tuam, with the result that, from 1840 to 1847, it enjoyed a period of comparative repose.

In 1847 the "Stopford rule" was passed. Between 1847 and 1850 the Catholics recommenced their agitation against the system. In 1852 Dr. Murray died, and Dr. Cullen became Archbishop of Dublin. In 1853 Dr. Whately retired from the Board for the reasons already stated. Between 1853 and 1860 the Catholics agitated almost constantly against the schools, and the Protestant Episcopalians joined with them in demanding a System of denominational education. In 1860 the National System was reformed on more liberal lines, in deference to Catholic opinion; and from 1860 to the present time it has been more or less free from attack, and has, upon the whole, worked well. However, the history of the schools from 1860 to the present time, as well as their history from 1831 to 1860, affords little ground for the belief that a mixed system of education will ever succeed in Ireland.

<sup>6</sup> "Catholic Case stated," p. 351.





## BOOK II.

# PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

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### Part I.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE FRANCHISE IN 1793.

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### CHAPTER I.

THE VOLUNTEER REFORMERS—THE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE—  
THE WHIG CLUB.

TOWARDS the end of the eighteenth century three important political bodies existed in Ireland—the Volunteer Reformers; the Catholic Committee; and the Whig Club. The first desired Parliamentary reform; the second, a partial removal of Catholic disabilities; while the third was, albeit its name, more or less of a nondescript association, sympathizing, however, rather with the Catholic Committee than the Volunteers.

Between the Volunteers and the Catholic Committee there was little sympathy. The former were indifferent to the Catholic claims, and the latter were unwilling to agitate for Reform. The one feared that Catholic emancipation would lead to Catholic domination; and the other dreaded that, if they identified themselves with the party of reform, and demanded admission to the franchise, the claim would be regarded as extravagant, and might have the effect of endangering their

chances of obtaining more moderate measures of relief. The policy of the Catholic aristocracy, whose influence at the time preponderated in the Committee, was to press their cause very slowly forward, to be modest in their demands, and humble in their attitude; not to anticipate Protestant opinion by making claims far in advance of it; not to shock Protestant feeling by asking for things which the Protestants felt ought not then, or perhaps ever, to be conceded. The Catholic aristocracy wished, apparently, rather to follow than to lead Protestant opinion on Catholic questions; rather to shape their own movements in accordance with Protestant views, than to take any independent action. They desired, in fact, to go just as far as the Protestants were prepared to go with them, and no farther; and between 1783 and 1790 the Protestants were not prepared to go very far in the direction of Catholic amelioration.

The relaxation of the Penal Code up to 1790 consisted of (1) an Act passed in 1778 enabling Catholics to take leases for 999 years, conferring on them the right of alienation, and depriving Catholic children of the power to acquire rights over their parents' estates; (2) the Acts already referred to by which the restrictions on education were removed; and (3) an Act passed in 1782, repealing the statute of Anne (1703), by which Catholics were declared incapable of holding landed property.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1783 and 1790, Catholics, among other disabilities, could not practise at the Bar, keep schools, act as magistrates or grand jurors, or vote for members of Parliament; and at this time they do not seem to have possessed the courage of resolutely demanding the removal of these disabilities.

The Catholic Committee sat regularly in Dublin, but apparently did nothing else but sit there. They hoped that Parliament would permit Catholics to prac-

<sup>1</sup> Parnell, "Penal Laws," pp. 75, 76, 77, 78; also p. 69.



tise at the Bar, to keep schools, and to act as magistrates and grand jurors ; but seemingly they were content with hoping.

They appear to have been animated by the fear that any vigorous, sustained, and determined effort in the assertion of Catholic rights, might result rather in the abridgment than the extension of those rights. "We can now," they said in effect, "purchase and hold lands; but perhaps if we demand educational equality, admission to the Bar, and, above all, the franchise, the Government will become alarmed at our boldness, and instead of yielding our claims on these points, will deprive us of the rights we already enjoy, and confiscate our estates."

The Volunteer Reformers did not, in pushing forward their demands, exhibit any of the timidity evinced by the Catholic organization. They agitated boldly for an extension of the franchise—among Protestants—but they agitated in vain.

By the end of the year 1790 both Reformers and Catholic Committee-men had failed in their respective endeavours. Perhaps, they deserved to fail; for the platform of the one was narrow, the spirit of the other mean.

Such was the state of affairs when, in October, 1791, Theobald Wolfe Tone entered public life in Ireland.

This remarkable man was born in 1763 in the city of Dublin, where his father was a coach-builder. In 1781 he entered Trinity College, and soon became auditor of the famous Historical Society. In 1786 he took his degree of B.A., resigned a scholarship he had won, and left the University. In 1787 he entered the Middle Temple, London, and commenced a literary career, writing for the *European Magazine* and other periodicals. Literature, however, afforded but little scope for the energies, the ambition, and the decidedly military tastes of Wolfe Tone. In 1788 he formed a design of establishing

a military settlement on one of the islands recently discovered by Cook, and forwarded a memorial to Pitt on the subject, but Pitt took no notice either of Tone or of his memorial. In 1789 he returned to Ireland, and in the first instance attached himself to the Whig party, whom, however, he soon found too slow, and quickly abandoned. He ultimately gravitated towards the northern Volunteers, and promptly formed the project of drawing them into alliance with the democratic Catholics.

Tone was a Protestant, but his was not the narrow Protestantism of the members of the Volunteer Convention. He felt as thoroughly as the Catholics themselves the injustice and hardships of their position; but he did not believe that position could be improved by the action of the Catholic Committee as it was then constituted and led. Tone hated England profoundly, and actuated, perhaps, in the main by this feeling, arrived at the conclusion that the question between the British Government and the Irish people was not one of Parliamentary reform or Catholic emancipation, but of a complete and absolute severance of the connexion between the two countries.<sup>2</sup> To bring about such a severance one thing was absolutely essential—the union of Irishmen of all classes and creeds. To effect this union was Tone's first aim, on entering the arena of Irish politics. "To subvert the tyranny of our execrable government, to break the

<sup>2</sup> In his autobiography Tone says, "My object was to secure the independence of my country . . . to which I was led by a hatred of England, so deeply rooted in my nature that it was rather an instinct than a principle."

Again he says, "I made speedily [probably in 1789 or 1790] what was to me a great discovery, though I might have found it in Swift or Molyneux, that the influence of England was the radical vice of our government, and consequently that Ireland would never be free, prosperous or happy, until she was independent; and that independence was unattainable whilst the connexion with England existed. . . . This theory . . . has ever since unvaryingly directed my political conduct."—Tone, "Autobiography."



connexion with England, the never-failing source of our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishmen in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter—these were my means.”<sup>3</sup>

Had it been possible to organize an insurrectionary movement in 1791, Tone, I incline to think, would have immediately applied himself to the task. But no such movement was then practicable. The Catholics, afraid to demand with resolution and boldness the removal of any of the political and social disabilities under which they laboured, were in no spirit to rise in arms against the power of England. To them Tone, as a leader of rebellion, could not look with hope, and constituting, as they did, the mass of the nation, rebellion without them seemed hopeless.

The Protestant Episcopalians—albeit Tone himself was a Protestant Episcopalian—were staunchly loyal to England, because it was by the power of England their ascendancy was maintained.

One body of men, however, existed in the country, who, like the Catholics, had grievances—for they too were excluded from political favour—but who, unlike the Catholics, possessed a public spirit, because they had not been mercilessly crushed by persecution; men who, like the Protestant Episcopalians, were disposed to be loyal if justice were done them; but who, unlike the Catholics, were prepared to rebel if it were not—the Presbyterians of Ulster.

In Ulster, alone of all Ireland, the influences of the French Revolution had been felt. There only the principles of republicanism had taken root, and the sentiment of nationality had been awakened.<sup>4</sup> What-

<sup>3</sup> Wolfe Tone, “Autobiography.”

<sup>4</sup> “Among the Presbyterians of Ulster republican principles and a feeling of admiration of the French Revolution had spread widely,

ever chances existed of originating a spirited political movement in Ireland—whether that movement was to be kept within, or carried without, the lines of the constitution—were to be found, Tone thought, and was right in thinking, in the Presbyterian colony of the north, and to the north the young revolutionist determined to appeal.

He immediately placed himself in communication with the Presbyterians of Belfast, and soon learned that the question of Parliamentary reform was the one in which they were chiefly interested at the time. He also communicated with the democratic members of the Catholic Committee in Dublin, in whose spirit and manliness he had confidence, and who, he felt, would be disposed to take part in a popular movement founded on more liberal and generous principles than had hitherto been permitted to prevail, either in their own society, or among the Volunteer Reformers—the members in question were John Keogh, Thomas Braughall, Richard McCormack, John Sweetman, and Edward Byrne.

Of those men, Keogh was by far the most remarkable, and deserves a special, though it must be a very brief, notice. Indeed, though I might write pages about this distinguished Catholic leader, I doubt if I could convey a more accurate idea of his character and capacity than by describing him as O'Connell I. A wealthy Dublin merchant of spirit and patriotism, he strove, as no Catholic before his time had attempted to strive, for the emancipation of his co-religionists. "He was," says Mr. Henry Grattan, in the life of his

and was fostered, rather than suppressed, by the mistaken hostility shown by ministers indiscriminately towards every popular question."—Wright, "History of Ireland," vol. ii. p. 557.

"The Dissenters of the north, and more especially of the town of Belfast, are, from the genius of their religion, and from the superior diffusion of political information among them, sincere and enlightened republicans."—Wolfe Tone, "Autobiography."



father, "the ablest man of the Catholic body. He had a powerful understanding, . . . a strong mind, . . . and a clear head. He possessed judgment and discretion, and had the art to unite and bring men forward on a hazardous enterprise, and at a critical moment. . . . He had the merit of raising a party, and bringing out the Catholic people. He wrote, he published, he harangued, and strove to kindle some spirit among the people. He did more for the Catholics than any other individual of that body."<sup>5</sup> This was the man with whom Tone now resolved to work, and whom, if possible, he desired to influence.

To unite the democratic Catholics of the south and the republican Presbyterians of the north in one society, having for its objects the advancement of Catholic and Presbyterian interests, occurred to Tone as a feasible plan, from the adoption and carrying out of which great advantages to Ireland, and, perhaps, much danger to England, might accrue. Such a society he resolved at once to establish, and on the 10th of October, 1791, in conjunction with Samuel Neilson, Henry Joy MacCracken, and Thomas Russell, founded in Belfast an organization destined to occupy a memorable place in Irish history; this organization he called "The United Irishmen."

"The United Irishmen," as originally established, was, more or less, a constitutional body. Neither John Keogh and his co-religionists,<sup>6</sup> nor the Presbyterians of Belfast, shared Tone's rebellious sentiments, and Tone wisely kept his views—which were certainly not constitutional—in the background. The society was, in fact, at the commencement—Tone notwithstanding—really what its founders represented it to be, viz. an organization formed for the purpose of

<sup>5</sup> Grattan, "Memoirs of Henry Grattan."

<sup>6</sup> Keogh was not a member of the society, but Braughall, McCormack, and Byrne belonged to it. See Madden, "United Irishmen."

advancing the cause of Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation.<sup>7</sup>

Having formed the central organization in Belfast, Tone next proceeded to open a branch society in Dublin, where he obtained letters of introduction to James Napper Tandy, an opulent merchant, and a leading member of the corporation, and to the Hon. Simon Butler, an ardent supporter of the Catholic cause.

With their aid he soon carried out his purpose. Tandy held extreme views, like Tone, and no doubt became a "United Irishman" with the ulterior object of bringing about a separation between England and Ireland.<sup>8</sup> Butler was a constitutionalist, and desired only to further the projects of reform and emancipation.

Tone's organization grew rapidly in strength, and by the end of the year 1791, it was already a power in the country. The Government beheld with alarm the union which was being effected between the Presbyterians and the Catholics. It was, they knew, just such a union as might under existing circumstances prove fatal to British authority in the island. The Presbyterians possessed energy, courage, and public spirit, and were imbued with republican and revolutionary notions. The Catholics were numerous and had many wrongs to avenge.

An insurrectionary movement led by the Presbyterians and recruited from the Catholic ranks, was an event most carefully to be guarded against, especially at a moment when foreign affairs and complications seriously occupied the attention of England. The Catholic aristocracy, with the Catholic bishops and priests at their back, were still soundly attached to the Government. They dreaded the diffusion

<sup>7</sup> See Tone, "Autobiography."

<sup>8</sup> "Tandy was a very sincere republican, and it did not require much argument to show him the impossibility of attaining a republic by any means short of the united powers of a whole people."—Tone, "Autobiography," p. 66.



of republican principles, and feared the revolution towards which, in their opinion, the operations of the United Irishmen were tending. That organization meant, they believed, rebellion, and nothing else; and with grave misgivings they witnessed the United Irishmen sympathies of John Keogh and other members of the Catholic Committee. To them it seemed clear that a stand should at once be made against the growth of United Irishmen influences in the Committee, or else that the association would soon become little better than a branch of Tone's society. Such a stand they made, but in vain. John Keogh now commanded the support of the majority of the Catholics in the Committee and in the country. Keogh was no revolutionist. He was in truth loyal, but not meanly loyal. The difference between him and the Catholic aristocracy, led by Lord Kenmare, was one of degree and of tactics. The aristocracy were prepared to accept gratefully any concessions which the Government might feel disposed to grant, and to ask no more. Their idea of how the Catholic question ought to be fought was to quietly await the intentions and actions of the Government. Nothing, they thought, was to be gained, but everything to be lost, by agitation. Moreover, they were unwilling to unite with the Presbyterians, suspecting that body of treasonable designs, and fearing that union with them would but damage the Catholic cause in the eyes of the authorities. In fact, the Catholic aristocracy were mere waiters on the providence of Parliament, and feared nothing so much as not being considered very loyal, very loving, and very humble subjects of the English crown. John Keogh's views as to what the measures of concession and what the means for carrying them should be, differed widely from the views of the Catholic aristocracy. He believed that the time had come when the Catholics should insist upon the concession of their right to be admitted to the elective franchise.

This was the special ground on which he took his stand, and which he was determined to hold by, the inclinations of the legislature, and the faint-heartedness and alarms of his aristocratic co-religionists, notwithstanding. Catholic rights were to be achieved, he thought, not by waiting on the providence of Parliament, and exhibiting an over-anxiety to be considered loyal and humble, but by a manful and determined assertion of them. The aristocracy thought that it should be left to the Government to take the initiative; Keogh was resolved that the initiative should be taken by the Catholic people themselves. He readily united with the Presbyterians, knowing that the Government would yield to combined Presbyterian and Catholic pressure what they would never yield to Catholic pressure alone. But, apart altogether from the Catholic question, he was anxious to promote union among all classes and creeds of his countrymen, and gradually co-operated with Tone and the United Irishmen in their efforts to bring about so desirable a consummation.

The relations between Keogh and his friends and the aristocratic party in the Catholic Committee, soon became very much strained, and at last an open rupture, which resulted in the retirement of the latter from the association, occurred. Keogh was now master of the situation, and the influences of the United Irishmen, so far as they were constitutionally exercised, became of weight in the Committee.

All these events the Government carefully noted. They rejoiced at the division in the Catholic ranks. They felt that the breach ought to be made wider and wider; that the position of the moderate Catholics ought to be strengthened, and the power of Keogh as much as possible undermined. How were these objects to be achieved? How was the support of the moderate Catholics to be drawn away from Keogh and secured for the Government? One whose interest in Irish affairs did not arise from motives of expediency, but from a sense of justice, suggested a



mode by which the ends of the Government might be gained. Concede, he said, the just demands of the Catholics, and thus will they be drawn away from extreme and dangerous courses, and attached to the constitution, and made loyal subjects of the crown. This was the advice of Edmund Burke.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Wright, "History of Ireland," p. 559.

## CHAPTER II.

SIR HERCULES LANGRISHE BRINGS FORWARD THE CATHOLIC QUESTION, AND RICHARD BURKE "MAKES A SCENE."

Two years previously, Burke's advice, mentioned in the last chapter, to the effect that the condition of the Catholics ought, as a matter of justice, to be ameliorated, would have fallen on unheeding ears. Indeed in 1790 a petition had been prepared by the Catholics, praying the House of Commons to inquire into their grievances; but no member could be found to present it.<sup>1</sup> However, a change had taken place in the aspect of affairs since 1790. Then Ireland was in a state of calm. Now there were signs of a coming storm.<sup>2</sup> In 1790 there seemed to be no necessity for doing justice to the Irish people. In 1792 this necessity appeared to have arisen.

On the first day of the session in the latter year, Sir Hercules Langrishe, the friend of Burke, and a leading Catholic champion in the Irish House of Commons, gave notice of his intention to introduce a

<sup>1</sup> "The first attempt of the Catholic Committee failed totally; endeavouring to accommodate all parties, they framed a petition so humble that it ventured to ask for nothing; and even this petition they could not find a single member of the legislature to present; of so little consequence in the year 1790 was the great mass of the Irish people."—Wolfe Tone, "Autobiography," 61.

<sup>2</sup> "It appears that they [the Government] considered it a matter of some consequence at this moment, when the mass of the Catholic population seemed to be rushing into the hands of revolutionists, to conciliate the most influential members of that persuasion."—Wright, "History of Ireland," vol. ii. p. 559.



bill for the relief of the Catholics, and it was vaguely announced by the Chief Secretary, Major Hobart, that the Government were disposed to take the subject of Catholic grievances into consideration.

Langrishe's notice, and the statement of Hobart, were received by the moderate Catholics with unreserved, by Keogh's party with reserved joy. The former were content with a promise of concession, and an assurance that some of the Catholic disabilities would immediately be removed. The satisfaction of the latter was damped by anxiety and doubt as to whether the promised measure of concession would include the admission of the Catholics to the elective franchise. Langrishe did not leave Keogh and his friends long in suspense. On the 25th of January, 1792, he addressed the House on the subject of his promised bill, and explained its provisions in an able speech condemning the "imprudence and immorality" of the "Popery laws," and urging their gradual relaxation, and ultimate abolition. "I could not," he said, "presume to think that it was ever justifiable for the sake of civil or ceremonial conformity to build a code of religious laws on the ruins of almost every moral virtue and obligation; to sport with the most sacred feelings, and violate the fondest prepossessions of the human heart; to rob youth of education, and age of authority; to seduce the son to become an interested informer against the piety of the father, and to break the bonds of all domestic fidelity and affection. I know very well that the State has a right to impose conditions on those who are to become the State itself, but to be entitled to common benefits and equal protection, I know of no qualification but allegiance, a peaceable demeanour, and obedience to the laws." Sir Hercules then, alluding to the United Irishmen and Keogh's party, referred with regret to the "multitude of publications and paragraphs in the newspapers and other prints circulated gratis, and communicated to everybody, with every degree of industry, pur-

porting to convey the sentiments of the Catholic body of Ireland." If these publications, he said, truly represented the sentiments of the Irish Catholics, then they were not entitled to receive any consideration or favour from the State. For what he asked was the import of these publications? They were exhortations to the people "never to be satisfied with any concession until the State itself was conceded"—not only that, but until a new constitution should be made for their present accommodation and future entertainment. They were "precautions" against public tranquillity; they were invitations to disorder, and covenants to discontent; they were ostentatious of strength rather than solicitious for favours—rather appeals to the powers of the people, than applications to the authority of the State; they involved the relief of the Catholics with the revolution of the Government, and were dissertations for democracy rather than arguments for toleration; they seemed the projects of some bold theorists whose principles were to divide man from man, and whose policy was to separate Great Britain from Ireland. . . . Having mentioned that he had consulted various members of both Houses, with a view of ascertaining how far Parliament was prepared to go in the way of concessions to the Catholics, Sir Hercules explained the main features of his bill. He proposed that the Catholics should be allowed (1) to practise at the bar, (2) to intermarry with Protestants, (3) to keep schools without the necessity of obtaining a licence as enjoined by the Act of 1782, and (4) to employ in trade any number of apprentices; and he concluded by moving for leave to bring in a bill of this nature. The Chief Secretary formally seconded the motion, and a short debate followed, in the course of which the division in the Catholic Committee was commented upon, and the disaffection of Keogh contrasted with the loyalty of Lord Kenmare. Mr. Cuffe, member for the County Mayo, said that the Catholic aristocracy led by the Earl of Kenmare, "a nobleman



distinguished for his liberality and extended property," deserved "every kindness in the power of the Legislature to bestow, for they were good citizens and loyal subjects." They had approached Parliament humbly; they had said that any indulgence would command their gratitude, and they did not and would not pretend to point out the extent of the relief which the Legislature in its wisdom might think proper to bestow. "Surely," said Mr. Cuffe, "in those circumstances we cannot refuse them some indulgence." Such was Mr. Cuffe's opinion of Lord Kenmare and the aristocratic Catholic party. But Mr. Cuffe had a very different opinion of John Keogh and his friends; they had shown no "humility;" they had not evinced a willingness to be "grateful" for any "indulgence" extended to the Catholics by Parliament. On the contrary, they had actually "presumed to dictate to the Legislature" the terms of concession. They had established a court of delegates in the capital. They had appointed local committees in the several counties. They had entered into negotiations with the discontented and turbulent of all religions. They had adopted a system of terrorism in order to intimidate Parliament, and they had appointed an agent<sup>3</sup> to carry on their business, with instructions that he should not leave the country until their demands were satisfied. "My duty as a member of this House," said Mr. Cuffe in solemn tones of advice and admonition, "obliges me to declare to this Assembly, and to the world, that neither the Government nor the gentlemen of the House of Commons will be intimidated by their numbers, their power, or their English agent. For my part, I am not in the Cabinet, but if I was I would advise the Minister to tell all men of all religions, 'we have power enough to protect our Establishments in Church and State. We will protect them on the principles of the Revolu-

<sup>3</sup> This agent was Richard Burke.

tion, and we will punish those who seek to disturb the peace and tranquillity of this growing country.' ”

Mr. Cuffe was followed by Colonel Blaquiére, member for Charleville, who felt “satisfied that indulgence should be extended to the Catholics,” because they had “always been attached to the Crown and the Government.” Then rose Mr. Ogle, a leading member of the Ascendency party, not, as he said, to “debate the merits of the question” at that moment, as a “better opportunity” would occur later on, but to request Sir Hercules Langrishe not “to hurry the subject,” which was no “trifling affair,” and required a “good deal of time for consideration.” “We know, sir,” he said, “what the wishes of the Roman Catholics are; but we do not know what the sentiments of the Protestants are. We do not know, whether our constituents are satisfied with the idea of a further relaxation of the penal laws.” Against Mr. Ogle’s plea for time, Mr. Denis Browne, senior member for Mayo, protested. The time had come, he thought, when a much stronger measure of relaxation than that foreshadowed in the speech of Sir H. Langrishe ought to be introduced. The restrictive laws against Catholics were a disgrace to the name of England, and a cruel injury to the Irish people; and the sooner they were completely swept from the statute-book the better. Mr. Coote, member for Maryborough, held a different opinion. It was dangerous, he said, to attempt altering any part of the constitution as settled at the Revolution. “Caution, therefore, was extremely necessary.” However, Mr. Coote approved of the additional relaxation of the laws relating to education, and of allowing Catholics to practise at the bar. But on the subject of the elective franchise, he said, “I hope the day will never arrive in which [the Catholics] will be entitled to vote at elections, or to any share in the Legislature. I hope this will also be the opinion of the Legislature. But should a Government be otherwise disposed in the country,



they will find themselves destitute of support, and abandoned by every Protestant of property and influence."

With these observations of Mr. Coote, and a statement from Major Hobart to the effect that if an attack were made on "our Establishments of Church and State," it would meet with the decided opposition of the Government of both countries, the conversational debate which had arisen on Sir Hercules Langrishe's motion came to an end, leave being unanimously given to bring in "a bill for the relief of the Catholics," and a committee appointed to draft the same.

An incident which afforded the House some diversion, and which had also its serious aspects, then occurred. Richard Burke, son of the great statesman, had, in his capacity as agent to the Catholic Committee, drafted a second petition in furtherance of the Catholic claims. Tone describes this document as a "very-well-written philippic" rather than a petition,<sup>4</sup> and Sir Jonah Barrington says it was ill-timed and ill-worded. The truth would seem to be that the petition was couched in vigorous language, and contained what the Ascendency disliked to see, and considered presumptuous, viz., a specific statement of demands.

The demands set forth in the petition were as follows:—

1. The admission of the Catholics to the profession of the law;
2. Their right to act as magistrates;
3. Permission for leave to serve as Grand Jurors;
- and
4. The elective franchise.

Burke had much difficulty in finding a member to present this petition, but at last he succeeded; Mr. O'Hara, member for Sligo, undertaking the task. In

<sup>4</sup> Tone, "Autobiography," p. 72. Tone fixes 1791 as the date of this petition, which is clearly wrong. See Debates of Irish House of Commons.

presenting the petition, Mr. O'Hara said that it was necessary to understand precisely what the Catholic demands really were before attempting to legislate on the subject of Catholic relief, otherwise the House would be legislating in the dark. It was for all practical purposes idle to pass measures which hon. members might consider excellent, but which the great body of the Catholics themselves might regard as utterly inadequate, and scarcely worthy of their acceptance. Catholic opinion should be ascertained and consulted. Considerations of prudence and policy, as well as a sense of justice and fair play, suggested the propriety of receiving from the Catholic body an authoritative and representative statement of their demands. Possessed of such a statement Ministers would be in a better position than they now were to deal with the Catholic question.

Mr. O'Hara then moved that the petition, which, he said, had been handed to him by an intimate acquaintance in whose integrity and discretion he had confidence, be read, whereupon Mr. Sheridan, member for Charlemont, rose at once to oppose the motion. It was, he said, a very odd way of introducing a petition to state that it came, not from any particular body of men, but from an "intimate acquaintance." The case was probably nothing more nor less than this: that an "intimate acquaintance" of the hon. member prayed the house that all places of trust and emolument in the State should be thrown open to the Roman Catholics.

At this juncture, Richard Burke, (who had occupied a place in the Speaker's gallery during the sitting,) fired by Sheridan's speech, descended, and with more courage than discretion, resolved boldly to enter the House, with, apparently, the intention of stating the contents of the petition himself.

The scene which ensued I shall describe in the words of an eye-witness—Sir Jonah Barrington:—

"Young Burke, either totally ignorant of Parlia-



mentary rules, or supposing that in a disturbed country like Ireland they would be dispensed with, especially in favour of a son of the great Burke, determined he would present the petition himself, not at the bar, but in the body of the House. Accordingly, having descended from the gallery, he walked into the body of the House with a long roll of parchment under his arm, and had arrived near the Treasury bench, when a general cry of 'Privilege! a stranger in the House!' arose from all quarters, and checked the progress of the intruder. But when the speaker, in his loud and dignified tone, called out, 'Sergeant-at-arms, do your duty!' it seemed to echo like thunder in Burke's ears; he felt the awkwardness of his situation, and ran towards the bar. Here he was met by the Sergeant-at-arms with a drawn sword; retracing his steps, he was stopped by the clerk, and the sergeant gaining on him, with a feeling of trepidation he took to actual flight and escaped."<sup>5</sup>

The House was thrown into a considerable state of confusion by this ludicrous incident. Some honourable members felt that a serious insult had been offered to Parliament, and proposed the taking of strong measures against the intruder; others censured the Sergeant-at-arms for not exhibiting more activity and skill in securing him. "The sergeant," it was said, "ought to have stopped the man at the back door." This observation brought Sir Boyle Roche to his legs in defence of the assailed officer. "How," said the noble baronet with much justice, "could the Sergeant-at-arms stop him in the rear whilst he was catching him in the front? Did hon. members think the sergeant-at-arms could, like a bird, be in two places at once?"<sup>6</sup>

The Solicitor-General, Toler (afterwards Lord Norbury), who was ever ready in an emergency of any

<sup>5</sup> Barrington, "Personal Sketches," p. 182.

<sup>6</sup> Sir Jonah Barrington, "Personal Recollections," pp. 181, 182.

kind, now interposed to restore composure. "The petition," he said, "in its present state of abandonment can be no object of notice. Such a petition so managed I never heard of before; nor indeed have I ever read of anything like it, except once in the cross readings of a London paper. The cross reading was in these terms: 'On such a day a most violent petition was presented to the House of Commons. It luckily missed fire, and the villain made off.'"

This sally having produced much merriment, Toler determined to use the opportunity so offered for the purpose of laughing the petition out of the House. "I am glad," he said, "to see honourable members in such good humour, and that we may meet again in the same temper, I now move the adjournment of the House."

But Denis Browne, a staunch friend of the Catholics, was resolved, if he could help it, that the petition should not thus be disposed of. However ludicrous might have been the scene created by Burke's escapade, the member for Mayo manifestly thought that the rejection of the petition by the House would be a serious and discreditable proceeding, and he therefore urged its acceptance. O'Hara, on the other hand, feeling doubtless that the sense of the House was against him, and that the hilarity produced by Burke's appearance and Toler's speech would be fatal to all serious reflection and deliberation for the remainder of the sitting, expressed his desire to withdraw the petition "for the present," adding "that he would present it on another day."

Grattan shared O'Hara's views and fears, and was in favour of the temporary postponement of the petition, as was also George Ponsonby, the leader of the Whigs.

The Catholic advocates being so disposed, the petition was then withdrawn, and Richard Burke soon afterwards resigned his position as paid agent to the Catholic Committee, and left Ireland.



## CHAPTER III.

THE CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL AND THE PETITION OF THE  
CATHOLIC COMMITTEE.

THE labours of the committee appointed by the House of Commons to prepare a measure for the relief of the Catholics, were concluded by the end of January; and on Saturday, the 4th of the following month, Sir Hercules Langrishe introduced the bill which the committee had drafted. It was drawn precisely on the lines laid down in Sir Hercules' speech of the 25th of January, and provided that Catholics should be allowed to practise at the bar, to intermarry with Protestants, to keep schools, and to employ in trade any number of apprentices. In a short speech, Sir Hercules moved that the bill be read a first time and printed—a motion which, after an appeal from Mr. Ogle and other anti-Catholic members for time, was agreed to, Saturday the 11th inst. being fixed for the second reading.

With this bill the Catholic aristocracy were perfectly contented; but not so John Keogh and his Presbyterian allies, who considered the measure grossly inadequate, as no provision for the admission of the Catholics to the franchise had been made in it.

The Presbyterians were the first to express their dissatisfaction with the measure. On the 8th of February Mr. John O'Neil, member for the County Antrim, presented a petition signed by 600 Presbyterians of Belfast, "many of whom he knew personally to be persons of great reputation." The petition began

by "lamenting the degraded state of the Roman Catholics," and concluded by praying that the Legislature would "be pleased to repeal all penal and restrictive laws against" them, placing them "on the same footing as their Protestant fellow-countrymen."

Denis Browne seconded O'Neil's motion for the reading of the petition, and in so doing ventured to say that the petition presented by Mr. O'Hara ought to have been read also—an observation which was received with loud cries of "No, no, no." "The 'no' may interrupt," retorted the member for Mayo, "but it does not convince. I am not willing to reject the petitions of any people. I do not forget what effect the rejection of the American petitions had."

Sir Hercules Langrishe followed Denis Browne, and said that he was not averse to the reception of the Presbyterian petition, but at the same time he could not help observing that he regarded with suspicion the fact of the Presbyterians making common cause with the Catholics on the question of the Catholic claims. It was "novel" and "singular" to find "one class of men interceding for another." The Presbyterians might, however, be sincere in their expressions of goodwill towards the Catholics, but Sir Hercules doubted very much if the Catholic cause would be served by their intervention. "I shall not object," concluded the member for Knocktopher, "to this petition being received from so respectable a member of this House [as the member for County Antrim], but I have seen some treasonable productions from the same town [Belfast] that merit the severest punishment."

Sir Boyle Roche was of opinion that the petition should be instantly rejected. "The question is," said the great bull-maker, "whether we will receive the insidious petition of a turbulent and disorderly set of people whom no king can govern and no God can please, or whether we shall treat it with merited con-



tempt. For my part I call upon you to dispose of it as it deserves, by tossing it over the bar, and kicking it into the lobby; and I am determined to divide the House upon it, even if I should stand alone in so just a cause."

Sir Boyle was as good as his word; he divided the House on the question, "that the petition be now allowed to lie on the table;" but did not succeed in inducing any one to follow him into the "noes" lobby.<sup>1</sup>

On the 15th of February Langrishe's bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed on the following Saturday. On Saturday Mr. O'Neil presented a petition, signed by 350 Protestant inhabitants of the County Antrim, praying that "every liberal immunity consistent with the spirit of our glorious constitution, and the safety and interests of the Protestant religion," might be granted to the Catholics—a document which, like the productions of the Catholic aristocracy, had the advantage of being safely vague and respectfully indefinite. This petition being considered perfectly harmless was allowed to lie on the table without note or comment. Far different was the reception reserved for another petition presented on the same occasion by Mr. Egan, the member for Tallaght. This was the petition of the Catholic Committee, now under the leadership of John Keogh. In order that the position taken up by the Committee may be the better understood, I shall fully set out the petition. It ran as follows:—

"To the Right Honourable the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses in Parliament assembled.

"The petition of the undersigned Roman Catholics, on behalf of themselves and the Roman Catholics of Ireland, humbly sheweth that, as the House has thought it expedient to direct their attention to the situation

<sup>1</sup> Debates of Irish House of Commons, vol. xii. p. 82.

of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and to a further relaxation of the penal statutes still subsisting against them, they beg leave, with all humility, to come before the House, with the most heartfelt assurance of the wisdom and justice of Parliament, which is at all times desirous most graciously to attend to the petitions of the people; they, therefore, humbly presume to submit to the house their entreaty that they should take into their consideration whether the removal of some of the civil incapacities under which they labour, and the restoration of the petitioners to some share in the elective franchise, which they enjoyed long after the Revolution, will not tend to strengthen the Protestant State, add new vigour to industry, and afford protection and happiness to the Catholics of Ireland; that the petitioners refer with confidence to their conduct in the past to prove their uniform loyalty and submission to the laws, and to corroborate their solemn declaration that, if they obtain from the justice and benignity of Parliament such relaxation from certain incapacities and a participation in that franchise which will raise them to the rank of freemen, their gratitude must be proportioned to the benefit, and that enjoying some share in the happy constitution of Ireland, they will exert themselves with additional zeal in its conservation."

Having read the petition, which was signed by the members of the Committee, Mr. Egan trusted the House would "receive it, and decide on its prayer with liberality." This petition quickly brought Mr. Ogle on his legs. "Sir," he said, "I do not rise to oppose the introduction of this petition, humble in its words, but bold in its tenor, but I rise to say that the claims that are every moment being made on the Protestant Ascendency must be met, a line must be drawn somewhere, beyond which we must not recede, and I will caution gentlemen to be upon their guard. It is my intention, when the bill goes into committee,



to move to expunge the present preamble,<sup>2</sup> and to introduce another for the purpose of maintaining the Protestant interests of Ireland, and preventing those new claims which every day produces. Everything which you grant in compliance with those claims of the Roman Catholics, is just so much lost to the Protestants who have sent us here ; as one I am determined to maintain their rights ; and I think it my duty, even in these critical times, to show that I am not afraid to meet and repel claims injurious to their interests and destructive of their ascendancy. Sir, I have said this is a petition humble in its words, but bold in its tenor ; and I now add it means much more than it professes. It is signed by certain individuals, but it comes from a Roman Catholic Convention sitting in Dublin. It is true their claims are not so strongly expressed as when they told you that they must have everything, and that they would persevere until they had totally overthrown your ascendancy,<sup>3</sup> but as it is it must be met and opposed at any risk. It is impossible to grant Roman Catholics what they demand, if we are at all to regard the Protestant safety. My honourable friend will see by the debate of this night—before to-morrow's sun shall dawn he will be convinced of what I say. I do, therefore, call upon gentlemen to agree to a preamble, which I intend to offer, to the bill, and which will pledge them no further than to maintain the constitution obtained for us by the virtue and valour of our great and good deliverer, King William III."

In this speech, as in all Mr. Ogle's utterances, there was the real ring of the genuine Ascendancy metal. But Mr. Ogle's war-note led to no practical result, nor

<sup>2</sup> The preamble simply referred to the several acts passed in the reigns of Anne, William, and George II., restraining Catholics from practising as barristers or solicitors, from keeping school, and intermarrying with Protestants, &c., and declared that it was deemed expedient that the same should be repealed.

<sup>3</sup> A reference, no doubt, to Richard Burke's petition.

was it his intention, perhaps, at the moment that it should so lead. The petition was received and ordered to lie on the table without any opposition. The order of the day for going into committee on the "Popery Bill" was then read, whereupon Mr. Ogle once more rose. At the various stages hitherto reached in the progress of the bill, Mr. Ogle had asked for "time." He now disclosed the real state of his mind with reference to the subject of Catholic relief, and expressed his doubts as to the propriety of "passing any bill this session in favour of the Roman Catholics." He furthermore declared that it was not in human wisdom to pass a bill granting such privileges to the Roman Catholics, without injury to the Protestant Ascendency. It was clear that Mr. Ogle did not want the bill. Neither did Mr. Parkinson-Ruxton, member for the borough of Athlone, who thought he could not discharge his duty "more properly" than by "obstinately and vigorously" opposing the measure. Another member, Mr. Staples, said the bill was introduced under "the mandate of a British minister, without the Protestant opinion of the country having been consulted;" and he called upon the Chief Secretary to say if the limit of concession to the Catholics had yet been reached. Mr. Sheridan followed on the same lines, denouncing the interference of the British minister in the matter, and warning the Irish Catholics to look for justice to the liberality of their Protestant fellow-countrymen, rather than to "foreign or ministerial negotiations," whether initiated in Rome or London. Mr. Sheridan's bark, however, was worse than his bite, for he wound up by declaring that he would support the bill, which he considered upon the whole, "innocent and perhaps desirable." The debate was continued by Hobart, who declined to express any opinion or give any pledge as to when or where the line of concession to the Catholics should be drawn; by Sir Thomas Osborne, Michael Smith, Colonel Hutchinson, George Knox, Mr. Egan, Grattan, Curran, and Ponsonby, all of



whom supported the bill, which was committed without a division.<sup>4</sup>

On the following Saturday, February 20th, an important debate, and a division more important still, took place with reference to the petitions of the Belfast Presbyterians and the Catholic Committee, which had previously been permitted to lie on the table. It will be remembered that Sir Boyle Roche had stood alone in his opposition to the acceptance of the Belfast petition which had been presented on the 8th of February. Since then the petition of the Catholic Committee, had, as we have seen, been received with some hostile observations from Mr. Ogle.

Sir Boyle Roche, defeated in his efforts on the 8th of February, now returned in a somewhat roundabout way to the charge. He proposed that "all the petitions relative to the Roman Catholic business" should be referred to the committee on the Roman Catholic Bill. Sir Boyle was very anxious to have both the Presbyterian and Catholic petitions removed from the table, but had not the courage, after both had been received, to attempt the attainment of this object by a direct motion for their rejection. This object would, however, he felt be as effectually gained by a proposal for their reference to the committee. Having made his proposal, Sir H. Langrishe at once rose to condemn the motion as "irregular and unparliamentary." The petitions in question, he said, had been ordered to lie on the table, and the committee had no power whatever to deal with them. But this apparently was not the view of David Latouche, who moved, Langrishe having concluded his remarks, that the "petition of the Roman Catholic Committee, presented on Saturday, be read by the clerk." The petition having been read, Latouche then said, "I am of opinion that if this petition be complied with, it will affect our Establishments of Church and State. I therefore move that it be

<sup>4</sup> Debates of Irish House of Commons, vol. xii. p. 123.

rejected ;” a motion which Mr. Ogle joyfully seconded. An exciting debate ensued. Sir John Blaquiere, a man of sound Protestant principles, and good sense, anxious to maintain the Ascendency, but unwilling to wantonly insult or exasperate any section of his fellow-countrymen, deprecated the proposal of his “honourable friend” the member for Newcastle. The Catholic petition, he said, had been received by an almost unanimous vote of the house ; it was entered upon the journals, and required the deliberate answer of Parliament. “Let the Catholics be told that Parliament cannot grant them what they ask, but let them be told so with temper and respect. The question is one of the utmost importance, materially affecting, it may be, the future peace of the country ; and I warn the house against the precipitous action which they are now invited to take.”

The Right Honourable John Beresford, member for Waterford, considered the proposal of Sir David Latouche perfectly right, and therefore had not the slightest hesitation in supporting it. Neither had General Conyngham, member for Monaghan. “Protestant Ascendency,” declared the general, “must be maintained,” “and, by Protestant Ascendency, I mean a Protestant king, a Protestant House of Lords, and a Protestant House of Commons.” If the Catholics were once admitted to the franchise, they would soon find their way into the House of Commons, and what would become of Protestant Ascendency then ? The proposition was an “absolute absurdity.” It was the duty of Parliament to speak out with determination, and if necessary, in the name of God, to draw swords at once, and stake one interest and power against the other. The present night was a most critical one for Ireland. He saw the galleries of the House were full, and he was glad of it, that his sentiments might be the more openly avowed ; and he thought that every man in the House, whether Papist or Protestant, was bound in honour to rise in his



place, and state his sentiments. The general was followed by Arthur French, member for Roscommon, who thought the petition ought not to be treated with "indignity," but "ought to be coolly investigated and fairly answered." So thought Denis Browne. A petition was never rejected, he said, unless it contained something disrespectful to the House, which the present did not; and he warned the House that no worse course could be pursued than to treat with "indignity the decent petitions of loyal and peaceable subjects." Sir James Cotter and Marcus Beresford supported the motion, the latter suggesting that the Belfast petition ought to be rejected also. Then Sir Boyle Roche rose, and delivered a characteristic oration. He requested that the names annexed to the petition might be read. If that request was not complied with he warned the house he would "repeat them from memory," for he meant to "observe upon them." "Who were they who affected to be the representatives of the Roman Catholics of Ireland? Were there amongst them any of the ancient nobility, or of the gentry of Ireland? Was there a single man of respectability or character? No, not one. There was, indeed, Mr. Edward Byrne, a sugar-baker, a seller of wines and other commodities, and he was the first name and put in the front of the battle. There was another name—John Keogh. And who was he? Why, he was a retailer of poplins in Dame Street. These men met over their porter to consider of commanding the Government. They met at a chop-house—at Derham's chop-house in particular—where the former of them in his cups happened to dream he was nabob of Ireland. As for the rest of them, they were so obscure that he could neither recollect nor describe them. . . . The Catholic nobility, the Catholic gentry, the Catholic clergy have nothing to do with this insolent and degrading petition." Having so dealt with the Catholic petition, Sir Boyle then turned to the petition of the Belfast Presbyterians. The subscribers

to that document, he said, had "moved heaven and earth to foment disturbances in the country." At the very time that they were framing this petition on behalf of their Roman Catholic brethren, they were holding a correspondence with the French National Assembly. . . . But the Catholic nobility detested the "abominations" of John Keogh and his Belfast allies. No imputations could be cast upon them; and Sir Boyle, "therefore hoped that all reflections would rest where they ought—upon the scum of the earth;" by which epithet, doubtless, the blustering baronet meant to designate the members of the Catholic Committee and their northern friends. Sir Boyle's views, as to the treatment of the petition, were shared, but expressed in more becoming language, by Mr. Brownlow, member for Armagh, who thought that the conduct of the [Catholics] in the time of James II. was such that they could never be trusted with power in Ireland again; by Sir Henry Cavendish, who said the rejection of the petition would meet with his "hearty concurrence;" and by Mr. Cuffe, who declared that he would not grant the Catholics the elective franchise "either now or at any other time."

But it was Mr. Ogle who, above all others, flung himself into an ecstasy of joy over what he regarded as the impending rejection of the petition. "I believe it is unnecessary for me to say that I will not vote for the Roman Catholic franchise. I think the petition ought to be rejected, for if it is not, it may imply that we admit the principle of the petition. I never in my life was so much delighted as I am at this moment. I glory in the principles which gentlemen have spoken. I think this will be a glorious night for the Protestants of Ireland."

Up to this point of the debate none of the "great guns" had come into action. Grattan, Curran, Toler, Langrishe, Hobart, and George Ponsonby, had so far remained silent. The time at last came when Toler felt he ought to interpose. He was, he said, as



much opposed as any member of the Ascendency party in the House, or out of it, to the concession of the franchise to the Catholics, but he doubted the wisdom of Latouche's motion. He was as willing as any one to tell the Catholics that the right to vote should not be conceded to them, but he was averse to conveying this decision in an insulting and exasperating manner. Latouche's motion was too extreme. The rejection of the petition *in toto* would be too violent a course to take. "Respectfully," he said, "tell the Catholics, who have approached you with decorum, that you cannot grant their demand for admission to the franchise, but do not reject their petition as a whole."

While Toler referred to the Catholics generally in conciliatory tones, he made a bitter attack on Keogh and his colleagues, and their Ulster allies, denouncing them as factious men, of "desperate, profligate, and dangerous principles."

"We are not," he said, "at this day to be taught by political quacks who tell us that radical reformations are necessary in Parliament. I have seen papers signed by Tobias McKenna, with Simon Butler in the chair, and Napper Tandy lending his *countenance*; I should have thought they could have put a better *face* upon it.<sup>6</sup> . . . But, sir, such fellows are too despicable for notice; therefore, I shall not drag them from their obscurity." Toler concluded his speech by proposing as an amendment to Latouche's motion, that "the prayer of Edward Byrne and others, purporting to be on behalf of themselves and the Roman Catholics of Ireland, so far as the same relates to a participation in the elective franchise, be not complied with *now*."

Mr. Brownlow, member for Armagh, supported this amendment. Sir Thomas Osborne opposed both motion and amendment, saying that the time had come when the Catholics ought to be admitted to

<sup>6</sup> Tandy had a very curious and grotesque cast of countenance.

the franchise. Francis Hely Hutchinson opposed the motion, asserting that the rejection of the petition would be a "disgrace" to Parliament. "The petitioners," he said, "have approached this House with a humble, and respectful application, desiring that persons of their persuasion may be restored to some share of the elective franchise. They claim a privilege attached by the constitution to freehold property. And because they have made this claim, they are charged with having thereby manifested a desire to become the ruling power; and are said to have demanded from the Protestants a surrender into their hands of the government of the country. Nothing contained in the petition can justify these charges. . . . The Catholics do not contend for any speculative right, but for the representation of property—that foundation on which the British constitution rests its weight."

Langrishe reminded the House that the petition had been already "received, read, and ordered to lie on the table." To reject it in these circumstances would be an act of aggravated disrespect which he entreated the House not to commit.

Langrishe's appeal was supported by Curran, who considered that the rejection of the petition would serve the ends not of the friends, but of the enemies of English rule in Ireland. "If," he said, "I were a friend to the wildest schemes of ambition attributed to the Catholics, I would recommend the rejection of the petition, as such a measure can only tend to stimulate ambition to precipitancy, and excite passion and discontent where the contrary feelings are desirable."

W. B. Ponsonby, member for Kilkenny County, did not, apparently, think that the rejection of the petition would "excite passion and discontent;" for he said, "I rise to support the resolution of the right honourable gentleman [Mr. Latouche]. We cannot suffer this petition to go to committee; if we did we should seem to approve its principles; but as we do not, I



would tell the Catholics boldly that we will not grant their claim."

Hobart agreed with Ponsonby. "Regarding the Protestant constitution as I do," said the Chief Secretary, "I cannot concur with this petition, nor have I any fear in rejecting it."

The Attorney-General of the day was equally fearless, and unhesitatingly declared his determination to "support the motion."

Toler's amendment was, in fact, thrown over by the Government, of which Toler was a law officer. David Latouche was carrying the Tory party solidly with him. Would he be equally successful with the Whigs? What would George Ponsonby do? What Grattan?

The debate had now reached a stage when the rising of the Whig leader and the veteran Nationalist was anxiously awaited, and when no one but an able speaker could prudently venture to stand between either and the House. Such a speaker was Colonel Hutchinson, member for Cork City, and who subsequently, as General Lord Hutchinson, was engaged in the suppression of the rebellion of '98, and finally succeeded to Abercromby's command in Egypt. Possessing neither the genius of Grattan, nor endowed with the rare gifts of the accomplished leader of the Whigs, Hutchinson was an eloquent speaker, and an earnest, honest advocate of the Catholic claims. The Catholic aristocracy were afraid or ashamed, or perhaps both, to associate themselves with John Keogh and Edward Byrne. Hutchinson was neither afraid nor ashamed to defend, before an unsympathetic audience, the leaders of the Catholic Committee from the coarse attacks made upon them by Sir Boyle Roche and Toler.

Sir [he said, rising to deliver what was the speech of the night], during the course of this debate, I have heard very extraordinary language from an honourable member [Boyle Roche] for whom I have long entertained great personal regard and respect—language on which I shall not comment, because I hope never again to hear it repeated within these walls; but

this much I must say : the gentlemen who signed this petition are persons of property, respectability, and character. Mr. Byrne alone pays 100,000*l.* a year duty to his Majesty's revenue. The capital which such a trade as his requires must be large indeed, and gives some security for the peaceable and loyal conduct of him who possesses it. If there is a man in the world engaged from interested motives to preserve the tranquillity of the country, it is a merchant who possesses a large floating property, which may vanish on the appearance of civil convulsion, or be entirely annihilated by the events of external war. This canvass of the personal merits or demerits of petitions to this House is a new Parliamentary doctrine, and one which ought not to be endured. We are the servants of the people, and not their masters. They have a right to petition us, provided they do it in a decorous and respectful manner, and there is no man who contends that this is not a respectful and decorous petition. Who shall appear before you, if he shall be obliged to endure this fiery ordeal, and to submit to such treatment? Believe me it is a wretched employment for the Parliament of Ireland to pass day after day, and night after night, in slandering the great majority of the Irish nation. Much applause has been given to the present bill, now before us : I am willing to give it some. I like its principle : it is the principle of concession to the Catholic body, which I admire and applaud—yet how far does it go? What does this boasted bill give? What restraints will remain after it has passed into law? No Catholic, however brave his spirit, or consummate his military talents, can command a company of foot in your service, nor had he the genius of a Cook or a Columbus, could he command the smallest sloop in your fleet. . . . It is said that the [Catholics] retain prejudices adverse to the constitution. What is meant by this assertion I have not sagacity enough to understand. It surely cannot be meant that there is anything in their religion which makes them the natural enemies of a free and admirable form of government. . . . The conduct of the Irish Catholics themselves is a sufficient answer to this unfounded insinuation. Did you not at a late period, when everything that could be dear and honourable to you as a nation was at stake, find them in arms by your side in order to protect that liberty which they were not suffered to enjoy, and to regenerate the constitution into whose pale they were not allowed to enter. In times of dread and danger they were your associates, your soldiers, your defenders ; now, in a moment of tranquillity, when you think you have no occasion for their services, you reject



and calumniate them. You called upon them in 1779 to assist you in recovering your commerce, in re-establishing your constitution, in defending your country against foreign invasion: your call was a proof of your weakness and your fears; their obedience was a proof of their affection and of their strength. Did they seize on a dangerous and critical moment in order to embarrass your affairs? Did they then remember the oppression and the misery of ages? They saw in the establishment of Protestant liberty, if not their own emancipation, at least the pride and the glory of the country which had given them birth. It is nonsense, I am sure, to talk to you of gratitude, but I would address one word to your understanding. If the revolution of 1782 could not have been brought about but by the co-operation of the Catholic body, can there be any real strength in Ireland unless the Protestants condescend to coalesce with them, and all descriptions of men shall be knit together in the bonds of common union and common affection. Gentlemen have talked of "Papists," and of drawing swords: I almost hoped not to have heard such language used at this day. I answer it by saying that the great body of Catholics in this kingdom by no means deserve that severe appellation. I believe the number of "Papists" in the country to be few, and they would be much fewer, if those of the Established Church were willing to think and to speak of them with more liberality and less misrepresentation. Fortunately for the country, Catholic bigotry has not kept pace with Protestant prejudice. What is meant by drawing swords I cannot tell; of this I am convinced, and I call upon any man to deny it, if he can, that his Majesty does not possess a more peaceable and a more loyal body of subjects than the Catholics of Ireland. To prove this, my assertion would be insufficient, but I appeal to their conduct, to their tried conduct for a century. I defy malignity itself to impute any designs to them, which are hostile to the State, the Church, or the king. Let me now revert to your conduct this night. The Catholics have presumed to state to you (who, if not their representatives, are undoubtedly their legislators and governors) and to this their native country, the oppressions and grievances under which they labour. For such their conduct, you traduce their motives; you malign their characters; you talk of fears which you do not feel, and of dangers you do not apprehend. You are willing to seize on this or that unauthorized expression of this or that unauthorized individual, in order to justify you in proscribing the whole Catholic body, and dismissing from your bar, with outrage and indignation, the petition of 3,000,000

of your people. Are these the wise principles of Protestant Ascendency? Are these the firm foundations of liberty, of truth, and of security on which it is built? Go one step farther. Condemn the Catholics to hug their chains. Order them not to feel as men. Command them not to use their recollection or their eyesight. Bid them not to remember the events of their own history: to forget what has passed in their own times in America, and what is now passing in France and Poland. . . . Something has been said [looking at Toler] of wild and innovating systems, and of factions existing in the country. For myself, I will say I am no innovator: I belong to no faction. . . . If any man in this country has infringed the law, the laws are equal to punish him. It is peculiarly the duty of gentlemen in office to see them enforced. I acknowledge with satisfaction and pride, that I have talked of a reformation of your penal code. I shall continue to talk this language to you as long as I exist: for in that reformation alone I see the future prosperity of my country, and that prosperity I value more than life, equal to honour.<sup>6</sup>

The position taken up by Colonel Hutchinson was one worthy of being supported by Grattan, and he did support it.

Hutchinson having resumed his seat, the great Nationalist rose and said,—

Sir, I find myself under difficulty to express how much I regard the mover (Latouche), and condemn the motion. It is a measure as strong and as violent as any ever perhaps propounded in Parliament. You reject a petition, which you have received already, decorous in its manner, regular in its introduction, and respectable from its signatures. You reject it because it comes from a great body of Roman Catholics, and applies on the part of that body for some small share of freedom. Thus you are not only to refuse, but to

<sup>6</sup> This noble speech of a generous and gallant Protestant gentleman Mr. Froude disposes of thus: "Prominent among [the Catholic] champions, was Colonel Hutchinson, the provost's son, who inherited his father's eloquence without his shrewdness. He talked the Liberal cant of the day, which may be compared instructively with the modern Papal syllabus. The sentiments of mankind on religion, he said, were altogether changed. The spirit of Romanism was softened, the influence of the Pope was feeble as the decrepit hand which wielded it. Catholics loved liberty as much as Protestants, and would cease to be bigots, when the Protestants ceased to be persecutors."—Froude, "*English in Ireland*," vol. iii. p. 58.



extinguish the principle; you are not only to disappoint, but to insult the petitioners. You put this rejection on grounds which you know are fictitious. You say this House must answer the petition. Then am I to understand, every petition which you do not comply with you are to reject by way of an answer? There is a petition now before you, touching the improvement of the brewery, which you have not rejected or complied with. The petitions last year against the police of the corporation of Dublin—did you reject them?—did you comply with them? But there is another petition on our table—a petition from the capital of Ulster; a petition from the most rising, spirited, and commercial town in the kingdom, Belfast—that goes infinitely farther than the Roman Catholics go in their prayer for indulgences. This petition, on a division, you receive, sir. The humble petition of the Catholics you reject. Or is it proposed in order to preserve consistency to reject the Belfast petition as well as the Catholic? and thus commit a violence on the Protestant as well as the Catholic subject: on the first for desiring freedom for his fellow-citizen, on the last for desiring it for himself?

Grattan then proceeded in one of his most telling speeches to adjure the House not to reject the petition, to implore them to grant its prayer; and then, at last, George Ponsonby rose. “Of all the votes,” said the Whig leader, “I have ever given, or shall give in this House, that of this night will be the most painful.” Well might he have said so, for that vote was to be given in favour of a motion whose impropriety even Toler saw, and which—be it remembered to his credit, and all the more readily because there are not many things to be remembered to the credit of Lord Norbury—he had sagaciously striven to defeat. Ponsonby’s speech was the speech of a mere opportunist. He was not prepared, he said, to assert that the Catholics should never be admitted to the franchise; he would limit himself to the statement that the time had not yet come for conceding their claims in this respect, and therefore he would vote for the rejection of the petition.

On the conclusion of Ponsonby’s speech, the House

divided on Latouche's motion, with the following result :—

For the motion that the Catholic	
petition should be rejected . . .	208
Against the motion . . . . .	23

The tellers for the ayes were Latouche and Ogle; the tellers for the noes, Colonel Hutchinson and Mr. Forbes.<sup>7</sup>

The Catholic petition having been thus disposed of, the Protestant petition was brought up for judgment. Mr. Latouche moved its rejection also, and the motion was carried by an overwhelming majority; in fact, only "two or three" members could be found to vote against it.<sup>8</sup>

On the 23rd instant, the committee on Langrishe's Bill resumed and concluded its labours without any alterations in the measure having been made. The bill passed quickly, without a division, through the House of Lords, where it was read a third time on the 3rd of March, 1792.

<sup>7</sup> The *Dublin Evening Post* of February 25th, 1792, gives the following as the names of the members composing the minority: Grattan, Forbes, Colonel Hutchinson, Curran, Egan, F. Hutchinson, Graydon, Ormsby, Faulkner, Aylmer, Digby, D. Browne, R. French, W. French, Blake, Freke, Grace, Blackwood (one of the Dufferin family), Ward, Osborne, Smith Hardy, Hallen, A. Browne, Keatinge, Burdet, Sir F. Newnham, or 27 including the tellers; the number of the minority is however given as 23 in the "Debates of the Irish House of Commons."

<sup>8</sup> Debates of Irish House of Commons, vol. xii. pp. 181—244.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE SEQUEL TO THE DEBATE ON THE CATHOLIC PETITION.

DURING the debate on the Catholic petition, Mr. Cuffe said that Latouche's motion afforded the House of Commons an opportunity of "immortalizing" itself. It must be allowed that the House availed itself of this opportunity to a considerable extent. A pair of rabid bigots and a blundering buffoon had led an assemblage of gentlemen who, as Lord Clare once said, were proud to call themselves the representatives of the Irish nation, into the commission of an act which was an insult to that nation. David Latouche, Mr. Ogle, and Sir Boyle Roche felt, no doubt, that they had achieved a great victory in bringing about the rejection of the Catholic petition. They had successfully asserted the principle of Protestant Ascendancy, and inflicted a humiliating affront on the Catholics; and they rejoiced thereat. That Hobart and George Ponsonby also rejoiced over the part which they took in the transaction, is by no means equally certain.

Hobart had good reasons for believing that the rejection of the petition would not be pleasing to the English cabinet. One of the principal aims of that cabinet was to prevent a union between the Catholics and the Presbyterians.<sup>1</sup> The action of the Irish House

<sup>1</sup> Richard Burke brought with him, in January 1792, to the Lord-Lieutenant a letter of introduction from Pitt, in which the premier wrote: "From the anxiety which Mr. Burke expressed that the Catholics and Dissenters should not form a union together, the cabinet

of Commons in rejecting the Catholic and Presbyterian petitions, was well calculated to precipitate such a union, and thus to thwart the plans of the English ministers. In fact, Hobart, who was the servant<sup>2</sup> of the English Government in Ireland, had supported the Anglo-Irish Colonial House of Commons in a course tending to embarrass and defeat the policy of that Government. This was a condition of things which the Chief Secretary could not regard with satisfaction.

With reference to Ponsonby; to embarrass and defeat the policy of the Government was, no doubt, an object of paramount importance in the mind of the Whig leader, partly because it was the policy of the Government, and partly because he suspected that Pitt's aim in attempting to conciliate the Catholics was to play them off against the Protestant colony, for the purpose of destroying the independence of the Irish Parliament. But it afforded Ponsonby no gratification to strike at the Government and at Pitt through the instrumentality of a motion so violent and unprecedented as was Latouche's. Possibly, however, the Chief Secretary and Ponsonby each comforted himself with the reflection that he had done the best thing under the circumstances. Protestant opinion in Ireland, both knew, was strongly opposed to the admission of the Catholics to the franchise, and both doubtless deemed it advisable to bow to that opinion.

But what did John Keogh and Edward Byrne, Simon Butler and Napper Tandy, think of the proceedings in Parliament?

The Catholic Committee and the United Irishmen had been violently denounced during the debate, and their leaders subjected to gross personal abuse. In

had no desire to restrain, though they could not hinder his journey."—Dundas to Westmoreland, January 28th, 1792, S.P.O., quoted in Mr. Froude's "English in Ireland."

<sup>2</sup> Plowden speaks of Hobart as the "oracle and the index of the British cabinet."—"Historical Review," &c. vol. ii. pt. i. p. 415.



the temper of the times in Ireland, such an attack as Boyle Roche had made on Keogh and Byrne, and Toler had made on Butler and Tandy, was usually met by a "challenge," and a hostile encounter on the "Fifteen acres." However, Keogh and Byrne were not fighting men, and they came to the conclusion that the most effectual means of repelling the insults which had been offered them, and through them to their co-religionists, were not shooting Boyle Roche, but renewing with redoubled vigour the agitation for Catholic relief; and sweeping through Parliament, in spite of the Latouches, Ogles, and Boyle Roches, the Hobarts, and the Ponsonbys, the Whigs and the Tories, and Dublin Castle itself, a measure admitting the Catholics to the elective franchise.

So also thought Simon Butler; but Napper Tandy thought differently. Napper Tandy was a man of war—an out-and-out revolutionist. The *Times* once said that "liberty was a game to be played out with knives and hatchets."<sup>3</sup> These were the sentiments of Tandy. Animated by such sentiments, the United Irishman was only acting consistently with his principles in respecting the customs of the country, and demanding from the Solicitor-General the "satisfaction of a gentleman."

On the morning after the debate, Tandy, accordingly, sent a letter to Toler requesting an "explanation." Toler declined to explain, whereupon Tandy immediately sent him a challenge, which Toler declined to accept. On the same evening Mr. Cuffe brought Tandy's conduct under the notice of the House, and Marcus Beresford, declaring that the hotheaded United Irishman had been "guilty of a gross breach of privilege," moved that he should be taken into the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and brought to the bar forthwith. The House agreed

<sup>3</sup> The *Times*, as quoted in Mr. A. M. Sullivan's "New Ireland," p. 243. sixth edition.

unanimously to the motion, and the Speaker at once issued his warrant for the arrest of Tandy.

The messenger proceeded instantly to Tandy's house in Bride Street, where he learned that the fiery merchant was at his son's residence in Chancery Lane. Thither the messenger repaired, and found the offender, to whom he showed the Speaker's warrant and his own badge of office. "Wait until I get my hat," said Tandy, and the messenger, in a moment of misplaced confidence, waited; but finding after a few minutes that Tandy did not return, he became uneasy. Presently he heard a door slam, and became still more uneasy. Then a window was raised, and at length Tandy junior appeared upon the scene to relieve his suspense, indeed, but also to inform him that Tandy senior had "escaped," politely adding that if he chose he might "go through the house and search for him." The work of searching for Tandy the messenger considered would be a waste of time, and accordingly, instead of giving chase to the United Irishman, he hastily returned to the Sergeant-at-Arms to apprise that functionary of the result of his mission.

The House had been much exercised at Tandy's conduct in sending a hostile messenger to one of its members, but what were its sentiments on learning that the culprit had treated the speaker's warrant with as scant courtesy as if it had only been a writ from the King's Bench—a document which some honourable members themselves did not invariably regard with becoming respect? The messenger was summoned to the Bar to give an account of himself, if not of Tandy. His story was a brief one. He related how he had shown Tandy the Speaker's warrant, how Tandy had gone for his hat, and never returned. The Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms was called to the bar to state what he knew about the transaction. He corroborated the messenger's statement as to the flight of Tandy. He had gone to Tandy's house after the return of the messenger, but no Tandy was there, and no information could be



elicited respecting his whereabouts. What was now to be done with the contumacious United Irishman? It was clear, said Marcus Beresford, that Tandy saw the Speaker's warrant, and "fully understood the meaning of it" (a statement which was no doubt true enough). Instead of coming to the bar, continued Beresford, to "extenuate the atrocious offence he had committed, he had rescued himself from the messenger." "I now move," concluded the member for Wexford, "that Napper Tandy, having rescued himself from the custody of an officer of this House, is guilty of gross contempt of its privileges."

Denis Browne, speaking in very indignant terms of Tandy's "outrageous" conduct, seconded the motion, which was unanimously carried.

Then Marcus Beresford moved that an address should be presented to the Lord-Lieutenant, praying his Excellency to issue a proclamation offering a reward for the apprehension of Tandy. Sir Lawrence Parsons suggested that this was rather an unusual mode of proceeding. Lord Jocelyn agreed with Sir Lawrence, but Beresford's motion was carried *nem. con.* The member for Wexford had not yet done with the outrageous Tandy. He next moved "that James Napper Tandy, having presumed to demand an explanation from a member of this House of words spoken in debate in this House, has been guilty of a gross breach of privilege."

Mr. Brown, member for Dublin University, a clear-headed and sagacious man, here interposed, observing that the action of the House with reference to Tandy had been marked by an unusual and an unjustifiable amount of warmth which "did the House no great honour." Tandy had been wrong, he thought, but there was danger of the House making too much of the matter.

Hobart disagreed with Mr. Brown. He thought that the absence of "warmth" upon the occasion would have done the House "the greatest dishonour;" and

finally the Attorney-General wound up the proceedings by moving "that his Majesty's Attorney-General be directed to prosecute the said Napper Tandy" for sending the challenge in question. In due course a proclamation appeared, offering a reward of 50*l.* for the apprehension of Tandy, and precautions were taken at all the seaport towns to prevent his leaving the country.

Tandy, however, evaded arrest, and kept out of Dublin until the following April. What took place on his return will form the subject of a future chapter. Meanwhile, that chronological order may be preserved, it will be necessary to record the events which occurred in the interval.



## CHAPTER V.

## WOLFE TONE PLOTS.

So far the extreme Ascendency party had succeeded all along the line. They had, to use the metaphor of Sir Boyle Roche, "tossed the Catholic and Presbyterian petitions over the bar, and kicked them into the lobby." They had treated the Catholic Committee with contempt, and struck down the leaders of the United Irishmen in Dublin; for simultaneously with Tandy's flight Simon Butler retired from active politics. They had, as they thought, (to use another of Boyle Roche's metaphors) "nipped" the agitation in the bud, and at this they much rejoiced. But much as the Ascendency party rejoiced over their successes, there was at least one man in Ireland who rejoiced still more; that man was Wolfe Tone—so true is it that extremes sometimes meet. They desired to maintain Protestant Ascendency and preserve the English connexion; he wished to destroy both; they believed that concession to the Catholics would be fatal to their "aims," he believed it would be fatal to his. Admit the Catholics to the franchise, said the Ogles and Latouches, and they will become revolutionists; continue to exclude them, said Tone, and they will be forced into my arms. In a word, the extreme Ascendency party regarded the "firm" action of the House of Commons with satisfaction, and so did Wolfe Tone.

Though Tone was practically the founder<sup>1</sup> of the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Madden says that "the idea of forming the society of United

United Irishmen organization, he seems to have lost all influence in the Society immediately after its establishment. This fact he tells us himself in that most candidly-written of books, his autobiography. "The club was scarcely formed," he says, "before I lost all pretensions to anything like influence in their measures; a circumstance which at first mortified me not a little. . . . However, so it was. . . . I soon sank into obscurity in the club."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, from his place of "obscurity" Tone watched carefully over the fortunes of the association; the circumstance that he had been relegated to the background in no wise diminished his interest in its progress, or lessened his anxiety for its success. He saw with pleasure Catholics and Protestants steadily "flocking in," and witnessed with pride the gradual approximation to that union of creeds on which his hopes of success were built.

With the flight of Tandy, and the retirement of Simon Butler, the Dublin branch of the United Irishmen was left without leaders. The situation was critical, but, from Tone's point of view, satisfactory. It gave him an opportunity of coming to the front and directing the course of affairs. Hitherto, the United Irishmen organization had attracted little attention in the country; Tone now resolved to strike a blow which should have the effect of bringing it more prominently before the public, and with this object he determined to force a collision with the House of Commons, making the proceedings against Tandy a pretext for attack.

Suddenly emerging from his obscurity, the energetic United Irishman looked around for some thoroughly trustworthy colleague to help him in his plans, and his choice quickly fell on Archibald Hamilton Rowan.

Irishmen originated with Neilson; it was Tone who reduced the plan into form. In fact, strictly speaking, Samuel Neilson was the originator and Tone the organizer of the Society, the framer of its declaration, the penman to whom the details of its formation were entrusted.—"United Irishmen," Second Series, vol. i. 93.

<sup>2</sup> "Autobiography," p. 67.



Rowan was an Englishman by birth, a Protestant by religion, and a Scotchman by descent. His father, Gawin Hamilton, was an Irish landed proprietor whose ancestors had come over with James I., and settled in Killyleagh in the County Down.<sup>3</sup>

In 1750, Gawin Hamilton's fortune "being in need of nursing, he retired to England with his wife, the only daughter of William Rowan, of Drogheda," where they both took up their residence in Brook Street, London, and there Archibald was born on the 12th of May, 1751. Having been educated at Westminster and Cambridge, and after spending some years abroad, in the United States and on the Continent, Archibald went to Ireland in 1784, purchased an estate in the County Kildare, and took up his abode permanently in the country.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "Hans Hamilton, vicar of Dunlop in Cunningham, Scotland, is the person from whom the Hamiltons of Killyleagh have their descent. . . . [Hans] had six sons; James, created a peer [Lord Clandeboye] by James I." and given the "castle and lands of Killyleagh which had formerly belonged to the O'Neils; Archibald, from whom I am lineally descended by the male line, and Lord Dufferin by the female line; Gawin, and John, William, Patrick." James Hamilton "appeared" as a "school-master" on the occasion of his first visit to Ireland, and "amongst his pupils was Bishop Ussher." ("Autobiography of Hamilton Rowan," edited by William Hamilton Drummond, D.D., M.R.I.A. pp. 1—3.) Rowan's family was connected with the well-known and distinguished houses of Abercorn, Clanbrassil, and Dufferin. (Ibid. p. 20.) See also Harris, "History of the County Down," and Archdall, "Peerage of Ireland."

<sup>4</sup> Rowan's education and bringing up was attended to chiefly by his maternal grandfather, who evinced a keen interest in the youth's welfare. He was anxious to make Archibald a sound Protestant with liberal views; and this his protégé ultimately became. The old man left all his property to his grandson, who subsequently adopted the name of Rowan. "From personal affection," so ran his will, "and in the hope that he shall become a learned, sober, honest man, live unbribed and unpensioned, zealous for the rights of his country, loyal to his king, and a true Protestant, without bigotry to any sect, I give my property to Archibald Hamilton." He also directed that Archibald should be brought up at one of the British universities, and should not go to Ireland until he was twenty-five years of age, under the penalty, in case of disobedience, of forfeiting the income of the estate during such time as he remained there. Notwithstanding this "injunction," Archibald made several trips to Ireland

He immediately dashed into politics, became a Volunteer, joined the Whig Club, and finally, in 1792, entered the United Irishman Society in Dublin.

during his minority. An incident associated with one of these Irish journeys may, perhaps, be worth relating. Returning from that country on one occasion, he struck up an acquaintance with a fellow-traveller—an Irishman. The traveller turned out to be Mr. Matthias O'Byrne, a member of "an old Catholic family," who "had been sent to Germany in his youth to acquire that education which was refused to a Catholic at home." O'Byrne had entered the Austrian army, and was returning to his regiment when Rowan met him. Arrived in London, O'Byrne and Rowan went to spend "an evening at Vauxhall together." While there, says Rowan, "we found Mr. Bate, editor of the *Morning Post*, in a squabble with the Hon. Mr. Lyttleton and some of his party, whom he accused of having behaved impertinently to his wife and sister, Mrs. Hartley. Nothing could be more likely, as they were both fine women, and Vauxhall was a place to which young men were accustomed to go to sport the latter part of the day in search of adventures. Mr. Bate had fixed upon Mr. Lyttleton, and lifting his cane had threatened to strike him. This roused O'Byrne's military feelings, which were increased by the physical disproportion of the antagonists—Bate being a strong athletic figure, while the other presented that of an emaciated but elegant debauchee. O'Byrne rushing forward with an ejaculation, the tone of which denoted his birth-place, swore, if he struck the gentleman, he would run his sword through his body; but added, if nothing but boxing would satisfy him, he would take a round with him. Lyttleton was by no means ill pleased to have found a substitute. Both ladies accepted apologies, and O'Byrne was invited to sup with Lyttleton's party."

Arising out of this incident, an intimacy sprang up between O'Byrne and Lyttleton (who soon afterwards became Lord Lyttleton), and the latter promised to obtain a commission for O'Byrne in the British service; but the promise was not kept, though O'Byrne had retired from the Austrian army in hopes of its fulfilment. Ultimately O'Byrne, who was reduced to the greatest straits, obtained an ensigncy in the 13th Regiment, through the influence of the Austrian Ambassador in London, Count Belgioso. "In that capacity, with a light wallet and a lighter purse, he marched with a recruiting party to Brighton, and quartered at Shergold's. There a Mr. Salvador, a rich Jew merchant, young, gay, fond of company and play, was confined to his room by a fit of the gout. He desired Shergold to invite the officer who had come with the recruiting party to dine with him. Salvador was pleased with his companion: they chatted, they drank, and they played; and in a short time O'Byrne returned to London in a chaise and four, with about 1000*l.* in his purse. With this nest-egg he obtained leave to recruit in London—was proposed at most of the fashionable clubs. . . . He continued to play with the most constant



Hamilton Rowan has been described thus: "Mr. Rowan had a tall and commanding person, in which agility, strength, and grace were combined. . . . He was

success; nor did I ever hear a whisper against his integrity. He took a house in Pall Mall, and was invited by and entertained persons of the highest rank." At one time his success was such that he had realized about 2000*l.* per annum, and had a good sum at his banker's to call upon. "O'Byrne upon one occasion won as much as 9000*l.* at a single sitting." . . .

"Calling one morning with O'Byrne on Lord Lyttleton, to compliment his lordship on a very spirited speech he had made the previous night in the House of Lords, we found him recounting a dream he had the same night. He said he thought he had been awakened by a noise similar to the fluttering of a bird in a cage; that he looked up and saw the figure of a female, who addressed him: "Lyttleton, beware; you have only three days to live." He was engaged that day to go to a country-house he had purchased from O'Kelly, near Epsom, with Lady Flood and the two Misses Amflet; and the remainder of the story was repeated to me by George, his favourite servant, as follows: On the third day after his dream, Lord Lyttleton was attacked by sickness during dinner, and obliged to leave the table. It lasted, however, but a short time. On his return, he ordered a favourite dish—eggs dressed in a particular mode—which he ate with appetite, and thought no more of the matter. In the evening he was pointing out to the ladies the excellence of some prints of Hogarth's, and on taking leave of the company, he looked at his watch, and said, "It is now near twelve o'clock; I think, girls, I shall cheat the ghost this time." He then went to his room, and while putting on his nightgown, said, "It is very fortunate I threw up that nasty stuff; however, I will take some tincture of rhubarb." George poured some into a glass with water, and took up Lord Lyttleton's toothpick-case to stir it, when his master said, "You dirty dog, get a spoon." George went downstairs, and on his return found his master speechless in his chair, and in a short time he expired."

O'Byrne died several years afterwards in the following circumstances. "After his income had been reduced by bad luck (which he said had pursued him from the moment he staked 1000*l.* against a seat in the Irish Parliament), he went to Bath, and being engaged to dine with a friend a few miles off, while scolding the postilion for not driving faster, burst a blood-vessel, and died in the chaise." — Hamilton Rowan, "Autobiography," pp. 50—57. [The Lord Lyttleton above referred to was the son of George, Lord Lyttleton, author of "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul." His sudden death was thus referred to in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for the month (Nov., 1779): "His lordship had supped, and was, apparently, in good health a few minutes before." Dr. Drummond, who quotes this passage, adds, "But dissipation had done its work, and his sudden and pre-

a man of a generous, manly, chivalrous disposition, of high principles, and a strong sense of the obligations of truth, justice, and humanity. He loved liberty and hated oppression. He was steadfast, intrepid, and incorruptible in his public career; a brave, a good Irishman in the fullest sense of the term, persevering and consistent in his patriotism, the same in youth and age, in the worst of times, as in the better days of his country."<sup>5</sup> It was this man whom Tone chose for his colleague in the struggle which he meant to precipitate between the United Irishmen of Dublin and the House of Commons. We cannot, Tone said to Rowan in stating his views, suffer the attack which has been made upon us to pass unnoticed; if so, we shall lose prestige in the country. The occasion is one requiring promptness of action and boldness of front. The House of Commons has wantonly assailed and insulted us; we must return their fire, and assail and insult the House of Commons, showing the nation at large that we are

mature fate might have been anticipated without warning from a ghost."—*Ibid.* 67.]

Hamilton Rowan was convicted in 1794 for distributing a seditious paper containing an address to the Irish people, headed "Citizen Soldiers, to arms," and sentenced to pay a fine of 500*l.*, and to be imprisoned for two years. He escaped from prison after an incarceration of nearly three months, and took refuge with a friend—Mr. Sweatman. Sweatman arranged with two brothers named Sheridan to carry him to France. Meanwhile, a proclamation offering 1000*l.* reward for his capture was issued. As he was embarking in the little sailing craft for France, one of the Sheridans exhibited a placard containing the proclamation, and addressing Sweatman, said, "It is Mr. Hamilton Rowan we are taking to France!" "Yes," answered Sweatman, "and there he is" (pointing to Rowan). "Never mind," said the elder of the two brothers, "by —— we will land him safe," and they did. From France, Rowan, who became terribly disgusted with the horrors of the Revolution, went to the United States, where he remained for five years. In 1800 he returned to Europe, and in 1802, having obtained a free pardon, to Ireland, where he re-entered public life as a staunch advocate of Catholic emancipation, and a consistent supporter of all liberal measures. He died in 1834 at the age of 77.

<sup>5</sup> Webb, "Compendium of Irish Biography," p. 459.



not to be intimidated or put down so easily. I propose that a meeting of the club be called immediately to consider the matter; do you take the chair, and I shall act as secretary. Rowan agreed. A meeting of the club was accordingly held on the 24th of February, when a series of resolutions, framed by Tone, and "so worded as to offend the dignity of the House, and challenge their authority," were proposed and carried.

The most important of the resolutions ran as follows:—

That an insolent menace, having been publicly thrown out respecting this Society, we think it incumbent on us to declare that we do not shrink from, but anxiously desire to meet, any constitutional inquiry into our principles and conduct; and reserving for that occasion the justification of our actions, we resign to merited contempt the scorn of official station, or the scoff of unprincipled venality.

This resolution, with the others, was inserted in all the Dublin papers of the day, and 5000 copies, with Rowan's signature as chairman, and Tone's as secretary, were circulated throughout the country.<sup>6</sup>

That both Rowan and himself would, in consequence of the extreme steps taken by them, be at least committed to Newgate, for a breach of the privileges of the House, Tone fully expected, and much desired. In anticipation of such an event, he, on the 27th February, when the House next sat, held himself in readiness to appear at the bar, and having requested Sir Lawrence Parsons to keep him advised of the enemy's movements within, took up his position on College Green, composedly awaiting the arrival of the Speaker's warrant. Having waited and watched for more than an hour, he suddenly beheld, not Sir Lawrence Parsons, but the whole House, apparently, rushing forth in a panic. What was the cause? The House had met between 4 and 5 o'clock. No member rose to call attention to Tone's meeting and resolu-

<sup>6</sup> *Dublin Evening Post*, February 28th, 1792.

tions. The House was in a sensible, practical, business-like mood. A bill having been presented and read a first time, for "enabling persons to work mines of coals, metals, and fossils, and for improving the harbour of Arklow," the House resolved itself into committee "to inquire into the effect of the spirit regulation." Mr. Fisher, an Englishman, and superintendent of a brewery in Dublin, was in course of examination on the subject of the "brewery business," when a "confused noise of persons on the roof" attracted the attention of members. Mr. Thoroton, one of the clerks, was despatched to inquire into the cause of the disturbance. In a few moments he returned to say that the roof was on fire, and that the dome would probably fall in "within five minutes." The Speaker was sent for, the adjournment of the committee moved, and the house "precipitately" cleared. The fire advanced with "dreadful" rapidity, and in less than two hours the whole building, "whose beautiful architecture had been since its construction the admiration of Europe," was burnt to the ground.<sup>7</sup> No Speaker's warrant came for Tone that night—or at all. The House met the next evening in the "coffee room." The principal subject of attention was the fire of the preceding evening; and a committee was appointed to inquire into its origin, which turned out to be of a purely accidental nature.

The action of the United Irishmen gave rise to no comment or observation. The extreme Ascendency party doubtless felt that they had gone sufficiently far in the matter of the petitions and of Tandy's chal-

<sup>7</sup> Debates of Irish House of Commons, vol. xii. p. 251, 252. No lives were lost, but "two auditors in the gallery were severely hurt; one gentleman had his knee sprained, and an old lady, who was rather in too good case to pass with facility through the avenues of the gallery in their contracted state, was nearly crushed to death." The building had been erected in 1731, at a cost of 40,000*l.* The architects were Sir G. Pierce and Mr. Burgh. The records and journals were saved.—*Dublin Evening Post*, February 28th, 1792.



lenge, and that, for the present, it might be more judicious to leave the proceedings of Tone and Rowan unnoticed.

So far Tone's effort to "draw" the House had failed.

## CHAPTER VI.

## JOHN KEOGH DELIBERATES.

TONE having met the attacks of the House of Commons in the way we have seen John Keogh prepared for action.

Tone was an extreme and a violent, but an able and a clear-headed revolutionist. Keogh, equally able and clear-headed, was a moderate and an unimpassioned constitutional agitator. Tone was brilliant, dashing, speculative; Keogh sober-minded, practical, matter-of-fact. The United Irishman was a skilful organizer, an accomplished writer, a persuasive speaker; one endowed with military talents, and possessing a bold and an adventurous spirit. The leader of the Catholic Committee was a plain man of business, with a strong will, and sound sense. The motive power which mainly prompted the actions of the former was hatred of England; that which influenced the conduct of the latter, love of Ireland, and attachment to the Catholic religion. The one desired separation, the other redress. The one was anxious to conciliate, the other to annoy. The rebellious Protestant was unwilling to treat either with the English cabinet, or the Irish House of Commons; the loyal Papist was eager to negotiate with both. The voice of the former was for war; that of the latter for peace.

Differing widely in their political aims, Tone and Keogh agreed, nevertheless, on one point; the importance of union among Irishmen of all creeds.



By such means Tone hoped to obtain separation; Keogh the enfranchisement and final emancipation of his co-religionists. If, thought the Catholic leader, Catholics and Protestants could only be induced to know, they would soon learn to trust, each other; and if a feeling of mutual trust and confidence could be created among them, then the question of Catholic emancipation would soon be settled.

In combating the efforts of the Catholic Committee the extreme Ascendency party endeavoured (1) to prevent the bringing about of a union between Catholics and Protestants, and (2) to dissuade the English cabinet from adopting a policy of conciliation.

In pursuance of the first object they vigorously denounced the Catholic religion, and warned their own co-religionists against coalescing with the vassals of the Pope. The Catholics, they said, were not to be trusted. A Papist was a man without a conscience. He simply did whatever the Pope told him, and no more. Independent thought he never exercised, individual responsibility he did not recognize. At the bidding of the Head of his Church he was ready to murder his sovereign, and to break faith with heretics.

In pursuance of the second, they said, that the Catholics as a body were really very well off, very contented, and very happy. They never complained. It was only the agitators and demagogues in Dublin who, falsely asserting that they represented Catholic opinion, were attempting to find out grievances and to cause disaffection. Only let *them* be put down with the strong hand, and not a sound of complaint would be heard throughout the length and breadth of the land. Let the English cabinet be firm. Let Keogh and the Catholic Committee be distinctly informed that no further concessions could be made to the Catholics, and agitation would cease, and complete tranquillity be restored to the country.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Richard Burke's letter to the Catholic Committee; see Tone, "Autobiography," Washington edition, vol. i. p. 209.

The statements and arguments set forth with the view of preventing a union between Catholics and Protestants, John Keogh considered undeserving of notice. What was to be gained, he said, by an attempt on the part of the Catholic Committee seriously to answer these allegations? The violently anti-Catholic Protestants who made them would not be induced to espouse the Catholic cause on the strength of any statements advanced by the Catholic body; while the pro-Catholic Protestants who had already espoused that cause, would not be driven to abandon it by a "cry" with which they were familiar, but in which they did not believe. The Presbyterians of Ulster, however, took a different view of the matter. They thought that the Catholic Committee were bound to answer the arguments and statements of the extreme Protestant party. The answers of the Catholic Committee, no matter how complete, might not satisfy the violently anti-Catholic Protestants, but the Committee owed it to their Protestant friends to place them in a position of being able to point to an authoritative Catholic document in refutation of charges so grave. Keogh accepted the suggestion of his Presbyterian friends, and, in deference to their wishes, the Catholic Committee issued a declaration of Catholic faith on the 17th of March, 1792. This document contained a categorical denial of the various charges advanced against Catholics as citizens and subjects by the extreme Ascendency party. The Pope, it affirmed, possessed no power to absolve the subject from his civil allegiance, or to annul contracts entered into between man and man: the assertion that to keep faith with heretics was contrary to Catholic doctrine, it condemned as unjust and false; and the statement that to kill or injure "heretics" was meritorious and dutiful, it reprobated as absurd and monstrous. The Pope and Council, it declared, were not infallible in the sense that their decrees could override the moral sanctions imposed upon a man by his own conscience,



which was the supreme arbiter of right and wrong. Nor was the former infallible in any sense, for Papal infallibility "is not an article of Catholic faith" which "we are required to believe or profess." The declaration concluded by denying that it was the intention of the Catholics to "subvert the Protestant Church Establishment," and to "substitute a Catholic establishment" in its stead, averring the Catholic claim to be simply the right of admission to the elective franchise.<sup>2</sup>

This declaration was unproductive of any practical results, so far as I can learn. In all probability it did not secure for the Catholics a single friend, or deprive them of a single enemy. It was what Wolfe Tone would have described as a discharge of blank cartridge. It made a considerable noise; it did no harm; it did no good. Much more efficacious in frustrating the designs of the Ascendency party were the articles published every week in the *Northern Star*—the organ of the United Irishmen. This journal, which might be described as the forerunner of the *Nation* of Duffy and Davis, was established in Belfast in January, 1792. Its motto was, "Union is power;" and the text from which its contributors preached the

<sup>2</sup> See Plowden, "Historical Review of the State of Ireland," vol. ii. pt. ii. Appendix No. lxxxviii. The declaration was signed by Edward Byrne and Richard McCormack, and subsequently by Dr. Troy and the Catholic clergy. See *Dublin Evening Post*, March 20th, 1792. See also, Dr. Troy's famous pastoral, written on the 18th of February, 1793, in which, to prevent any misunderstanding with reference to the subject of Papal infallibility, he wrote thus: "Many Catholics contend that the Pope, when teaching the Universal Church as her supreme head and pastor, as successor to St. Peter, and heir to the promises of special assistance made to him by Jesus Christ, is infallible, and that his decrees and decisions in that capacity are to be respected as rules of faith when they are dogmatical, or confined to doctrinal points of faith and morals. Others deny this, and require the expressed or tacit acquiescence of the Church, assembled or dispersed, to stamp infallibility on his decrees. Until the Church shall decide upon this question of the schools, either opinion may be adopted by individual Catholics without any breach of Catholic communion or peace."—Pastoral, p. 73.

words of Grattan: "The Irish Protestant can never be free until the Irish Catholic has ceased to be a slave." In this paper, as in the *Nation* of '42—'48, articles constantly appeared, urging Catholics and Protestants to unite, and, pointing out in forcible language, that it was for the true interests of both to "stand together."

Keogh, having, in compliance with the desires of his Presbyterian allies, met the attempts of the extreme Ascendency party to check the growing union between Catholics and Protestants by issuing the Catholic declaration, next prepared to deal with what he considered a more important matter, viz. the efforts to persuade the English cabinet that there was no discontent amongst the Irish Catholics, and that the Catholic Committee did not represent Catholic opinion.

*Visible signs of serious discontent among the Catholics, as a body, there certainly were not at this time.* The statement of the Ascendency party that the Catholic masses did not complain was perfectly true. Indeed, Keogh's great difficulty all along had been to rouse the Catholics to action, and he had not as yet succeeded in so doing. There can be no denying the fact, but for the "agitators and demagogues" in Dublin the Irish parliament would be very little troubled with the Catholic question. Neither could it be said, strictly speaking, that the Catholic Committee was a thoroughly representative Catholic body. The Catholic aristocracy and clergy stood apart from the association, while the middle and lower classes throughout the provinces had not in any public way given their adhesion to its programme or policy. No meetings of Catholics had been held in any part of the country, save Dublin, to express approval of the action of Keogh and his colleagues, or to acknowledge their right to speak in the Catholic name. All this was true, and being true, Keogh felt that the facts could be used with much effect by the Ascendency party to depreciate the importance, and damage



the character of the Catholic Committee in the eyes of the English cabinet. He therefore resolved to reorganize the Committee on a basis which would henceforth give it a thoroughly representative appearance and character; but, before his plans of re-organization had been formulated or thought out, Napper Tandy returned to the scene of action. I will now leave the subject of the reconstitution of the Catholic Committee for the present, and follow the fortunes of the stormy petrel of Irish politics of those days.

## CHAPTER VII.

NAPPER TANDY "FACES" THE HOUSE, AND LORD OLONMEL  
MEETS WITH A DISAPPOINTMENT.

TANDY returned to Dublin about the 15th of April, 1792, and on the 16th, at noon, he sauntered forth from his son's house in Chancery Lane to take a stroll in College Green, where he was immediately encountered by an individual named Knight, who said, "Mr. Tandy, I arrest you in the king's name." "Where is your warrant?" said Tandy. "There," said Knight, pulling the proclamation of the Lord-Lieutenant out of his pocket, and submitting it to the gaze of the United Irishman. "I dispute the validity of your warrant," said Tandy; "it is an illegal document; but I shall accompany you to a magistrate;" and to a magistrate Knight led the way.

Arrived at the court, Knight presented his prisoner, and said he had made the arrest conformably to the proclamation of his Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant and the Privy Council. Alderman Carleton, the magistrate, a cautious man and a circumspect functionary, said that he did not see his way very clearly in the matter. He had some misgivings as to the legality of the proclamation, and did not wish to deal with the case at all. "I think," he said, "it is hard that this affair should be saddled on me; but I will have nothing to do with it. I recommend you to apply to Alderman James;" and to James, Knight immediately proceeded. But James was as unwilling to deal with the matter as Carleton had been. "I wish to have nothing to



do with this affair," he said; "I refer you to the Lord Mayor." "I will not go to the Lord Mayor," said Knight, who considered that he had quite done his part, "I have brought my prisoner, Mr. Tandy, before you and Alderman Carleton as magistrates, and with you it rests to dispose of him as you please. I have done my duty; I shall now go and apply for the reward," and away went Knight, leaving Tandy behind. "Am I to consider myself detained as a prisoner?" said Tandy. "Certainly not," replied the magistrates, for Alderman Carleton had now joined his brother James; "but we should feel obliged if you would wait until the recorder, whom we have sent for, arrives." Tandy waited, but the recorder did not arrive, and finally the aldermen informed Mr. Tandy that he was "perfectly at liberty," whereupon Mr. Tandy bowed to their worships, and departed in freedom. But his freedom was of short duration, for next morning he was arrested on the Speaker's warrant, and in the evening brought to the bar of the House of Commons, in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms. The following scene then occurred:—

The SPEAKER (addressing Tandy),—Did you receive an order from this House for taking you into custody for a breach of privilege?

TANDY,—I did.

The SPEAKER,—Did you obey that order?

TANDY,—I was taken into custody.

The SPEAKER,—Did you escape out of custody?

TANDY,—I am now in custody which I consider illegal—

The SPEAKER,—Give a direct answer. Did you escape out of custody?

Counsellor (Charles) SHERIDAN,—I rise to order. I have seen a proclamation enjoining all his Majesty's liege subjects to apprehend James Napper Tandy, and the crime specified in this paper, which purports to be a proclamation (for I wish to believe for the honour of the Government of this country that it is a spurious production) was that Mr. Tandy had escaped from the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms. Now, the question proposed from the chair tends to make Mr. Tandy criminate himself; and I conceive here, as in every court of

justice in the country, no man is bound to answer questions that might tend to establish his own guilt. If the citizen at the bar, therefore, will take my advice, he will not answer the question proposed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL,—I conceive the honourable member's objection to the question ill-founded. If Mr. Tandy conceives that the question will tend to criminate him, he may object to it. But it will still remain for the House to determine how they shall act if Mr. Tandy should so object.

The SPEAKER,—I deemed it unnecessary to inform Mr. Tandy that he was not bound to answer questions which might tend to criminate him; and if I had thought it possible that any honourable member could have objected to the question I have proposed to Mr. Tandy, I should have called on the House to direct me in the matter. I now await the pleasure of the House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL,—I beg to move that Mr. Speaker shall demand of Mr. Tandy whether he had escaped out of custody.

This motion was agreed to unanimously.

The SPEAKER then repeated his question as to whether Tandy had escaped from custody.

TANDY,—I was in custody, which I considered illegal and unconstitutional.

The SPEAKER,—I must demand a direct answer.

TANDY,—I will answer no interrogatories which I am not bound to answer by the law of the land.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL,—Mr. Tandy confesses that he had been taken into custody by an officer of the House. He refuses to answer whether he escaped from that custody or not. The evidence of the officer, however, on a former day established that he had so escaped. I, therefore, now move that "James Napper Tandy be committed to Newgate." The motion was seconded by Denis Browne and carried unanimously.<sup>1</sup>

The extreme Ascendency party had at last laid Tandy by the heels, and had been helped in the good work even by so liberal-minded and generous a politician as Denis Browne. Once more the extreme Ascendency party rejoiced. Once more Wolfe Tone (who sat in the gallery during the proceedings, and keenly watched all that was going on beneath,) rejoiced also. By a curious but easily explainable

<sup>1</sup> Debates of the Irish House of Commons.



concatenation of circumstances, it often came to pass in those days that the friends of the constitution, the champions of Church and State, the lovers of order, and the one solitary man in the country who at that time really was in heart and resolution an irreconcilable rebel, rejoiced together respecting the political situation. The extreme Ascendency party in truth were the unconscious allies of the watchful and untiring revolutionist. The incarceration of Tandy was precisely the thing which Tone wanted. Tandy at large was not of much service to the United Irishmen; Tandy in jail would be a useful man; and to jail Tandy, accompanied by Tone and the United Irishmen, and followed by a vast mob which cheered all the way, was marched, a hero and a martyr.

Tandy had been in jail about two hours<sup>2</sup> when Parliament was prorogued; whereupon it, of course, became impossible to keep Tandy in jail any longer, and he was accordingly let out. On leaving the jail he was again met by Tone and the United Irishmen and a sympathetic circle, and conveyed in triumph to his house.

The day after Tandy's passage of arms with the House of Commons, a dinner, under the auspices of the United Irishmen Society, was given in Belfast, when the following toasts were proposed: "Mr. Paine and the rights of man;" "Mr. Tandy and the right of the subject;" "Mr. Tone and a reform of Parliament;" "the United Irishmen and union of power;" "General Washington and the American States;" "La Fayette and the 14th of July;" "May the people know now the true value of kings;" and "Religion without priestcraft."

Tandy determined to follow up his victory; and accordingly, on the 28th of April, addressed a letter to the citizens of Dublin, denouncing the House of Commons and the Government. The dignity of

<sup>2</sup> Froude, "English in Ireland," vol. iii. p. 55. Madden says Parliament was prorogued about half an hour after Tandy's committal.—  
"United Irishmen," Third Series, vol. i. p. 67.

Parliament, he said, had with the connivance of the administration, been reduced to a state of "puerile petulance and frothy railing, while the law was abused by an illiterate debating society." Among the rights comprehended in the privilege of "free debate" was apparently "that of unrestrained Billingsgate against every citizen who opposes or exposes the profligacy of a corrupt court." No notice was taken of this letter by the House or the Castle; but the Attorney-General was instructed to indict Tandy for having "written a challenge to Toler," and for "provoking that gentleman to fight," "intending him much bodily damage, and putting him in great terror." The trial came off on the 11th of June, before Lord Chief Justice Clonmel, Mr. Justice Hewitt, Mr. Justice Boyd, and a jury. The Prime Serjeant, the Attorney-General, Mr. Hackett, Mr. Franklin, and Mr. Whitestone prosecuted. The Recorder, Thomas Addis, Emmet, Mr. McNally, Mr. G. J. Browne, and Mr. Ridgway defended.

On taking his place on the bench Lord Chief Justice Clonmel, finding a great rush for seats, said, "As trials of this kind may be considered as public examples, it is my wish to accommodate the public with places in the court; but I must in the first instance see that the gentlemen of the bar are accommodated." Whatever the opinion of the jury might be, it was tolerably clear that Lord Clonmel had judicially resolved to make a public example of the obnoxious Napper Tandy. The gentlemen of the bar having been accommodated, and the public allowed to crowd in, to witness the holocaust, the trial commenced. It lasted all day, and at the close Mr. Justice Hewitt and the Lord Chief Justice charged dead against the prisoner. The jury then retired to consider their verdict, and after an absence of an hour and a half returned to the court. "Are you agreed to your verdict, gentlemen of the jury?" said the clerk of arraigns. "We are," said the foreman. "What say you?" said the clerk;



“is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?”  
 “Not guilty,” replied the foreman. Then broke forth a cheer which astonished and discomfited Clonmel, already surprised and perplexed by the verdict. In vain he sought to suppress the applause, which soon became uproarious. The cheers, which had commenced in the court, were taken up in the corridors and carried into the outer hall, where an enthusiastic crowd, anxiously awaiting the result of the trial, repeated them again and again, until the whole building rang with plaudits and huzzas. Even the “highly respectable”<sup>3</sup> citizens whom Lord Clonmel had interested himself in having accommodated with places in the grand jury box, in order that they might witness the trial which was to prove a “public example,” caught the contagion of popular joy. They clapped their hands, stamped their feet, and beat the sides of the box with their sticks, despite the indignation and rage of the disappointed and baffled judge. “Never again,” said his lordship, “shall I allow the grand jury box to be set apart for the accommodation of the public. The indecency of this demonstration is outrageous. I have the highest veneration for that invaluable privilege of the constitution—trial by jury—but in my opinion the indecent conduct of the populace on the present occasion has robbed the verdict of the jury, in my mind at least, of a very considerable share of that dignity which was its brightest ornament.” When Tandy appeared in the outer hall he was greeted with renewed cries of welcome and applause, and was finally conducted to his house in triumph, amid the acclamations of an immense multitude.<sup>4</sup>

There was not in Dublin that night a more popular citizen than Napper Tandy, nor a man more highly pleased than Wolfe Tone.

Napper Tandy, having gained a victory over the

<sup>3</sup> Clonmel.

<sup>4</sup> *Dublin Evening Post*, June 19th, 1792.

House of Commons and the Government, determined, with the temerity which was his distinguishing characteristic, to pursue to the uttermost the advantages of his success. He resolved to bring an action against the Lord-Lieutenant for publishing an illegal proclamation against him. The writ was issued in June; but immediately quashed on the ground that the Lord-Lieutenant was not legally responsible for any acts done by him in his official capacity as viceroy. On the 27th of June, Simon Butler, in behalf of Tandy, appeared to show cause why the writ ought not to be quashed. He said that the court had no judicial knowledge of the fact that Lord Westmoreland was Viceroy; "no documents had been adduced to prove it." In the course of his observations Butler said that there was no legally-established Government in the country, whereupon the court at once interposed and severely reprimanded him.

BUTLER,—I am not to be dictated to in the duties of my station.

The COURT,—Do you mean to insinuate that there is no legal Government established in the country?

BUTLER,—My regard for the peace of the country induces me not to answer that question.

The COURT,—We think that we are sufficiently informed of Lord Westmoreland's official character by its common notoriety—by his lordship's being generally acknowledged as the representative of majesty, and by his actually exercising all the functions of that office. Finding him invested *de facto* with the character and powers of viceroy, we are of opinion that we have nothing to do with the question *de jure*.

BUTLER,—Well, I now press for a decision on this question: Whether an action civil or criminal can lie against a Chief Governor of this country?

The COURT,—We shall not decide that question now. We shall let it stand until next term.<sup>5</sup>

Next term their lordships gave judgment affirming the order for quashing the writ, and declaring that no action could lie against a lord-lieutenant for acts done

<sup>5</sup> *Dublin Evening Post*, June 28th, 1792.



in his capacity of "chief executive magistrate of this kingdom." So terminated Tandy's proceedings against the Lord-Lieutenant, and for the present his conflict with the authorities generally.

The United Irishmen Society now began much to attract the attention of the Government and the country. George Ponsonby shrewdly observed that the genius of the movement was Tone, and he judged, rightly enough, probably, that if Tone was removed from it, it would go to pieces. The Whig leader, therefore, now tried, and perhaps not unwisely, to draw him from the ranks of the United Irishmen and to place him in the ranks of the Whigs. A member of the Whig party was sent to treat with Tone. This gentleman pointed out to the United Irishman the dangers of the course on which he was entering, and dwelt upon the advantages to be gained by departing from it and joining the Whigs. These overtures Tone politely but firmly rejected, and Ponsonby, seeing the hopelessness of persevering in his design, quickly abandoned it.<sup>a</sup>

We shall now return to John Keogh and the Catholic Committee.

<sup>a</sup> Tone, "Autobiography," London edition, p. 70.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE.

RICHARD BURKE resigned his office of paid agent to the Catholic Committee, and returned to England in April, 1792. His mission to Ireland had not been a success. He had come to the country with the best intentions; and his conduct while there had been regulated by the most moderate considerations of policy, and influenced by the strongest feelings of loyalty. An earnest advocate of the Catholic claims, he was also a staunch supporter of the Protestant Establishment; strong in the conviction that for reasons of expediency as well as justice the Catholics ought to be admitted to the franchise, he was desirous of obtaining from them every guarantee for the safeguarding of the Protestant institutions of the country. A steady friend of the English connexion, he was anxious to remove the discontent that endangered it; a loyal subject of the crown, he was solicitous of attaching the masses of the people to the constitution; a Conservative, and a monarchist, he was concerned to conciliate the Catholics, whom he regarded as Conservatives and monarchists too. Had the Ascendency party been wise in their generation, they would willingly have treated with Richard Burke, as with one not hostile to their interests, though opposed to their views; but they did not treat with him at all. On the contrary, from the moment of his arrival in the country until his departure, he was made the subject of Castle intrigues and Ascendency denunciations. He was attacked as an "Eng-



lish" agent; he was almost mobbed in the House of Commons for an act which, however indiscreet and irregular, certainly did not deserve the outburst of passion and fury which it provoked. The petition which he had prepared on behalf of the Catholic Committee, praying for the concession of the franchise, was treated in, to use the words of Edmund Burke, an "unheard of," and "an unparliamentary," a "monstrous," "shocking," and "profligate" manner. Seldom, assuredly, had a supporter of the constitution been treated with such contumely by the accredited guardians of the constitution, as Richard Burke was treated by the Ascendency party in Ireland. "God forbid," says Edmund Burke, writing in March, 1792, "for the sake of general humanity in which [the extreme Ascendency] partake in spite of themselves, that they should suffer the punishment which *their folly and wickedness call for from God and man.* [Nevertheless] I pray you, as far as in you lies, to keep the terms of common society with those with whom you can keep no other."<sup>1</sup>

Richard Burke returned to England in April, feeling, doubtless, after his Irish experience, that he might for a while be able to render better services to the Catholics by endeavouring to persuade the English cabinet in London to do what was just, than by attempting any longer to overcome the prejudices and defeat the machinations of the authorities at Dublin Castle.

Burke having left Ireland, it became necessary for John Keogh to appoint a successor in his place as paid agent to the Catholic Committee. Where was he to look for this successor? To the Whig Club? There were in that society many experienced politicians well fitted to undertake the duties of the post. But, unhappily, the Whig Club would have nothing to do with the Catholic Committee as now led. To the Catholic aristocracy? There were in its ranks men of culture and ability; where more likely to find a

Letter of Edmund Burke to Richard Burke, March 20th, 1792.

sympathetic organizer than among its members? But, unfortunately, the Catholic aristocracy were as unwilling to identify themselves in any way with the Catholic Committee as was the Whig Club. They had in fact—to use an expression of Edmund Burke, employed with reference to the defection of Lord Kenmare, and to the submission of that nobleman to the Castle influences—been “Kenmared.”<sup>2</sup> Where then was Keogh to look for one to fill the place of Richard Burke, and to form and carry out the plans of re-organization which he deemed so essential? Shunned by the Whigs and the Catholic aristocracy, Keogh was constrained, by force of circumstances, to turn to the United Irishmen for the assistance he needed. In that association he sought for and found the man he wanted. In June, 1792, he invited Wolfe Tone to become the paid agent and organizer of the Catholic Committee, and Tone accepted the invitation.

Immediately on Tone's joining the Catholic Committee the work of re-organization commenced. Tone gives the chief credit of this work to Myles Keon of Keonbrook, County Galway, a Catholic gentleman who had hitherto taken little part in public affairs. The plan of re-organization proposed by Mr. Keon was as follows,—

(1) Two members from each county and one from each leading city were to be associated with the General Committee in Dublin. The election of the county members was to be carried out thus: each parish was in the first instance to nominate the men of its own choice, and then the men so nominated were to become the candidates for election in the counties, the polling for which was to take place at the chief towns in each county, much on the same principle as a Parliamentary election would be conducted. The city members were elected in the same way as an ordinary borough member of Parliament would be elected. It was a

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Edmund Burke to Richard Burke, March 20th, 1792.



necessary qualification for election that the candidates should be residents of the counties or cities they sought to represent. The ordinary routine business of the association was to be carried on as usual by the General Committee in Dublin; but whenever matters of an extraordinary nature were to be transacted—such as petitioning Parliament, or making arrangements generally for a parliamentary campaign, &c.—the country members were to be summoned to meet their Dublin colleagues in full convention in the metropolis.

(2.) While the country members were bound to attend in Dublin only on extraordinary occasions, they were at all times required to communicate regularly with the central establishment; moreover, those among them who represented counties were to communicate constantly with their constituents, and these again were to communicate with the parish nominators; thus a complete chain of communication between the metropolis and the provinces was to be kept up.

This plan Keon submitted in writing to the Committee. The first part, viz., that relating to the association and election of county members, was, with some slight modifications, accepted; the second, relating to the maintaining of constant communication with the mass of the people, “being thought,” says Tone, “too hardy,” was rejected.<sup>3</sup> John Keogh was a man who always moved by degrees. There is a story told of an Irishman who, in the town of Belfast, asked a Scotch piper upon one occasion to “play up the ‘Boyne Water’ softly, just to see how I’d stand it.” John Keogh was resolved to “play up” the system of re-organization “softly” to the Ascendency party, to see how they would “stand it.”

Keon’s plan, as approved of by the Committee, was soon published in the Dublin papers, and imme-

<sup>3</sup> Tone, “Autobiography.”



diately transmitted to the provinces. Its publication was received by the Ascendency party with a burst of indignation and wrath. Not since the battle of Limerick, it seemed to them, had the Papists shown such fight as now. What, they asked, was the meaning of this new move—this audacious effort to extend the ramifications of the Papist Committee throughout every parish and hamlet in the country? One in their ranks, who in genius and power stood above all the rest pre-eminent, knew well what the meaning of this new move was. John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare, (for to him I allude,) felt that it meant nothing more nor less than the assembling in Dublin of a Papist Parliament; and if such a Parliament was once permitted to meet, then, in his judgment, not only the admission of the Catholics to the franchise, but their complete emancipation, would become only a matter of time.

Now or never, he thought, it behoved the Ascendency to push back the tide of Romish invasion; otherwise not a Protestant institution in the land could for long withstand its force and fury. He was well aware how for a century the Catholics had been oppressed and enslaved, and he feared, or affected to fear, that their enfranchisement would lead to a war of vengeance and extermination against their taskmasters. It was, however, not mere feelings of apprehension—if indeed they existed at all—that occupied his thoughts.

He was averse to the enfranchisement of the Catholics, because he was opposed to the freedom of his fellow-countrymen generally. The grand passion of this extraordinary man's heart was a consuming hatred of the land which had given him birth. But let justice be done him; his hate was impartial: Catholics and Protestants, landlords and tenants, were all equally and thoroughly the subjects of his dislike and anger. To have been born an Irishman—no matter of what class or creed—was all-sufficient to earn the



lasting enmity of John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare. "Good God!" said Pitt to Wilberforce in the English House of Lords on one occasion, when Clare was denouncing and slandering his countrymen there, as he had ever been accustomed to denounce and slander them at home; "good God! did you ever hear in all your life such a rascal as that!"<sup>4</sup>

John Fitzgibbon was born near Donnybrook, in the neighbourhood of Dublin, in 1749. His father, (a barrister who had amassed a large fortune,) was a convert to the Protestant religion, and a relative of Edmund Burke. Speaking of him, Burke once said, "The second growth [of Catholics], and, most of all, they who touched the first growth the nearest, and those whom I had seen in their meridian when I began life, whether Catholics or converts, were, for the greater part, very low and abject. Such was . . . a relation of ours, John Fitzgibbon, a convert himself. . . . He had, however, a firm and manly character. Had he lived he would have been astonished more than edified at the zeal of his son. My last conversation with him was in 1766. . . . He spoke to me like an Irishman. Religion, as such, made no part of our conversation then or at any time; but the condition of his countrymen and blood, on account of their religion, from the insane prejudices, and furious temper then raging in the lower part of the prevailing faction, seemed to make a proper impression on him; although the desire of fortune, the fear of raising disturbance to his declining days, and his ambition with regard to his family, as well as the habits of fear and constraint, hindered him from taking any proper part. However, his mind was right, both as a lawyer and a man who wished well to his country."

Young Fitzgibbon, having graduated at the Dublin University, and also taken a degree at Oxford, was called to the Irish bar in 1772; and he soon attained

<sup>4</sup> Stated by Wilberforce to North, who used to relate the anecdote. See Grattan's "Memoirs," vol. iii. p. 403.

a position of eminence in his profession. He entered politics as a supporter of the popular party, and a friend of Grattan. In 1780 he was elected member for the university, his colleague being Hussey Burgh. Upon that occasion he used the following words in expressing his determination to support Grattan's Petition of Rights: "I have always been of opinion that the claim of the British Parliament to make laws for this country, is a daring usurpation on the rights of a free people, and have uniformly asserted the opinion in public and private." But in a few years Fitzgibbon changed his views, and deserted his party. In 1783 he succeeded Yelverton as Attorney-General, and soon afterwards broke completely with his old friends. Thenceforth, Ireland—his "damnable country," as he once described it in a letter to Lord Castlereagh<sup>5</sup>—had no more bitter enemy, England no more dangerous friend, than John Fitzgibbon.

Endowed with intellectual qualities of a very high order; possessing great personal courage, and immense force of character; a skilful and an able debater; adroit, ready, eloquent; effective in argument, impressive in statement, powerful in denunciation, and quick at retort: selfish, arrogant, intolerant, and unscrupulous; caring for no country, and loving no man; animated by not one pure or noble sentiment, and influenced by not a single just or honourable principle—Fitzgibbon, next to Castlereagh, was the most useful instrument employed by the English minister in accomplishing the Legislative Union. The Act of Union carried, Fitzgibbon immediately sank into insignificance. While the Irish Parliament existed, he was one of the most considerable political characters in the three kingdoms. The Irish Parliament destroyed, Fitzgibbon's occupation was gone. Detested by his own countrymen, spurned by his English em-

<sup>5</sup> See Sir John Barrington, "Historic Memoirs of Ireland," vol. i. p. 24; also Lecky, "Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland," new edition, p. 166.



ployers—to whom, when he had ceased to be useful, he became intolerable—disappointed, wretched, miserable, he died, after a brief illness, at the age of fifty-three, in his house at Dublin on 28th January, 1802.<sup>6</sup>

His remains were conveyed to the grave amid the maledictions of an infuriated populace; his memory is to the present day execrated in the country which it was his chief business in life to slander and vilify, to injure and oppress.

Such was the man who now resolved to oppose the efforts of the Catholic Committee by the whole strength of the Ascendency party. To be hewers of wood and drawers of water to Lord Clare and his class, was the destined lot of the Irish Papists; and that lot, and no other, should for all time be theirs—so thought, so wished John Fitzgibbon. To think and wish, and not to act in accordance with his thoughts and wishes, was no part of the character of this remarkable personage. Once cognizant of what he conceived to be the designs of the Catholic Committee—viz. the extension of its influence throughout the country, and the assembling of a Catholic convention in Dublin—Clare set vigorously to work to prevent the carrying out of the new plan. Under his directing influence the corporation and grand jury of Limerick passed a series of resolutions condemning in the strongest manner the conduct of the Catholic Committee in adopting and promulgating Keon's plan. The example set by Limerick was quickly followed by Louth, where Foster, the Speaker of the House of Commons, held sway. Other counties promptly fell into line: Carlow, Mayo, Monaghan, Longford, Cork, Wexford, Cavan, Fermanagh,

<sup>6</sup> Immediately on his return [from England] he found the knocker of his hall-door assailed as usual by hundreds of applicants, craving for place and pension. "Ah," said he, as for the first time in his life he began to calculate his influence, and found it wanting; "*I* that once had all Ireland at my disposal, cannot now nominate the appointment of a gauger."—Fitzpatrick, "*Cloncurry, and his Times*," p. 251.

Roscommon, Leitrim, Derry, and Armagh—in all of which resolutions were passed by the corporations and grand juries, condemning and denouncing the projected plan of the Catholic Committee.<sup>7</sup> The grand jury of Leitrim described it as “an inflammatory, and dangerous publication;” that of Cork, as an “unconstitutional proceeding of the most alarming, dangerous, and seditious tendency; an attempt to overawe Parliament.” Epithets and statements of a like character were indulged in by the grand jury of Roscommon, who asserted their determination, “at the hazard of everything dear to them, to uphold and maintain the Protestant interests of Ireland, so gravely threatened by the action of the Catholic Committee.” The grand jury of Sligo resolved “that they would now and at all times, and by every constitutional means in their power, resist and oppose every attempt then making, or hereafter to be made, by the Roman Catholics to obtain the elective franchise, or any participation in the government of the country. The grand jury of Donegal, “while regarding the Catholics with tenderness,” were resolved, nevertheless, “to maintain, at the hazard of everything dear to them, the Protestant interest of Ireland.” The grand jury of Fermanagh would do likewise, though likewise they had “the warmest attachment to their Roman Catholic brethren.” Of course, the gentlemen of Derry “tendered their lives and fortunes to support the happy constitution as established at the Revolution of 1688, and now” endangered by Popish plots and wiles. The grand jury of Louth, with the Speaker at their head, declared “that allowing the Roman Catholics the right of voting for members to serve in Parliament, or admitting them to any participation in the government of the kingdom, was incompatible with the safety of the Protestant Establishment, the continuance of the succession to the crown in the illustrious House

<sup>7</sup> See Grattan's *Memoirs* by his son, vol. iv. p. 69.



of Hanover, and tending finally to shake, if not destroy, their connexion with Great Britain, on the continuance and inseparability of which depended the happiness and prosperity of the kingdom; that they would oppose every attempt towards such a dangerous innovation, and that they would support with their lives and fortunes the present constitution, and the settlement of the throne on his Majesty's Protestant House."

The freeholders and gentry of the County Limerick, marshalled under the command of Clare, charged the Committee, acting under the direction of turbulent and seditious men, with an intention to overawe the legislature, to force a repeal of the penal laws, and to create a Popish democracy for their government. To save the State they instructed their representatives in Parliament "to oppose at every risk any proposition which might be made for extending to Catholics the right of elective franchise." The corporation of Dublin was not, of course, silent in so great an emergency. They denied in the strongest terms the competence of Parliament to extend the right of the franchise to the Catholics, and declared that such an act would be "an alienation of the most valuable of their inheritances."<sup>8</sup>

The cannonade of resolutions and manifestoes thus opened by the Ascendency party on the Catholic Committee, staggered Keogh and Tone for a moment; but it was only for a moment. Neither was a man to be staggered much or for long. Keogh met the attack in his usual calm, sensible, and practical way. We must, he said, satisfy ourselves in the first instance that we are well within the law in adopting this plan of association. We must take legal advice on the subject at once. A case was accordingly prepared for counsel by Tone. It was sent to Simon Butler and

<sup>8</sup> Plowden, "Historical Review of the State of Ireland," vol. ii. pp. 373—375.

Beresford Burton. The two principal queries ran thus :—

“ 1. Have his Majesty’s subjects of Ireland professing the Roman Catholic religion a right to petition his Majesty and the legislature for the redress of grievances equally with Protestants, and if not, wherein do they differ ?

“ 2. If they have this right, may they lawfully choose delegates for the purpose of framing such petition, and presenting the same in a peaceable and respectful manner ; and if they may not, by what law or statute are they forbidden so to do ?”

Both these questions were answered in the affirmative by Butler and Burton. “ Delegation,” said Butler, “ has always been considered not only as the most effectual mode of obtaining the general sense, but also as the best security against tumult and disturbance.”<sup>9</sup>

Having thus cleared the way, and being satisfied as to the legality of the Committee’s action, Keogh returned the cannonade of the Ascendency party by firing off counter-manifestoes, justifying his own conduct and that of his colleagues, and condemning the attitude of their foes.

You charge us with being seditious and turbulent, (this was the burden of those counter-manifestoes, written chiefly by Tone)—why ? Because we, constituting three millions of the people of Ireland, seek for the rights which you, being only half a million, possess. You say that the “ constitution of this kingdom is unacquainted with any such body of men as the Committee of the Catholics of Ireland.” Very true. But was the constitution acquainted with any such body of men as the Volunteers ? Were not the Volunteers denounced by the creatures of the government, even as you denounce us ? But you were Volunteers. How did the Volunteers demand their rights, and how do we demand ours ? We have approached Parliament,

<sup>9</sup> Grattan’s *Memoirs* by his son, vol. iv. Appendix iv.



and we mean to approach it again, dutifully, humbly, constitutionally. How did you approach Parliament? You came armed into the capital to dictate measures to the existing government of the country. We are seditious, and you are loyal! Were you loyal when you planted guns in the streets of the metropolis, and said, "Free trade or this?" Were you loyal when, availing yourselves of the foreign complications in which England was involved, you snatched from her, practically by force of arms, your legislative independence? You did all this, and you were loyal! We approach Parliament without arms, without threats of violence, with respect, submission, and as suppliants, and we are seditious! But we have resolved upon our course. We have petitioned for our rights. We shall petition for them again, and we will not, on the one hand, be bullied out of that determination by your pompous offers of "your lives and fortunes," no more than we will, on the other, be duped by your mean and pitiful professions of "love and high respect."<sup>1</sup>

So far, the battle of Catholic liberty had been fought only by the Catholic Committee in Dublin, assisted by the United Irishmen; that is to say, by a mere handful of individuals. The masses of the Catholics in the country had not hitherto shown any signs of life; the Catholic aristocracy were apathetic, the bishops and clergy timid. Early in 1792 Keogh had stated to Peter Burrowes, a leading barrister who was favourable to the Catholic claims, that he had failed in his efforts to rouse the Catholics; they would not stir; they would hold no public meetings; it was impossible to excite them; in fact,

<sup>1</sup> I have compressed into the above the burden of the Catholic manifestoes and statements generally as gathered from the papers and pamphlets, &c., of the time. But see Tone's letter in reply to the resolutions of the grand jury of Derry.—"Autobiography (Political Works)," vol. i. pp. 378—381, see also *ibid.* pp. 65, 67, Washington edition.

he said, "I despair." This had been the condition of things up to the opening, by Fitzgibbon, of the Ascendency campaign of resistance to the plan of the Catholic Committee, in June, 1792. Then a change suddenly occurred in the position of the Catholic masses. "By ——!" said Keogh, rushing in one day to Grattan with a host of Ascendency resolutions, and manifestoes, and a budget of news from the provinces in his hands, "By ——! Lord Clare has done what I so long attempted, and attempted in vain; he has roused the Catholics."<sup>2</sup> So it was. The masses of the Catholics had remained passive spectators of the struggle for emancipation until they saw the handful of men who were bravely fighting their cause in Dublin assailed with that excessiveness of vituperation and falsehood of which Fitzgibbon was so perfect a master. Then they rallied around the Committee. Far different was the effect produced on the minds of the aristocracy by Fitzgibbon's attack. It made them tremble more than ever. They foresaw a stand-up fight between the Catholics and the Ascendency, in which they felt assured that the former, as usual, would go to the wall. Then would follow fresh penal enactments, the destruction of the rights they now enjoyed, the confiscation of their lands, the annihilation of their religion and order. The clergy were also not without apprehensions for the future. They did not like the alliance between the Committee and the northern republicans. In the temper of the times republicanism meant government based on the principles of the French Revolution; and a government of this kind meant infidelity and ruin. Influenced by these apprehensions, the clergy were disposed rather to stand by the aristocracy and the government than by Keogh and the Catholic Committee.

For the support of the Catholic aristocracy Keogh was not very eager. He thought the battle could be

<sup>2</sup> Grattan's Memoirs by his son, vol. iv. p. 82.



fought without them.”<sup>3</sup> But his feelings towards the clergy were very different. He did not care for republicanism any more than they did; to him it meant separation from England, and separation he did not want.<sup>4</sup> But the alliance he had formed with the northern republicans was unavoidable. He was driven to it by the hostility of all the constitutional parties in the country. However, nothing would afford him greater satisfaction than to bring into the Committee men whose influence could be used in counteracting the republican tendencies of the United Irishmen. He believed that the influence of the Catholic clergy could be so used. He felt that their adhesion would have the effect of steadying the movement; their opposition, that of unsteading it. He resolved to obtain their support, or, at all events, to secure their neutrality. With this intent he proposed that Tone (who did not much relish the proposal, though he accepted it), Braughall, and himself should undertake a journey to the provinces, to interview the leading ecclesiastics, and satisfy them of the soundness of the policy—the legal and constitutional character of the action—of the Committee. The three started for the south and west. Their mission was eminently successful. Many of the clergy expressed a willingness to

<sup>3</sup> “The exertions of [the Catholic aristocracy] were directly opposed to our seeking redress. . . . We were scoffed at and opposed by our own nobility and gentry. . . . The hostile spirit of the Irish Government met in the aristocracy of the Catholics very active, very zealous, but certainly not very able partisans. . . . They opposed the convention.”—Keogh, Speech at a meeting of the Catholic Committee in 1810. See Proceedings of Catholic Committee, 1791—1811.

<sup>4</sup> Keogh refused to become a United Irishman. In 1797 a foreigner got introduced to Keogh, and endeavoured to draw him into the revolutionary movement then on foot. Keogh told them that revolution was absurd, and that nothing could be worse or more dangerous. Keogh finding the man plotting treason, told him to leave; the man refused. Keogh said, “If you do not go, I will give you up to the authorities.” The man would not go, and Keogh gave him up; whereupon he was obliged to leave Ireland. See Grattan’s Memoirs by his son, vol. iv. p. 82 and n.

join the Association, while others declared their determination to remain perfectly neutral in the contest.

Having so far made matters smooth in the south, Tone thought that it was now Keogh's duty to turn his attention to the north. The leader of the Catholic Committee had not up to the present ever visited his northern allies. This, to say the least, was ungracious. Why should he not come among them now to thank them for their support in the past, to confer with them as to future action? So Tone put the case. Keogh did not relish a visit to the northern republicans any more than Tone had relished his visit to the southern bishops, but he deemed it expedient to comply with Tone's request. On the 9th of July Tone started for Belfast, Keogh promising that he, McCormack, and other members of the Committee would in due course follow. On the 14th of July there was to be a Volunteer review and a banquet in the Northern capital in celebration of the French Revolution. For this event Tone was anxious that Keogh and the other members of the Committee should be in time; it would afford, he thought, an admirable opportunity for a fore-gathering of Catholics and Presbyterians.

On the morning of the 13th July, Tone was up betimes, and hastened to the "Donegal Arms" to welcome the Catholics who were to arrive by the mail. The mail had arrived, but no Catholics. "Very odd," notes Tone in his diary; "saw them take places for last night." The careful United Irishman had taken the precaution of booking Keogh and the Catholics for Belfast per mail of the 12th inst. before he himself had taken his departure on the 9th. "Very odd. Will they come or not? No letters." Later on in the day he "hears" that "several Catholics have been seen." He "runs to try" if the report be true, and finds that it is. McCormack and several other Catholics had arrived, and at last Keogh appeared, and Tone's mind was set at ease. In the evening the several Volunteer corps streamed into the town, and were, according to



the usual practice of the times, billeted on the inhabitants, who warmly greeted them. Next day came the review. The Earl of Charlemont, commander-in-chief of the Volunteers, was unable to attend, and Colonel Sharman, of Moira Castle, was deputed to take his place on the occasion. But Colonel Sharman was taken unexpectedly ill, so the duties of Reviewing General ultimately devolved on Major Crawford, of Crawfordsleagh. Early in the morning the various regiments formed into line in High Street and thence marched to the ground, where the review was successfully held.

The review being over, a procession was formed consisting of Volunteers and civilians, and all marched back to Belfast in the following order and style. First came the Belfast troop of Light Dragoons and the Artillery of the Belfast first company, with Major Crawford at their head. They exhibited the following national colours and mottoes:—

Ireland.—*Motto*, “Unite and be free.”

America.—*Motto*, “The asylum of liberty.”

France.—*Motto*, “The nation, the law, and the king.”

Poland.—*Motto*, “We will support it.”

Great Britain.—*Motto*, “Wisdom, spirit and liberality to the people.”

In the rear of this first corps was carried a portrait of Dr. Franklin, with the motto, “Where liberty is, there is my country.”

Then came the following regiments:—Belfast first company, commanded by Captain Cunningham; Muckamore Fusileers, commanded by Captain Swan; Larne, commanded by Lieutenant Farrel; Randalstown, commanded by Captain Dickey; Moira, commanded by Captain Bateman; Dromore first company, commanded by Captain Vaughan; Villa Independents, commanded by Captain Hamilton; Ballynahinch, commanded by Captain Armstrong. The Artillery of Belfast Blues brought up the rear, and after them came a triumphal car drawn by four horses,

on which stood a great standard supported by two Volunteers. The standard contained on one side of the canvas a representation of the release of the prisoners from the Bastile, with the motto, "Sacred to Liberty;" the reverse contained a figure of Hibernia, with one hand and foot in shackles, and a Volunteer presenting to her a figure of Liberty; motto, "For a people to be free, it is sufficient that they will it." Close behind the triumphal car marched—The Belfast Blues, Captain Wm. Brown; Downpatrick, Captain Hawthorne; Dromore Light Infantry, Captain Bodle; Carrickfergus, Captain Craig; Braughshane, Captain Teuffin. Last of all came the inhabitants of the outlying districts, preceded by a portrait of Mirabeau, and bearing a green flag with, on one side, the motto, "Our Gallic brother was born July 14th, 1789: alas! we are still in embryo;" and, on the other, the words, "Superstitious jealousy the cause of the Irish Bastile; let us unite and destroy it."

The whole procession moved forward in the above order, followed by an immense multitude of citizens, and halted in front of the Linen Hall. There, after three *feux de joie*, a vast mass meeting was held, when addresses to the National Assembly of France and to the people of Ireland, (which had been prepared by Tone,) were voted. The latter address contained the following paragraph:—

" . . . We feel it incumbent upon us to declare . . . that no reform will answer our ideas of utility or justice which shall not equally include all sects and denominations of Irishmen. We reprobate and abhor the idea that political inequality should result from religious opinions; and we should be ashamed, at the moment when we are seeking for liberty ourselves, to acquiesce in any system founded on the slavery of others."

The expunging of this paragraph was moved by Mr. Joy and seconded by Mr. Stewart, better known to fame in later years as Lord Castlereagh. But not one other man in the vast meeting could be found to support the amendment so proposed. Samuel Neilson



denounced it vigorously. "We know nothing," he said, "of a Roman Catholic question, or a Church question—of a Presbyterian, a Quaker, or an Anabaptist question. *The question is, Shall Irishmen be free or not?*"

A Protestant clergyman, the Rev. J. Kelburn, said, "It is time to quit this foolery [of saying, as Joy had said, that the Protestant mind was not yet prepared to give, or the Catholic to receive complete emancipation] and join hands and voices with your Catholic brethren, to recover the birthright which you both have lost." "I would rather," said another Protestant clergyman, the Rev. T. Birch of Lambfield, "transport myself to Botany Bay than live in a country which continues to keep itself in abject slavery by internal divisions." "When," said Dr. Dickson of Portaferry, "when are the Catholics to be emancipated? To-morrow? next day? next month? next year? next century? in the next world perhaps?—or is their emancipation to be postponed until by intermarrying with us wise and capable Protestants, and particularly with us Presbyterians, they may breed, and produce a race of beings who will inherit a capacity from us? You say the Catholics are not fit to exercise the rights of citizenship because they are ignorant. If they be ignorant, what has made them so? Our mild system of laws. But I deny that they are ignorant or unfit to exercise the rights of citizenship. What is it that we do that they cannot do? They understand and practise the cultivation of the land as well as we. They excel in all the common arts as well as we. Do we not see them quit the humble paths of life to prove themselves an ingenious and commercial people? Do they not bend their minds to the study of philosophy, the useful branches of literature and the fine arts, as successfully as we? There is no difference of opinion in this meeting as to the justice of completely emancipating the Catholics, the only question in dispute is

as to the expediency of emancipating them at the present time; and I am for immediate emancipation.”<sup>5</sup>

Joy's amendment was then put and defeated by a huge majority.<sup>6</sup> In the evening there was a great banquet in the Linen Hall. Among the toasts proposed were: “The National Assembly of France,” “The French Army,” “Confusion to the enemies of French liberty,” “May the glorious Revolution of France teach the governments of every country wisdom,” “Freedom and prosperity to the United States,” “The rights of man,” “Mr. Paine,” “Washington,” “Stanislas Augustus,” “Mr. Fox,” “Mr. Grattan,” “Ireland,” “The cause of freedom,” “The memory of John Locke,” “The memory of Molyneux,” “The memory of Dr. Franklin,” “The memory of Mirabeau.” In fact, the demonstration—review, meeting, banquet, and all—was a vast success, and contributed much to drawing closer and closer the bonds of union between the Catholics and Presbyterians.<sup>7</sup>

Keogh remained in Belfast from the 14th to the 18th of July, conferring with the Presbyterians—who approved of the plan for reorganizing the Catholic Committee—respecting the future. On the 18th he started on his way to Dublin with Tone, stopping at various places *en route* to interview the bishops of the districts, and win them over to his side. Tone did not much relish this interviewing of the

<sup>5</sup> The words used by O'Connell, when the question was raised whether the negroes should be immediately emancipated, may be aptly quoted here. “I am for speedy, immediate abolition. I care not what caste, creed, or colour, slavery may assume. I am for its total, its instant abolition. Whether it be personal or political, mental or corporeal, intellectual or spiritual, I am for its immediate abolition. I enter into no compromise with slavery; I am for justice, in the name of humanity, and according to the law of the living God.”

<sup>6</sup> Only five, out of an assemblage where there were thousands, voted for the amendment.—Tone, Diary, July 14th, 1792.

<sup>7</sup> See “History of Belfast,” pp. 371—381; “Belfast Politics,” 1792-93, pp. 52—72; Tone, Diary, July 9th—15th, 1792.



bishops. Indeed, it would seem that he thought the Committee well rid both of the aristocracy and the bishops. "Damn all bishops," he says in one part of his diary, "Keogh not quite right on that point."<sup>8</sup> In fact, he knew that the influence of the bishops would be used in defeating his ulterior object—a separation between the two countries—and was desirous of avoiding them accordingly. But Keogh was resolved to stick to the bishops, and to make them stick to him.<sup>9</sup> "August 18th," again notes Tone, ". . . . [Keogh] converts a bishop at Newry, another at Downpatrick." "August 19th. Get on to Drogheda, and find the Newry stage setting off for Dublin. Leave [Keogh] converting another bishop, the Catholic Primate, and drive off in the stage."

Having arrived in Dublin, Keogh and Tone immediately visited Grattan, and reported to him all they had done in the south and north. He approved of their operations. He was afraid, however, that the Government would strike some severe blow at the Committee; probably arrest their chairman if they attempted to hold a convention in Dublin. In that event Tone suggested that all the leaders should "rise and go with" the chairman. Grattan said, "No, let him go, and immediately elect another; if he be committed, elect another, and so on, but never recede." "If," he added, "the House of Commons give words, let

<sup>8</sup> Tone, Diary, August 1st, 1792.

<sup>9</sup> Though Tone objected to the bishops politically he did not object to them socially or intellectually. A few days after he had "damned" them all he makes the following entry in his diary:—"August 9th; dinner with Dr. Reilly, the primate, Plunket, Bishop of Meath, Reilly, Bishop of Clogher, Cruise, Bishop of Ardagh, McMillan, Bishop of Down, Coyle, Bishop of Raphoe, McDevitt, Bishop of Derry, and Lender, Bishop of Dromore; all very pleasant and sensible men. Dr. Plunket for the first: think he would be a credit to any situation. All well on the Catholic question; more and more admire Dr. Plunket; glad to find Catholic prelates men of such manners and understanding." Keogh deserves some credit for his tactics in getting Tone among the bishops.

the Catholic Committee do the same; and if they be firm, the House will submit, because the one is an emanation from the people, and the other is not." <sup>1</sup>

The preparations for the elections of delegates were now being vigorously pushed on, and the beginning of December was fixed for the holding of a great Catholic Convention in Dublin. The tide of "Romish invasion," swelled by the elements of Presbyterian discontent, was rolling steadily on. What thought Lord Clare? what Dublin Castle? what the English Cabinet?

<sup>1</sup> Tone, Diary, August 21st, 1792.



## CHAPTER IX.

## THE CASTLE, THE CABINET, AND THE CONVENTION.

DUBLIN Castle—and in those days Lord Clare was Dublin Castle—had one specific for dealing with Irish disaffection, one remedy for removing Irish discontent—coercion. To inquire into the causes of popular complaints; to see what was just, what unjust in them; to discriminate between the turbulent and the seditious, and the reasonable and loyal characteristics of political agitation; to separate the elements of treason from those of constitutionalism; to try and conciliate the men who were well-disposed to the State, though fairly dissatisfied with their condition under it, while repressing with the strong hand the hopelessly irreconcilable revolutionist—this was not a mode of dealing with political disorders which recommended itself to the Chancellor as a kind of government, worthy of statesmanship, or at all adapted to the temperament of the Irish people.

Lord Clare's views of the situation—right or wrong—were clear and decisive; his mind, as to what should be done, was fully made up. The Catholics should not be permitted to elect their delegates; they should not be allowed to hold a Convention; the Catholic Committee should without one moment's hesitation be suppressed. How was this to be accomplished? By proclamation. Would such a proceeding be legal? That was a mere matter of detail, not worthy of serious consideration in dealing with the Irish. Suppose the proclamation was resisted? It would not be

resisted ; the people had not the pluck to resist. But suppose for a moment they should resist ? Then let the military be called out ; if they do not yield to the proclamation, they will yield to grape and canister, to powder and ball. But, perhaps, their demand to be admitted to the franchise is after all just ? Another mere matter of detail not really worth thinking or talking about. The question in a nutshell was this. The Irish were not civilized or civilizable. They did not understand justice. They were not entitled to it. What they understood ; what alone they would be amenable to, was the strong arm : Justice with the sword but not with the scales. Such were the views, such was the policy of Lord Clare ; such the views, such the policy of Dublin Castle. If the resources of the British Empire were only placed at the disposal of the Chancellor, order would reign in a very short time at Warsaw. He would soon, to use the language of Mr. Froude, make “faction”—represented by John Keogh and the Catholic Committee—“slink into its den.”<sup>1</sup>

The policy which Lord Clare, working at one side of the Channel, sought to press on the English cabinet, Edmund Burke, working at the other, endeavoured to dissuade the cabinet from adopting. In public and private he urged the Government, both in England and in Ireland, to concede the franchise to Catholics ; firstly, because it was just ; secondly, because it was wise ; thirdly, because it was, sooner or later, inevitable. It was impossible, he said, to deprive the Catholics of Ireland for ever of the franchise. They must “in the nature of things” ultimately have it. “What vexes me is that it will not be [granted to them] in the best, the most gracious, the most conciliatory, and the most politic mode.”<sup>2</sup> The Catholics constituted, he said, three millions of the Irish people,

<sup>1</sup> Froude, “English in Ireland, vol. iii. p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Burke, “Works and Correspondence,” vol. ii. p. 59.



while Protestant Episcopalians were but half a million, the Dissenters contributing another half-million to the total population of the country. They possessed property to a large extent, and were rapidly advancing in wealth and intelligence.

The penal code had been so constructed that if a breach were made in any essential part of it, the whole was ultimately bound to crumble to pieces. Such a breach had been made; and it was idle to attempt to keep the Catholics any longer in a state of servitude.

But it was objected that the Catholics had allied themselves with the Presbyterian republicans of the north. That was a condition of things to be regretted, but were the Catholics to be blamed and punished for it? What was the state of the case? The Episcopalian Protestants refused to grant the Catholic demands. The Presbyterians volunteered to help the Catholics in pressing forward those demands. For accepting that offer of assistance the Catholics—though placed in circumstances of great temptation—were to be punished, while the Presbyterians who made the offer were to be treated with perfect impunity. It was not proposed to deprive the Presbyterians—of whose republican principles there could be no doubt—of the franchise, but to deny that right to the Catholics—who had not shown themselves in a single instance to be imbued with republican sentiments. “We mean,” [you, the Ascendancy, say to the Catholics,] continued Burke, “to preserve, as our life-blood, all the liberties and immunities” [of the Presbyterians]. We mean to cultivate them as brethren whom we love and respect—with you we have no fellowship. We can bear with patience their enmity to ourselves, but their friendship with you we will not endure. . . All our quarrels with them are always to be revenged upon you. Formerly, it is notorious, that we should have resented with the highest indignation your presuming to show any ill-

will to them. You must not suffer them now to show any good-will to you. Know—and take it once for all—that it is, and ever has been, and ever will be, a fundamental maxim in our politics, that you are not to have any part or shadow or name of interest whatever in our State: that we look upon you as under an irreversible outlawry from our constitution—as perpetual and unalterable aliens.”<sup>3</sup> Was this a just, was it a rational way of dealing with the case? Burke reasoned.

The Catholics, he urged, could be won over to the side of the Episcopalian Protestants; their union with the northern republicans, (which was not a “natural union,” though the Episcopalians might make it so,) could be broken, if the latter would but do them justice.

Let the Episcopalian Protestants concede the franchise to the Catholics gracefully and liberally, and they would make the Catholics their friends. Let them not do that. Let them withhold the franchise until it was wrested from Parliament by force—by the force of a Catholic and Presbyterian combination—then they would make the Catholics, and the Presbyterians as well, their enemies—then might they tremble for the fate of the Church establishment, and for the Protestant interest in Ireland. What forces had the Episcopalian Protestants to oppose to a Catholic and Presbyterian combination? The Catholics and Presbyterians combined were three and a half millions, and the Episcopalians only half a million. But it was said that the Episcopalians could always rely on the support of Great Britain. No doubt in the event of an effort on the part of Catholics and Presbyterians combined, to bring about a separation between the two countries, the Episcopalians could safely rely on the support of Great Britain. But could they rely upon that support when the question simply was

<sup>3</sup> “Burke on Irish Affairs,” edited by Matthew Arnold, pp. 258, 259.



whether a "proscriptive monopolizing system," under which the great majority of the people of the country were excluded from the common rights of citizens, should or should not be maintained in the interests of a "handful of gentlemen, clergy, and their dependants"? Burke thought that in such a case the support of Great Britain could not be relied on. "Before Great Britain engages in any quarrel, the cause of the dispute will certainly be a part of her consideration. . . . She will not be fond of making another American War in Ireland."<sup>4</sup> Let the "leading gentlemen of Ireland" think well on this. Let them "undertake cheerfully, and with hearty affection," the business of conciliating the masses, of their fellow-countrymen. Let them be just in time. Let them grant willingly what in the end—whether they like it or not—must be conceded. Such was the burden of the advice, given from time to time, by Edmund Burke to the English cabinet and the Irish Government during the years 1791 and 1792.<sup>5</sup> So far as the Irish Government was concerned this advice was addressed to deaf ears. With the English cabinet the case was different. At first they were disposed to recognize the expediency of conciliating the Catholics by granting the franchise; but by degrees, yielding to the pressure of Dublin Castle, they changed their views, or rather declined to act upon them.

The day previous to his departure for Ireland, to act as agent to the Catholic Committee, Richard Burke had an interview with Dundas, at which the subject of the franchise, and the Catholic question generally, was discussed. Next day (December 25th, 1791), Dundas wrote to Richard Burke, saying that, having "very maturely considered the different particulars which passed in conversation between us yesterday

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 270.

<sup>5</sup> See Burke's letters on Irish affairs in 1791-92, "Works and Correspondence," vol. ii.; also "Burke on Irish Affairs," edited by Matthew Arnold.

forenoon, and in compliance with your request, I take the first opportunity of intimating to you, that Mr. Hobart sets out immediately for Ireland, furnished with a full communication of the sentiments of his Majesty's confidential servants, relative to the Roman Catholics of Ireland. The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, will in consequence thereof, take the proper steps on the subject, and will very speedily communicate to the Roman Catholics the determination of the Government respecting the representations they have made. I must, therefore, refer you to the Government of Ireland for any further communications you may wish to hold on this subject. I think it necessary, however, to assure you that you will do me much injustice, if you think that my forbearing to enter into any further particulars with yourself proceeds from any want of personal respect for you; and above all, I must entreat you to believe that the steps we have taken for the conduct of this business, are those which occur to us as the most likely to bring this important question to a happy conclusion.<sup>6</sup>

What the views of the English cabinet as to the "steps most likely to bring" the Catholic question to a "happy conclusion" were, may be gathered from the terms of a letter written by Dundas to Westmoreland on the day following that on which his letter to Burke was penned. In this letter he states that the "Cabinet considered that the risk to the Protestant interest would be greater by the total exclusion of the Catholics [from] than by their admission [to the franchise]." This was a very clear hint to the Irish Government that the English cabinet were not unfavourable to what at the time was the extreme Catholic demand.<sup>7</sup>

But the Irish Government were fully determined not to act upon this hint; on the contrary, they

<sup>6</sup> Dundas to Richard Burke, December 25th, 1791; Burke, "Works and Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 52.

<sup>7</sup> Dundas to Westmoreland, December 26th, 1791, S.P.O.



resolved by every means in their power to baffle the intentions of the cabinet.

“I find, on comparing various accounts,” says Edmund Burke, writing to Richard on the 13th of January, 1792, “that the opposition [to concession] is chiefly in the Castle itself, and that the point against which they set their faces most strongly is the representation. They say that they would cheerfully give up the bar, and would open the army and navy; but that to the last they would never consent. For this, I do not find that Hobart gives any sort of reason, but the reason is evident enough. The Castle faction, by having commissions now and then to give to this or that man, would completely gain this or that man, and dispose him to dupe or disavow his brethren; but the votes of independent men of property might sometimes give them trouble, and never could be of service to them in a job. They [the votes] would go into the general mass of the feelings and interests of the country.” In the same letter, referring to an interview which he had with J. King, Burke says: “When I found that the Castle had been set on to talk with contempt of Keogh, and to say that the general wishes of the Catholics were not to be taken from him, I did justice to Keogh, and said that it were well for government if they had many men of such abilities to serve them; in which King agreed with me, thinking highly of the man. But when I added that it was [idle] to tell me that any people on earth existed that should not wish to be on as good a footing as others in their community, or were pleased with exclusions and incapacities, all he did was to convince me that he had a poor idea of my understanding, and did not a bit less than affront me.” Burke then goes on to say, “I find that Hobart does not at all like your being concerned in the business; and in that idea I should not be surprised if he did all he could, underhand, to lessen you in the opinion and confidence of those who employ you, as well as with others. But by

this time you are at the bottom of all this, and you will see whether it is more prudent for your cause, and safe for your personal dignity (things that ought never to be separated), to continue where you are, or to come hither [to London], where you are sure of being heard at least with respect. . . . If the Castle do not wish you as a friend and mediator, they will soon reduce you, for it is completely in their power . . . , to the situation of a mere common solicitor, with the disadvantages of being an unsuccessful [one too].”<sup>8</sup>

The English cabinet endeavoured in those early days to secure the reception of a “friend and mediator” for Richard Burke, at the Castle, though the steps which they took in that direction were cautious, tentative, and hesitating. At Richard Burke’s request, Dundas on the 29th of January, sent him a letter of introduction to Westmoreland, in which he said, “From the anxiety which Mr. Burke expressed that the Catholics and Dissenters should not form a union together, the cabinet had no desire to restrain, though they could not hinder, his journey.”<sup>9</sup> Dundas was desirous of suggesting to the Castle people, that, in their own interests, they ought to accept the services of Burke, in order to prevent the formation of a dangerous coalition; to put the matter to them in any other way—on the grounds of right or justice, for example—he knew well would be futile. But the Castle people were not to be

<sup>8</sup> Some days later (on January 26th), Burke wrote again to Richard: “Though we have nothing from you, we hear on all hands that the Castle has omitted nothing to break that line of policy which the [English] Government has pursued, as opportunity offered, from the beginning of the present reign: that of wearing out the vestiges of conquests, and settling all descriptions of people on the bottom of one protecting and constitutional system. But, by what I learn, the Castle has another system, and considers the outlawry (or what at least I look upon as such) of the great mass of the people as an unalterable maxim in the government of Ireland.—Burke, “Works and Correspondence,” vol. ii. pp. 58, 59.

<sup>9</sup> Dundas to Westmoreland, January 29th, 1792, S.P.O (already referred to).



coaxed or manœuvred into accepting Burke as a friend or mediator under any circumstances. Dundas tried to frighten them. He wrote to Westmoreland, stating that they must not expect the power and resources of England to be exerted in any contest that might arise for pre-eminence or power between distinctions of Irishmen, for that it was the decided opinion of the cabinet that all such differences, so far as political considerations were regarded, should be done away with. Westmoreland promptly replied, and showed Dundas that two could play at the frightening game. "I must tell you," he said, "the inevitable results of communicating these statements of yours [that politico-religious distinctions should be done away with, and that the power of England would not be exercised to maintain them]. The fears and jealousies that universally affect the Protestant mind are not confined to Parliament, but affect almost every individual and every public body. The steadiest friends of British government apprehend that indulgence will give the Catholics strength to press for admission to the State. In this they see the ruin of political power to the Protestants, and—trifling as you may consider the danger—a total change of the property of the country. The final consequence will be a confederacy of the Protestants, with very few exceptions, to resist every concession. They will resolve to support their own situation by their own power. You will lose for the Catholics the very indulgence which you desire to procure. You will cause the collision which it is your object to prevent. The Catholic body can only act against the Protestant, by outrage and intimidation, and you will be obliged by the necessary principles of government to spill the blood of the very people whom the expectation of your indifference may have raised to a state of ferment. The next consequence will be a general confederacy against the present Administration, the Protestant interest considering themselves made a sacrifice to

false policy or resentment. What is the state of this country? The government strong; the Parliament well-disposed; the country quiet; the Catholics of respectable landed property and clergy, disavowing every turbulent sentiment, stepping forward and separating themselves from the agitators. Some concession is due to them, but the publication of your sentiments would at once shut the door. Why sacrifice our present strength? Why sacrifice an old and established policy, which has for a century maintained the Government of Ireland, to the intimidation of Napper Tandy and his associates, at the head of the lower rank of Catholics in Dublin, unconnected with the nobility, landed gentry, or clergy of their communion.

“If I am to understand that I am directed to endeavour to reconcile the minds of Protestants to the . . . admission [of the Catholics] to the franchise by an information or intimation that England will not interfere in any contest produced by refusal, and that even [this] concession [is] *to be considered as a prelude to the abolition of all religious distinctions*, I must request you will again take the sense of his Majesty’s confidential servants, and if they continue of the mind that such language shall be held, that you will send me positive directions how I am to proceed, that I may not be counted as responsible.”<sup>1</sup>

I shall offer but a single word of comment upon this letter. It was worthy in every respect—typical in almost every line—of the justice, good sense, statesmanship, and virtue of Dublin Castle.

But it produced the desired effect on the mind of the English cabinet. It was a broadside which silenced the guns of Dundas. Westmoreland had the best of the frightening game. Dundas quickly disclaimed any

<sup>1</sup> Westmoreland to Dundas, January, 1792, S.P.O. Dundas’ letter, to which this was a reply, is not in the State Paper Office; but the substance of it can be gathered from the above. See Froude, “English in Ireland,” vol. iii. p. 40, n.



“intention of playing what was called a Catholic game.” “The Cabinet,” he said, “urged nothing which the Irish Council might think unsafe. They had no interest apart from Ireland,” that is from the Irish Council. “The Protestants should decide for themselves how far a slight concession,” with reference to the franchise, “might safely be made.” The Cabinet would not have offered an opinion at all on the matter only that the Protestants had “all through the summer and autumn [of 1791] expressed their fears to us of a union between the Catholics and Dissenters.” “They asked for our opinion, and we gave it. Time will show whether we were right or not.” “But what interest could we have but concern for the Irish Establishment?”<sup>2</sup> The Cabinet had completely knuckled under. The Castle was triumphant.

On the 19th of February, 1792, Edmund Burke wrote to Richard thus:—

I could not trust the post to state to you the apparently unaccountable conduct of the ministers, and the manner in which you and Ireland are with them. Whether they all read the ample letters which I know they received from you, I cannot tell. This I know: that they seem governed by the counter-representations they receive from the Castle. The only impression they seem to have received is that of terror and perplexity. They find themselves well, and would be glad to remain in quiet, though three millions, or three hundred millions, passed their nights with very little rest. . . . You have written long letters to Dundas. I wonder at it; for I know that the length only furnished him with an excuse not to read them. The ministers here consider Ireland only as an object that they do not know how to give up. *They* take no sort of trouble about it, and do by no means thank you for any that you take. . . . The government has abandoned you and itself.<sup>3</sup>

The Castle having “bullied,” (to use an expression of Tone,) the Cabinet into “abandoning itself,” now

<sup>2</sup> Dundas to Westmoreland, January, 1792, S.P.O.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Burke to Richard Burke. Burke, “Works and Correspondence,” vol. ii. pp. 76 and 79.

directed their efforts to prevent any return to conciliatory lines of policy—while the Burkes still continued to exert themselves in London, whither Richard had gone, to counteract the influences of the Irish Government. In June, 1792, Hobart went to London. The great danger which the Castle then feared was the meeting of the Catholic Convention.

On the 17th of June Westmoreland wrote to Hobart:—

If you please, ascertain [from the cabinet] that they will support the existing Establishment. If they will treat with decided coldness any ambassador or address from any other body [save Dublin Castle and the Ascendency party], no mischief can happen. Point out to the cabinet the dangerous character of this Catholic National Assembly. Endeavour to sift what steps Pitt thinks we might venture. If the assembly is *bonâ fide* elected and subsists, we must decide whether we shall oppose or submit.<sup>4</sup>

In August Richard Burke sought an interview with Dundas, and was “with decided coldness repelled,” the minister stating that he could receive representations respecting the Irish Catholics from no quarter save the Castle.<sup>5</sup>

Dundas had done precisely what Hobart, acting under the directions of Westmoreland, had requested. The Castle ruled the cabinet. The “old and established policy which had for a century maintained the Government of Ireland” was not to be “sacrificed.” The Castle and the cabinet were of one mind as to the necessity of not extending the franchise to the Papists. This was in August, 1792; but ere two months had passed an event occurred which aroused the English cabinet to a sense of justice and duty, and caused, if I may once more use the words of Mr. Froude, though with a different application, [the Castle] “faction to

<sup>4</sup> Westmoreland to Hobart, June 7th, 1792, S.P.O.; Letter of Dundas to Richard Burke, August 1st, 1792.

<sup>5</sup> Burke, “Works and Correspondence,” vol. ii. pp. 110, 111.



slink into its den." This event was the battle of Valmy,<sup>6</sup> fought on the 20th of September, 1792.

The news of the victory of the French revolutionists (which reached the British Isles in October) was received in England with feelings of dismay, in Ireland with feelings of exultation and joy. Dublin illuminated! Belfast illuminated!

In the northern capital the Volunteers turned out and fired three *feux de joie* "in honour of the day." A mass meeting was held consisting of "armed and unarmed citizens," to declare, "with hearts overflowing with joy," their happiness at the glorious success of the French arms. Illuminated devices were exhibited throughout the town displaying the following mottoes: "Perfect union and equal liberty to the men of Ireland;" "*Vive la République*;" "*Vive la Nation*;" "Liberty triumphant;" "France is free; so may we; let us will it," "Irishmen, rejoice!" "Union among Irishmen;" "We are tithed and enslaved; but we have only to unite and be free;"

<sup>6</sup> With reference to this event, Edmund Burke wrote to Richard on the 17th of October, 1792: ". . . All is well with us, so far as concerns us directly and domestically. Everything else is quite in a different condition. The horizon, which was covered with thick darkness, has cleared up; but it discovers nothing but the most deplorable scenes. The united military glory of Europe has suffered a stain never to be effaced. The Prussian and Austrian combined forces have fled before a troop of strolling players with a buffoon at their head. Savoy, Nice, &c., are occupied without a blow. Whilst the Duke of Brunswick flies out of France, the whole course of the Rhine is ravaged. The empire is left exposed on all parts. The Netherlands are not much better off, internally or externally. Their mountains will not protect the Swiss. A French fleet is preparing to domineer in the Mediterranean without resistance. In short, vigour and decision, though joined with crime, folly, and madness, have triumphed, as they always will triumph, over puzzled politics and unsteady, irresolute councils ("Works and Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 177). Tone's comment on Valmy was, "Domouriez's victory. Huzza! If the French had been beaten, it was all over with us" (Diary, Oct. 11th, 1792). Mr. Froude, referring to the subject, says, "The Duke of Brunswick was advancing, and if he reached Paris . . . all would be over with the Committee and the United Irishmen."—Froude, "English in Ireland," vol. iii. p. 72.

“Look to France;” “Liberty, equality.”<sup>7</sup> “Belfast,” as Mr. Froude truly observes, referring to those times, “was going fast and far;”<sup>8</sup> and Pitt and Dundas clearly observed, and thoroughly appreciated the import of this serious fact. The Presbyterians of Ulster gone, and the Papists of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught prepared to follow—what was to become of British rule in Ireland?—what of the “handful of gentlemen, clergy, and their dependants,” who constituted the “Saxon garrison.” If it came to the worst, and if the question of Catholic Emancipation had to be decided by an appeal to arms, the “garrison” could not, unassisted by England, successfully resist the combined forces of the Presbyterians and Papists. Was England prepared to assist them? If so, action ought to be promptly taken. The election of the delegates should be prohibited, the meeting of the Convention proclaimed, and in the last extremity prevented by the use of grape and canister. Was England disposed to back up the Castle in taking these steps? The “garrison” were ready to stand to their guns. Was England ready to stand to the “garrison”? That was the question of the hour, and the Castle anxiously awaited Hobart’s return from England to learn how it would be answered. Hobart returned in November, bringing back the cheerless news that the cabinet were prepared no longer to stand by their Irish colleagues. *The election of delegates must not be interfered with;*<sup>9</sup> these were the melancholy instructions which Dundas sent to the Lord-Lieutenant by the Irish Secretary. What was to be done now? The Castle met in solemn conclave to consider the situation. It was not the first time that the cabinet had broken away from the Castle; but had they not been frightened back into accepting the policy of the Castle after-

<sup>7</sup> “Belfast Politics,” 1792-93, pp. 85—87.

<sup>8</sup> Froude, “English in Ireland,” vol. iii. p. 69, n.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 75.



wards? Why not try to frighten them back again? Westmoreland's bogie letter of January had been a great success. Why not try the effect of another bogie letter? Most assuredly this was the wisest thing to do? So thought the statesmen of the Castle; and accordingly, on November 17th, 1792, Westmoreland proceeded to administer a second shock to the nerves of Dundas.<sup>1</sup> "The country," wrote the Lord-Lieutenant, "is in a terrible state." "The democratic leaders [Keogh and the Catholic Committee] have forced the clergy into co-operation, and the gentry into acquiescence. The elective franchise is accepted by them all. They mean to press it as a prelude to the abolition of all distinctions. The attainment of the franchise they consider decisive of their future power in the State. They have coalesced with the United Irishmen and with every turbulent spirit in the country. . . . The Committee already exercise the functions of government, levy contributions, issue orders for the preservation of the peace—a circumstance more dangerous, perhaps, than if they could direct the breach of it. Their mandates are taken by the lower class of people as laws. Their communications are rapid, and are carried on, not by the post, but by secret channels and agents. The lower Catholics connect the franchise with the non-payment of rents, tithe, and taxes. As universal as is the Catholic demand [for the

<sup>1</sup> In the same month Edmund Burke wrote to Richard, saying, "[the Irish] think that the conduct of the Castle is the result of directions from hence [London], and that here they do nothing but plot mischief against Ireland. Alas! I wish they [the Cabinet] could be got seriously, and with a ruling spirit, to think of it at all. But things move in a reverse order from what [the United Irishmen] imagine. They think that ministers here instruct the Castle, and that the Castle sets the jobbing Ascendancy in motion; whereas it is wholly, and has, ever since I remember, been for the greater part the direct contrary, the junto [the Ascendancy] in Ireland entirely governs the Castle; the Castle, by its representation of the country, governs the ministers here; so that the whole evil has always originated, and does still originate, amongst ourselves.—Burke, "Works and Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 151.

franchise] so is the determination of the Protestants to resist the claim. There is no risk they will not run rather than submit to it. In Down a thousand Protestants are arming to preserve the peace, and their object is to keep the Catholics down. They are arming in Monaghan on the same principle, and Volunteering will become general if the Government will not act. I have consulted the Chancellor [Clare] and the other confidential friends of the Government. All are unanimous not to yield anything at present, and all agree that the British Government must speak out plainly to quiet the suspicions of the Protestants. I asked if they were prepared for the consequences of their language, and what means they would employ for resistance. On this head I found in no one the smallest apprehension, provided Government spoke with firmness. They apprehend no immediate convulsion, or any convulsion if Great Britain be firm. If the hour is not come, yet it may not be distant, when you must decide whether you will incline to the Protestants or Catholics; and if such necessity should arise, it cannot be doubted for a moment [but] you must take part with the Protestants.”<sup>2</sup> Here was a description of a dreadful state of affairs! Protestants and Papists preparing for civil war in Ireland! The Protestants determined to resist the Catholic demand for the franchise to the death; the Papists to fight for it to the death; the Catholic Committee usurping the functions of Government; the Protestants arming to the teeth to overthrow them. In such a course of events what was the duty of England? Certainly to pour troops into the country to protect the Protestant interest. So thought the Castle, but not the English Cabinet. In response to Westmoreland’s appeal for sympathy and help, the Cabinet did not send troops across the Channel to crush the Papists; but they sent a letter which crushed Westmoreland and the

<sup>2</sup> Westmoreland to Dundas, November 17th, 1792, S.P.O.



Castle as effectually as it was possible for a letter to do. We can give you no assistance, wrote Dundas, in effect, to the Viceroy; England requires all the forces she possesses at home to protect herself from her foreign and domestic enemies. You must therefore act upon your own responsibility.<sup>3</sup> It was Dundas who fired the broadside this time. Westmoreland's turn to have his nerves shocked had arrived. Left to act upon their own responsibility, Westmoreland and the Castle behaved with admirable discretion. They lowered their flag. They gave the Papists their head. They did not attempt to interfere with the action of the Catholic Committee. The elections of delegates were permitted to go on without interruption. These elections were conducted with the utmost order and regularity, and on the 3rd of December, 1792, the Catholic Convention met in Dublin under, it might almost be said, the cover of the guns of the French Revolutionists. Edward Byrne was unanimously called on to preside at the first sitting, and the following members were chosen to take the chair in succession from day to day afterwards: Sir T. French, Mr. Barnwall, Mr. Deveureux, Mr. Bellew, Mr. Coppinger, and Mr. Rivers.

The chief business set down to be transacted was :—

1. To discuss the advisability of presenting a petition to the king ;
2. To decide what the prayer of the petition should request ;
3. To consider how the petition should be transmitted.

After brief deliberation, the question of the advisability of presenting a petition to the king was unanimously agreed to.

This conclusion having been arrived at, a draft petition, which had been prepared by Tone, and the prayer of which asked for the admission of the Catho-

<sup>3</sup> Dundas to Westmoreland, November, 1792, S.P.O.

lics to the elective franchise, was then read and discussed paragraph by paragraph—every paragraph being approved of (with some verbal alterations, whose effect was to moderate the tone of the whole document) except the last, the prayer.

With reference to this, an Ulster member, Mr. Teeling, of Lisburn, moved, as an amendment, “that the prayer should demand complete emancipation;” whereupon Tone, who was acting as secretary to the Convention, wrote on a slip of paper to Keogh, “Press the amendment.” But Keogh promptly refused to do so, and rose to make a strong speech against its adoption. “Consider your strength,” he said, “and the magnitude of your demand. What if you make this demand, and it is refused? Have you calculated; are you prepared for the consequences?” To this question several voices answered, “We are.” Keogh, finding that the meeting had become somewhat heated, and fearing an adverse and imprudent decision, moved the adjournment of the discussion. “The question,” he said, “is one of grave importance, and should not be decided until the meeting has had more time than has at present been afforded for its consideration. I propose, therefore, that the discussion of the amendment be adjourned until to-morrow.”

This proposal was at once accepted.

In the interval, Keogh used his best efforts to secure the rejection of the amendment, and succeeded in converting a great number of the members to his way of thinking. The extreme men also exerted themselves to carry their point.

On the meeting of the Convention next day, it was rumoured that “a large number of the most respectable county delegates would instantly quit the meeting, and publish their dissent,” if the amendment were pushed. Nothing deterred by this rumour, Teeling and the Ulster men, pushed the amendment and carried it. So far, Keogh and the moderate party in the Convention were defeated.



The next question for decision was the manner in which the petition should be presented to the king. The usual Irish practice in presenting petitions to the sovereign was to transmit them through the Castle, and some of the members of the Convention were of opinion that this practice ought not to be departed from. To depart from it, they said, would be to offer a slight and an insult to the Government. But Keogh answered, "The Government have slighted and insulted us. This petition must be carried to the throne over the head of the Government;" and so it was resolved.<sup>4</sup>

Five delegates were then chosen to present the petition to the king. They were: John Keogh, Sir Thomas French, Patrick Byrne, James Devereux, and Christopher Bellew. The delegates set out for London on the 11th of December, travelling *viâ* Belfast. On their arrival in the northern capital at 9 a.m. on the 12th instant, they were met by their Presbyterian allies, and invited to a public breakfast. Breakfast over, the delegates prepared to proceed on their journey; but a vast populace had meanwhile gathered, and on the appearance of Keogh and his colleagues, the horses were taken from the coach, and ropes being fastened to the vehicle, the Catholic deputation were drawn by the enthusiastic Presbyterian republicans through the town, "quite over the Lang bridge and along the road to Donaghadee." The horses were then permitted to be yoked, and the delegates started on their way amid enthusiastic huzzas, and loud cries of "Success attend you," "Union," "Equal laws," and "Down with Ascendency."<sup>5</sup>

While the deputation were speeding on their way to London, the Castle set to work to secure for them at the hands of Dundas a rebuff similar to that adminis-

<sup>4</sup> Tone, Account of the Proceedings of the Catholic Convention, "Autobiography," vol. i. p. 79, Washington edition.

<sup>5</sup> "History of Belfast," p. 388.

tered to Richard Burke four months previously. Hobart wrote to the Minister, warning him against Keogh, who, he said, was connected with the worst men and the worst intentions in the country, and "so plausible and subtle, that there was danger in communicating with him." <sup>6</sup>

Simultaneously with the despatch of Hobart to Dundas, a letter was forwarded by Lord Ossory to Edmund Burke, with a request that it might be laid before the Cabinet, "as it was sensibly written, and gave a true account of the state of the country." This was a letter addressed by Sir Robert Staples to Lord Ossory himself. It ran as follows:—

My Lord,—I believe your lordship will be a good deal surprised at my addressing you on a political subject; but as your lordship has a considerable property in this country, and *as I feel myself under obligation to [have] a personal regard* for your lordship, I hope you will consider in its true sense a wish of being of some service to your lordship, as far as giving a fair sentiment of the present situation of the country. Your lordship must have heard that the Roman Catholics through all Ireland have appointed delegates to meet in Dublin in order to obtain redress of grievances. They *have met*, and as far as we can find, for great secrecy was observed, have conducted themselves coolly and moderately. Government have endeavoured to cause a division of opinion amongst them, but without effect. This body have sent deputies to England with a petition to the throne stating their wishes. They say they have no confidence in Government, and would not trust them with it. In Ireland, as well as England and Scotland, we have a party of a levelling disposition. I do not think the Roman Catholics have that disposition; quite the reverse. The Catholics complain of grievances; the others make no complaints but wish to throw everything into confusion. The latter, I think, are most to be dreaded. If the Roman Catholics can be settled with, the others we can easily manage. But in case reasonable concessions are not made [to the Catholics], I think a union [between them and the men of a levelling disposition] would certainly take place; though now they are perfectly separate, for they naturally hate one another; and if that

\* Froude, "English in Ireland," vol. iii. p. 81.



[union] should happen, I can foresee nothing less than a general rebellion ; and I should be glad to know how we could protect ourselves, or make head against them united. I do not know what [the Catholic petition] may contain, as I have not seen it, but suppose your lordship will have an opportunity of looking it over. The levellers, who style themselves "United Irishmen," wished to have an interview with the Catholic Committee, but this was refused. Your lordship has much to lose ; I have but little in comparison ; but when I consider our different situations, mine is as much to me as yours to your lordship. When I left the country I thought differently to what I think now, and it is from necessity, not inclination, that I have changed my sentiments, and I find many in the same situation. I have now told you, as well as I could in the compass of a letter, the present state of the country. I think I have as little to fear as any man ; but though I have thrown out some hints in favour of the Roman Catholics, I would be happy if wiser heads would form some plan to settle matters in this country. I am sure I would be satisfied ; but I think it impossible. I should think your lordship and many others who have property in the country would do well to meet and talk the matter over. I shall now conclude, assuring you that I am no Papist, but your lordship's most obedient, Robert Staples.

In forwarding this letter to Burke, Lord Ossory wrote : " I most sincerely hope [the Government] mean to give way, as both policy and justice seem to require. I shall be much obliged to you [with whom, I suppose and hope, the Government communicate] to set my mind at ease [in the matter]." Hobart's letter to Dundas was treated as in the earlier part of the year Dundas had treated the letters of Richard Burke, viz., with complete indifference. Whether Staples' letter was placed before Dundas or not, I cannot say—most probably it was. Anyhow, on the arrival of the deputation in London Dundas received them warmly. They were promptly presented by him to the king, who, says Plowden, "graciously received the petition."

They were told that their claims would be recommended to Parliament from the throne ; and in return

<sup>7</sup> Burke, "Works and Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 165.

that the Government looked to them to support order and authority in the country.<sup>8</sup>

What a change in less than a twelvemonth! In February a Catholic petition praying for the franchise was rejected with ignominy by the Irish House of Commons. In December a Catholic petition praying for complete emancipation was "graciously" received by the king. Valmy had done its work. It had effected what Burke was unable to accomplish; it had forced the English Cabinet to return to the lines of a conciliatory policy.

<sup>8</sup> Froude, "English in Ireland," vol. iii. p. 81.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE CATHOLICS OBTAIN THE FRANCHISE.

WHEN the news reached Ireland that the Catholic deputies had been received by the king, and had been told that their claims would be recommended to Parliament from the throne, there was trouble at the Castle, but not yet despair. Clare, Westmoreland, Hobart, and their colleagues, resolved to make one more effort to stave off concession, to prevent the slightest relaxation of the penal code, to keep still in serfdom three millions of the Irish people. "Our opinions are not altered," wrote Westmoreland to Dundas. "The Chancellor, the Speaker, the Archbishop of Cashel still consider [concession] most unwise. The alarm at concession is aggravated by the principle on which it is made. You expect it will give quiet here. It will not, unless you say emphatically that the Irish Parliament, having made this concession, will then receive the cordial support of the British Government. The recommendation from the throne appears as originating from the petition of the Catholic Convention. At this moment a daring insurrection prevails amongst the lower Catholics in neighbouring counties for the purpose of disarming Protestants. This is a part of the intimidatory system of the Catholic Committee."<sup>1</sup> At the same time Hobart wrote to

<sup>1</sup> Westmoreland to Hobart, Jan. 9th, 1793, S.P.O. This statement was utterly untrue. The "insurrection" referred to was the

Evan Nepean: "Intimidation is too glaring on the face of the whole proceeding. Instead of satisfying the Catholics, the public tranquillity will be in greater danger from concessions than if none were made. Every man of talent we have considers himself sacrificed for England's convenience. Be assured, unless England speedily interposes energetically with regard to Ireland, we shall have a commotion of a very serious nature. . . . Believe no one that would persuade you that Keogh's party—and it leads the Catholics—are not republicans."<sup>2</sup>

These letters produced not the slightest visible effect on the Cabinet. The star of the Castle had for a time set. "We are perfectly ready," Dundas replied sharply to Westmoreland, "to declare our determination to support the Protestant Establishment of Ireland, and maintain its form of government; but unfortunately we and his Majesty's servants in Ireland differ essentially as to the best mode of securing those objects. We consider the Catholics less likely to concur in disturbing the existing order of things when they participate in the franchise, than if totally excluded from those benefits which must be most dear to men living in a country where the power of an independent Parliament has been recognized." The Minister then added this important sentence:

disturbances between the "Peep-of-Days"—Protestants who had attacked the Catholics in the north of Ireland—and the "Defenders"—Catholics who had formed themselves into a defence association. The Catholic Committee had done all in its power to suppress these disorders. They had issued a manifesto directed against them. Tone, Keogh, and other members either of the Committee or of the United Irishmen Society, had visited the districts where the riots prevailed, and did their best to put an end to them. In fact, from motives of interest—to place the matter on no higher ground—the Committee and the United Irishmen were most anxious to suppress the "insurrection," for it kept alive the religious feuds which both associations deemed it an affair of the first moment to extinguish. See Tone, "Autobiography," vol. i. p. 169; Lecky, "History of England," vol. iv., chapter on Ireland; Cornwall Lewis, "Irish Disturbances."

<sup>2</sup> Hobart to Evan Nepean, Jan. 9th and 19th, 1793.



“had the franchise been granted a year ago, it would have been enough; now it will probably not be enough.”<sup>3</sup>

This second broadside completely silenced the guns of the Castle. There was nothing left now but to capitulate and to submit to whatever terms the Cabinet, acting under the pressure of the Catholic Committee and the United Irishmen, chose to impose. What would those terms be? The concession of the franchise, or the granting of complete emancipation? The United Irishmen were in favour of demanding complete emancipation; and it was their party who, at the Convention, had, contrary to Keogh's wishes and exertions, succeeded in inserting a request to that effect in the prayer of the petition to the king. But John Keogh had not been persuaded by the arguments of the United Irishmen that the time was opportune for claiming complete emancipation; he still considered that the Catholic demand ought to be limited to the franchise, and for this reason: united the Catholics would succeed; disunited they would fail. On the question of the franchise they were now united; on the question of complete emancipation they were not. Their union even on the former subject was a matter of the most recent growth. At the commencement of the year the clergy and aristocracy had separated themselves from the Committee on that very topic. It was only after much effort that both had at last been induced to adopt the Committee's views, and to support the Catholic claim to vote at elections. To press forward the demand for complete emancipation would simply be to run the risk of breaking up the union which it had cost so much labour to bring about, and whose rupture would lead to the total defeat of the Catholic party. The franchise was within their reach; complete emancipation was not; and to grasp at the latter instead of consolidating all their efforts to

<sup>3</sup> Dundas to Westmoreland, Jan. 23rd, 1793.

secure the former, would in all probability result in the denial of both demands.

This mode of reasoning did not recommend itself to the United Irishmen. They said that the time was most opportune for completely emancipating the Catholics. England was in trouble. She would soon require all her resources to confront her foreign enemies. The Ascendancy party would be left to defend themselves, and what could they do against the Catholics and Presbyterians combined? Now is the time to strike, said Tone and his colleagues; let us be but firm and united, and England will give whatever we ask. But John Keogh, with characteristic resolution, stood out successfully against the United Irishmen, and finally took the extreme step of breaking entirely with them. "Sad, sad," notes Tone in his diary, commenting on the moderation of Keogh; "merchants, I see, make bad revolutionists. . . . Keogh is too much of a Papist;" and, he adds, "Will the Catholics be satisfied with the franchise? I believe they will, and be damned."<sup>4</sup>

On the 10th January, 1793, Parliament met; and the Lord-Lieutenant's speech, contrary to all precedent, contained a paragraph recommending the condition of "his Majesty's Catholic subjects to its serious attention." The Address was moved in the Commons by Lord Tyrone, and seconded by one, who thirty-six years later, came to be associated in a more remarkable manner with the cause of Catholic relief, namely, the Honourable Arthur Wellesley.

The future Duke of Wellington, rising for the first time in the House, expressed his approval of the policy of conciliation foreshadowed in the Speech. "I have no doubt," he said, "of the loyalty of the Catholics of this country, and I trust that, when the question shall be brought forward respecting this description of men, we will lay aside all animosities, and act with moderation and dignity, and not with the fury and violence

<sup>4</sup> Tone, Diary, January 21st, and February 4th, 1793.



of partisans." On the 4th of February the question was brought forward by Major Hobart, and the House, in discussing it, acted in the main with "moderation and dignity," though some members there were who failed not to display "the fury and violence of partisans." Hobart's speech upon the occasion was brief and diplomatic. He placed himself, he said, entirely in the hands of the House; and he was ready to acquiesce in whatever measures the House thought proper to adopt. His only object in resisting the claims of the Catholics hitherto, had been an unwillingness to hold out hopes which might be disappointed, and being disappointed would tend to agitate the public mind, and disturb the public peace. Last year he had voted for the rejection of a petition praying for a measure identical with that he now begged to propose. But last year the time was not ripe for such a measure; it was ripe now. Of the loyalty of the Catholics, he entertained no doubt. Their conduct for a century had proved how "perfectly attached they were to the constitution," and the exigencies of the time required that men so attached should "receive encouragement from this House." To reward their loyalty and encourage their attachment to the constitution, the Chief Secretary moved for leave to bring in a bill admitting the Catholics to the franchise and the magistracy; allowing them to become grand jurors; to endow a college or university and schools; and to carry arms. The motion was seconded by Sir Hercules Langrishe, in an able, a graceful, and a sympathetic speech.

Deserted by the English Cabinet, and the Irish Government, abandoned by so respectable and influential a class as that represented by Arthur Wellesley and his friends, and apparently left to its fate even by the House of Commons, the insecure fabric of Protestant Ascendancy now found a fitting support in the person of Patrick O'Dewegenan, or Duigenan, member for the borough of Old Leighlin.

Patrick O'Dewegenan was born in the year 1735, in the County of Leitrim. His ancestors were not only Irish of the Irish, but Catholic of the Catholic. Born and reared in a mud cabin, and educated at a hedge-school, young O'Dewegenan soon displayed that natural quickness, and aptitude for learning, which have, at all times, been distinguishing characteristics of the race, and class, from which he sprang. His father intended Patrick for the priesthood, but a Protestant clergyman, attracted by the intelligence and studious inclinations of the youth, offered him a tutorship in a Protestant boarding-school. Patrick accepted the offer, flung up the priesthood, became a Protestant, and changed his name to Duigenan. From the boarding-school he went to Dublin University, where he graduated and gained a fellowship ; finally he was called to the Irish Bar in 1761. In 1790 he entered Parliament.

From the moment of his taking any active part in public life, Duigenan seems to have exhibited an aversion to the religion he had left, which in the course of time developed into a frenzy and a craze. I have said of Lord Clare that the grand passion of his heart was a hatred of Ireland. The grand passion of Duigenan's heart was a hatred of Catholicism. So far as the former disliked the Catholics, he disliked them because they were Irish ; so far as the latter disliked the Irish, he disliked them because they were Catholic. If all Ireland had become converted to Protestantism, Clare's hatred of the country would not, probably, have abated a jot. With Duigenan the case would, perhaps, have been different. In a Protestant Ireland it is possible to conceive that he might have become an advanced Nationalist, with very anti-English feelings. As events turned out, however, the Connaught peasant of 1750 represented in the House of Commons, in 1793, the most violent of the anti-Irish antipathies of the English garrison. He believed, or affected to believe, that the worst thing in Ireland was the



religion of Ireland. It, at all risks and hazards, ought to be eradicated; and the surest means of attaining so desirable an end, was to preserve intact and inviolate the principles of Protestant Ascendency. "A Protestant king, a Protestant Parliament, a Protestant hierarchy, Protestant electors and government, the bench of justice, the army, and the revenue, through all their branches and details, *Protestant*;" that, in his own words, was the political creed of Patrick Duigenan, and that creed he now came forward to proclaim.<sup>5</sup>

When Langrishe sat down, the member for Old Leighlin rose to address the House, holding in his hand a copy of the Catholic petition, which he criticized as he went along. His violent and extravagant dislike of the Catholic party he exhibited at the commencement of his speech in a somewhat ludicrous manner. Though "Irish of the Irish," well acquainted with Irish literature, and accustomed from his childhood to Irish phraseology, he affected an inability to pronounce the names of the petitioners, especially the name of Keogh—a proceeding which drew from Curran the observation—witty and true—that "he was showing his enmity by actually *gnawing* the petitioners' names." Having "*gnawed*" the petitioners' names, he then proceeded to take the petition to pieces, and finally dashed into a terrific invective against Catholics and Catholicity in general, and against Irish Catho-

<sup>5</sup> Duigenan's persistent and unprincipled attacks upon the religion of his country were not permitted to pass unrewarded. For his services to the State, he obtained many lucrative appointments. He was made Surrogate to the High Court of Admiralty, and Advocate-General to the king, Vicar-General of the Metropolitan Court of Armagh, Judge of the Prerogative Court of Ireland, Vicar-General of the Consistorial Court. He was named one of the commissioners for distributing compensation at the period of the Union. After the Union he was elected a member of the Imperial Parliament for the borough of Armagh, and finally he was appointed a Privy Councillor.—Grattan's Memoirs by his son, vol. ii. pp. 99, 100.

<sup>6</sup> Memoirs of Henry Grattan by his son, vol. iv. p. 98.

lics, and Irish Catholicity in particular. The petition, he said, "commenced with a deception." The petitioners described themselves as "Catholics," when in reality they were "Roman Catholics." This conduct on the part of the petitioners reminded him of the "stories told about the devil in the old tales, who, when appearing to mortals, cautiously concealed the cloven foot." The petitioners "practised this deception in order to suppress the fact that they acknowledged the supremacy of Rome, and paid to a foreign prince a homage inconsistent with their allegiance as the subjects of a Protestant sovereign." It was said that the "Catholics of Ireland" had "behaved with uninterrupted loyalty for a century." He impeached the accuracy of the statement, and in proof of its falsehood, referred to the circumstances that the armies of England's enemies abroad were filled with Irish Papists, while at home the conduct of the Defenders and Whiteboys bore ample testimony of Catholic treason.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Curiously enough, in the Speech from the throne the same "deception" was practised, for the expression "Catholic," not "Roman Catholic," was used; and Duigenan himself, in the course of his own lengthy speech, did not use the phrase "Roman Catholic" once, save in referring to the "deception" of the petitioners at the outset. Afterwards he invariably used the word "Catholic."

<sup>8</sup> Mr. Froude does not regard as just Dr. Duigenan's argument that Irish Papists at home ought to be treated as rebels, because Irish Papists abroad fought in the armies of England's enemies. "More just," he says, "was the member for Old Leighlin's allusion to the Defenders and Whiteboys" ("English in Ireland," vol. iii. p. 87). But the Defenders and Whiteboys were not engaged in treasonable practices. They waged a social war; the former (consisting exclusively of Catholics) against the Protestants of Ulster, who, be it remembered, had commenced hostilities; the latter consisting of Catholics and Protestants against the landlords (irrespective of creed) of Munster. Political considerations—the idea of rebelling against English rule—did not enter into their calculations at all. See G. C. Lewis, "Irish Disturbances;" Lecky, "History of England," vol. ii., chapter on Ireland. The only organization which could with any fairness be described as having a treasonable tendency was the United Irishmen Society, an association founded by Protestants. It should also be borne in mind that, out of the 16,000 Irish who fought



But what were the Catholic grievances, which called for redress? The Catholics were excluded from the franchise and from other privileges of citizenship. That was their own fault. Why did they not conform to the laws of the State? They were interdicted from attaining degrees in the University of Dublin. That was a grievance which he hoped he should never see redressed. "Catholics have a right," he said, "as the law stands, to set up and establish schools in every part of the kingdom for the education of their youth; let that content them, and let them not expect to obtrude themselves into the participation of the emoluments of a university founded and partly endowed by Elizabeth, the great patroness of the reformed religion, and whose endowments have been augmented by our successive monarchs for the sole purpose of planting in this kingdom a learned Protestant colony for the education of a pious ministry, and the supply of missionaries to reclaim the benighted and ignorant natives from the errors of Popery. God forbid that I should ever see the pious intentions of the royal founders frustrated by the conversion of this seminary and its revenues to the support and encouragement of Popery, or its hallowed walls made the residence of superstition and treason."

In this spirit he railed against his fellow-countrymen and former co-religionists. They were not, he said, to be trusted; the safety of the empire required that they should be kept in a state of perpetual servitude, and for the following reasons:—

"There is scarce a title of a Protestant nobleman or gentleman in this kingdom to his estate which is not derived either mediately or immediately from the grants of Elizabeth, of William and Mary, or under the Acts of Settlement and Explanation. The Irish Catholics, to a man, esteem all Protestants

against England in the American War, the great majority were Northern Presbyterians. See Plowden, "*Historical Review of the State of Ireland*," vol. ii. pt. i. p. 417, n.

as usurpers of their estates. They to this day settle these estates on the marriage of their sons and daughters. They have accurate maps of them. They published, in Dublin, within ten years a map of the kingdom, cantoned out amongst the old Irish proprietors. They look to political power to enable them to assert their claims with effect, which they will do if ever they have power, not by tedious forms of law or Acts of Parliament, but by the sword. They abhor all Protestants and all Englishmen as plunderers and oppressors, exclusive of their detestation of them on a religious account—no nation on earth being more wedded to the Romish superstition than the generality of Irish Catholics. They have but one word in their language to signify both Protestant and Englishman, to wit ‘*Sacconach.*’<sup>9</sup> If, then, the Parliament of this

<sup>9</sup> It is true that the native Irish applied the word *Saccenach*, as a term of reproach, indifferently to Englishmen and Protestants. However, it should be stated that in so doing they were influenced, not by religious—as Duigenan would seem to suggest and many people of the present day think—but by national antipathies. Their hatred was confined solely to the *Englishman* as such; their dislike to the Protestant was not on account of his creed, but of his supposed English birth or descent. The evidence of the United Irishman, Dr. Macneven, given before the Secret Committee of the Irish House of Lords, on this matter is worth quoting. Being asked by the Protestant Archbishop of Cashel to account “for the massacres committed upon Protestants by the Papists in the County Wexford,” he answered: “My Lord, I am far from being an apologist of massacres, however provoked; but if I am rightly informed as to the conduct of the magistrates of the county, the massacres you allude to were acts of retaliation upon enemies, much more than fanaticism; moreover, it has been the misfortune of this country scarcely ever to have known the English natives or settlers otherwise than enemies, and in his language the Irish peasant has but one name for Protestant and Englishman, and confounds them. He calls them both by the name of *Sassanagh*; his conversation therefore is *less against a religionist* than against a *foe*. His prejudice is the effect of the ignorance he is kept in, and the treatment he receives. How can one be surprised at it, when so much pains are taken to brutalize him?” Lord Clare: “I agree with Dr. Macneven; the Irish peasant considers the two words as synonymous; he calls Protestant and Englishman indifferently *Sassanagh*.”—Madden, “Lives of the United Irishmen,” Second Series, vol. ii. pp. 277, 278.



kingdom can ever be so infatuated as to put the Irish Catholics on the same footing of civil privileges with the English Catholics, or on better, and if the English nation shall ever countenance such a frenzy, the direct and immediate consequence (exclusive of the utter ruin of all the Irish Protestants) must be either that the kingdom will be for ever severed from the British Empire, or that it must be again conquered by a British army; for in truth the Protestants in Ireland are but the British garrison in an enemy's country, and if entirely deserted by the parent state must surrender at discretion, though now with very little help they are still able to repel the common enemy."

No better idea of the principles and feelings of the Ascendency faction can be given than is expressed in this speech of Dr. Duigenan. That the native Irish had been despoiled of their estates, plundered and oppressed, mattered little to him, or to the party he so faithfully represented. His sole anxiety and theirs was for the prosperity and aggrandizement of the British garrison. Its prosperity and aggrandizement he and they thought could only be secured by crushing and trampling under foot the native race. Three millions of people were to be kept in a state of perpetual servitude, in order that half a million might live and flourish on the fat of the land. These were the views of justice, and of statesmanship, held by the "learned Protestant colony," the "pious ministry," and the "missionaries," which Dublin University had been "founded," and "partly endowed" by the "great patroness of the Reformation," to "plant" in the kingdom.

Denis Browne replied briefly to Duigenan's speech, testifying to the loyalty of the Irish Catholics at home, showing how the Irish Catholics abroad had been driven by England's laws into the armies of England's enemies, and asserting his belief that a policy of conciliation and justice would lead to "peace, prosperity, and union." Sir Henry Cavendish followed, suggest-

ing that if there were not "a second man" in the House who wished to oppose the bill, there was no occasion for debating it further at the "present stage."

Was there such a man? George Ogle quickly answered. "Sir," he said, "I am that man who will oppose the bill in this stage, and in every other stage." He then dashed into one of his usual Ascendency orations, prophesying the downfall of the empire if the penal code were further relaxed. "In the last session," he said, "I did declare that I thought it impossible to make any further concession to the Roman Catholics without injuring the Protestant Ascendency—a word I am proud to use—[and now further concessions are to be granted]. . . . The Roman Catholics are to be made grand jurors; they are to have all civil employments; they are to be justices of the peace; they are to vote at elections; and, if England permits, they are to have the army and navy open to them. What then remains for the Protestants? [Only] the throne, the Parliament, and the judgment seat. . . . Will you [thus] grant away your dearest rights, or will you maintain them? For my part I will never grant them away. Are you aware of what your [concession] will lead to? I will tell you what it will lead to, either a union with or a total separation from England; for is any man so unacquainted with the spirit of Popish intolerance—is any man so little informed of the history of this country as not to know that when they attain to power they will use it to the oppression of the Protestant, who must then fly for succour to England. Sir, hitherto I always thought that no possible case could occur which would make me consent to a union. I would rather lay my head down upon that table to be severed from my body than give such a consent. Alas! sir, I did not think I should live to see the Protestant cause deserted; but I declare before Almighty God I would rather pass an Act of Union than this bill. I speak my feelings



openly, fearless of the consequence. Why should I disguise them? If I did, the Protestant would despise me, the Presbyterian would despise me; nay, even the Papists themselves; nay, worse, I should despise myself." But Ogle's eloquence, and Duigenan's invective were exhausted in vain. A third man could not be found to oppose the motion for leave to bring in the bill, and leave accordingly was granted.<sup>1</sup>

On the 18th of February, Hobart moved the first reading, when a speech, which at all events had the advantage of being moderate in its tone, and practical, was delivered by Sir Lawrence Parsons. It was impossible, he said, in the present crisis of affairs to oppose successfully the Government bill altogether. XThe admission of the Catholics to the franchise "is no longer a matter of choice, but of urgent and irresistible policy. When Protestants of all descriptions were united in withholding it, and when England backed them in doing so, it might be withheld. But is that the state of things now? Are the Protestants united? Is England aiding? No—but the reverse. Add to all this an impending and tremendous war, and then I ask can the claims of the Catholics be altogether resisted? Impossible." The first and second reading of the bill, Sir Lawrence thought, ought not to be opposed; but he was prepared to move an amendment in committee limiting the franchise among Catholics to such only as possessed "a freehold property of 20*l.* a year." To grant the Catholics a forty-shilling franchise would, he said, be running a great risk. Indeed, some said that such a franchise would be useless to the Catholics, for they would "exercise" the right, "as slaves to their landlords." But suppose they exercised the right independently, what would happen? They, being the majority of electors, would return the majority of the House of Commons, the majority of the House of Commons

<sup>1</sup> Debates of Irish House of Commons, February 4th, 1793.

would control the supplies, and control of the supplies would give control of everything else. In fact Protestant Ascendancy would be succeeded by Catholic ascendancy; Protestant persecution, by Catholic persecution. Were the Protestants prepared to run this risk? Were the Dissenters? Was this the "improvement in the constitution" for which *they* had been struggling; an improvement which "would not put themselves up, but would put the Catholics up, and themselves down for ever." "I always," he continued, "respected the Dissenters as wise people. [But] I fear some mist stands before them at this instant, and that they do not see their way. I trust, however, that you will see your way, and see the gulf which is prepared for you."

This speech, though able, and well-calculated to provoke a show of fight on the part of the extreme Ascendancy party, seems to have fallen very flatly on the House. After a few observations from Denis Browne—ever the foremost among the Catholic champions—describing Parson's speech as unnecessarily alarming, a suggestion from Major Doyle that the Catholics ought to be completely emancipated, and an appeal for time from George Ogle—always anxious to put off the evil day as long as possible—the bill was read without a division. On the 22nd of February the second reading was moved, when George Knox, member for Dungannon, proposed, as an amendment, that "Roman Catholics should be permitted to hold seats in Parliament." The Catholics, he said, were bound finally to obtain total emancipation. This result became inevitable the moment they were permitted to acquire property, for a people possessed of property could not for ever be deprived of complete liberty. Why delay any longer the full measure of freedom, which in the end must be conceded to the masses of the Irish people? For his part he feared no dangers, but on the contrary anticipated increased security for Protestant interests by the im-



mediate admission of the Catholics to all the rights of citizenship. It was for the advantage of those interests that Catholics and Protestants should be united, that religious animosities should cease, and sectarian rivalries disappear. But there never would be union, never religious peace in Ireland, until Catholics and Protestants were equally free, equally entitled to share the privileges of a common constitution, equally benefited by the progress of their common country.

Knox's speech led to no discussion, and his amendment, not being regular at that stage of the bill, was not put. The bill was then read a second time without a division. On the question for its committal, a long debate ensued, Grattan in a patriotic, and Ponsoby in what it is impossible to avoid describing as a party speech, expressing themselves favourable to the complete emancipation of the Catholics. The question for the committal of the bill was carried with but one dissentient voice.<sup>2</sup>

In committee on February 25th, George Knox moved his amendment for the admission of the Catholics to seats in Parliament, and Major Doyle seconded it; Blake (Galway), Michael Smith, Mr. Hardy (Mullingar), John O'Neil, J. Hutchinson, Egan, A. Hamilton, Handcock (Athlone), and Jackson, spoke in favour of it; and Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Cuffe, Colonel De Blaquiere, Sir J. Cotter, Mr. Vandeleur (borough of Catherlogh), Mr. Wesley (Trim), Mr. Brooke (Co. Donegal), Mr. Coote (Maryborough), Mr. Bushe (Lanesborough), Sir J. De Blaquiere, Hobart, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer against it. Sir Boyle Roche delivered a speech in which there was much praise of Catholics, but from which his intentions with reference to the amendment could not very clearly be gathered. After a very dull debate the House divided on the amendment with the following result:<sup>3</sup>—

<sup>2</sup> Debates of Irish House of Commons, Feb. 22nd, 1793.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Feb. 25th, 1793.

For the amendment.	. . .	69
Against it	. . .	163
		<hr/>
Majority against	. . .	94

On the resumption of the committee on the 27th of February, Duigenan moved an amendment, limiting the franchise to 20*l.* freeholders, or to persons possessing personal property to the amount of 1000*l.* The amendment—which gave rise to a somewhat irregular discussion, in which the Speaker took part, making a somewhat irregular speech—was negatived without a division. Mr. Vandeleur next proposed an amendment fixing a 10*l.* freehold as the limit. It was negatived by a majority of 144 to 72. Mr. Warburton finally moved that a 5*l.* freehold should be adopted, but his motion was negatived without a division.<sup>4</sup> The bill ultimately passed through committee unaltered in any material way, and was read a third time on the 7th of March, 1793.<sup>5</sup> On the same day it was read a first time in the Lords without discussion or division. On Wednesday, March 13th, it was read a second time, also without division or discussion. The second reading over, Lord Clare asked if their lordships desired that the bill should be committed on the following Friday, whereupon Dr. Law, the Bishop of Killala, and the brother of Lord Ellenborough, delivered a speech, at which a great modern English historian has sneered, but which assuredly—whether his Grace's views on the Catholic question were right or wrong—deserves a more courteous and generous recognition, for it was a courteous, a generous, an able and honest expression of opinion. Mr. Froude reserves all his sympathies for the speech of Lord Clare, who followed and attacked the Bishop of Killala. Clare's speech, the author of the history of the "English in Ireland" sets out at considerable length, and with much unction. The speech of the Bishop of

<sup>4</sup> Debates of Irish House of Commons, Feb. 27th, 1793.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. March 7th, 1793.



Killala he contemptuously dismisses, with the single observation that his grace "delivered himself of an oration in a style which has since become too familiar."<sup>6</sup> Not a line of what the Bishop said does Mr. Froude publish, not the faintest notion of the views which this Protestant ecclesiastic held, does he give. I shall set fairly out this speech of Dr. Law, and leave my readers to judge whether it merits a respectful recognition, or deserves to be dismissed with a sneer. He commenced by congratulating the House on the opportunity which had arisen of abolishing for ever those religious distinctions which were the cause of dividing into hostile camps the Catholics and Protestants of Ireland. The strength of a State depended upon the union of its people, and their attachment to the laws; but this union and attachment could only be secured by justice and good government; and justice and good government the Catholics of Ireland had long been strangers to. They were accused of disloyalty; but could loyalty be expected from men whom the laws injured and crushed? Their disaffection was attributed to the influences of popular agitators, when in reality it arose from maltreatment and oppression; to Paine's pamphlet and the Catholic Committee were ascribed the unfortunate results which British injustice and impolicy had produced.

Let a change be made in the methods of government, and a change would take place in the attitude of the Catholics. Let their righteous claims be conceded, and agitation would cease; let them be admitted to the constitution, and they would become its friends and supporters; let them be fairly dealt with by Protestants, and Protestant interests would not be endangered. To govern them through their fears would be to make them perpetual enemies; to govern them through their affections, constant friends. "But it has been said that they ought to be excluded from the constitution

<sup>6</sup> Froude, "English in Ireland," vol. iii. p. 109.

on account of their numbers. I think the fact is a reason why they should be admitted to it. In times like the present, when we are threatened by foreign enemies, and agitated by domestic dissensions, I should wish to unite [the vast majority of the Irish people] in support of the constitution, rather than turn them against it by perpetuating restrictive systems and oppressive exclusions, which no existing necessity can warrant, and no [sound] policy approve." His lordship then dealt with the argument, so often urged, that the Catholics by very virtue of their religion could not make good subjects. "I could never," he said, "discern that a belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation rendered the person professing it a bad subject, or a worse neighbour, or a less courageous soul. As to the doctrine of Papal infallibility, I could never ascertain where it lay; whether in the Pope or in a general council with the Pope at its head. But what I can ascertain is that [the Protestant Government of Ireland] have, in their policy towards the Irish Catholics, fallen into the error which they condemn, and have themselves assumed the prerogative of infallibility, though no one acknowledges their right to it." After many other observations urging the propriety, as a matter of necessity as well as justice, of removing the laws against Catholics, his lordship concluded as follows: "I consider it my duty to support the Catholic claims because I look upon my Roman Catholic brethren as fellow-subjects and fellow-Christians; believers in the same God, and partners in the same redemption. Speculative differences on some points of faith count for nothing with me. The Catholics and I have but one religion—the religion of Christianity. Therefore, as children of the same Father, as travellers on the same road, and seekers of the same salvation, why not love each other as brothers? Persecution of Catholics is not an article of the Protestant creed; and moreover, from



motives of prudence it behoves us not to persecute the Irish Catholics. On the contrary it behoves us, even from such motives, to be just to them; for without justice to the Irish Catholics there can be no security for the Protestant establishment. Therefore, as a friend of that establishment, and one anxious for the prosperity of Ireland, and desirous of justice to the Catholics, I shall cheerfully vote for the committal of the bill.”<sup>7</sup> The Bishop of Killala was sustained in his generous defence of the Irish Catholics by Lord Glandore, the Marquis of Waterford, the Bishop of Cork, the Bishop of Killaloe, Lord Westmeath, Lord Clifden, Lord Dunsany, and the Duke of Leinster; he was opposed by the Earl of Farnham (Lord Portarlington, jun.), the Archbishop of Cashel, and Lord Clare, none of whom, however, ventured to vote against the bill, though they all spoke against it. Clare’s was, of course, the speech of the night. Irritated at the Bishop of Killala’s appeal for justice to the Catholics, and mortified because he was unable to defeat the policy of conciliation, forced on the Castle in spite of his exertions, the Chancellor began by attacking the liberal Protestant divine who had so honestly pleaded the cause of the class from which Clare had sprung, and then proceeded to condemn altogether the principle which recognized the right of three millions of Irishmen to have any voice in the Government of their country. “I have always,” he said, “felt peculiar reluctance in discussing the political claims of the Catholics of Ireland, feeling it impossible not to recur to the past injuries which it is my most earnest wish to bury in eternal oblivion. I could wish again to pass them by; but when the epidemical frenzy of the day has reached even that grave and reverend bench, and a learned prelate has thought fit most wantonly to pour forth a torrent of

<sup>7</sup> *Woodfall’s Register*, March 20th, 1793; *Belfast Northern Star*, March 16th, 1793.

exaggerated misstatements against the Government of this country for two centuries past, I cannot leave his indiscretion unnoticed and unapprehended, [the more particularly as] I wish to resist the further innovations which I foresee will cause a separation from England or a union with her, each to be equally dreaded.”<sup>s</sup> Having said that he would not vote against the bill, much as he condemned its principles, as “it might be essential to the momentary peace of the country;” and having stated that “religious distinctions” had “proved the source of bitter calamity to the people of Ireland,” he, nevertheless, went on to justify the maintenance of those distinctions. “We must look,” he said, “to the principles of the [Catholic] religion, and to the unerring influence which those principles have had upon the political government of every country in Europe for centuries. From this point of view there is not a single instance in which Protestants and Papists have agreed in exercising the political power of the same State; and as long as the claims of Rome to universal spiritual dominion over the Christian world shall be maintained, it is impossible that any man who admits them can exercise the legislative power of a Protestant state with temper and justice.”

Reminding the House that there was no country in which the reformed religion had made such little progress as in Ireland; urging the abhorrence of the majority of the people to the Protestant faith as a reason for not admitting them to a full share in the power of the State; combatting the argument that because the “expectation” of making Ireland a Protestant country was “vain,” the Catholics ought no longer to be excluded from political power; and reviewing the history of the country from the time of Elizabeth onwards, he proceeded to defend the principles on which British authority in the island had

<sup>s</sup> See Flanagan’s “Lives of the Chancellors,” vol. ii. p. 219.



hitherto rested, and to justify the imposition of the penal code. "The penal laws," he said, "enacted in this country were a code forced on the Parliament by hard necessity, and to these old Popery laws, I do not scruple to say, Ireland stands indebted for her internal tranquillity during the last century. Let philosophers who exclaim against this code as subverting the immutable principles of justice and fraternity, condescend to look to the situation of the Protestant settlers at the Revolution. They were an English colony in the country of an enemy reduced by the sword to a sullen and refractory allegiance. In numbers they were a fourth of the inhabitants. The experience of a century had shown that the natives of the country had contracted an incurable aversion to them. They could not stand their ground unless by disarming the enemies who surrounded them of political power. These laws in part disabled the native Irish from renewing hostilities against the English settlers, or embarrassing the British Government." Having stated that, from the Revolution to 1782, the desire of the possessors of power and property in Ireland had been to cement the connexion with England, but that since '82 a different policy—a policy aiming in fact at separation—had been pursued, and having shown that "till the modern Irish patriots had divided the Protestants of Ireland into opposite factions," the Catholics did not venture to advance any claims for political power—or any claims at all as a matter of right, suing for whatever they demanded as an act of favour and grace—Clare concluded what was unquestionably a very powerful and masterly speech thus: "I do not scruple to say that, in my opinion, it is an act of insanity in the Parliament of Ireland to open the efficient political powers of the State to persons in communion with the Court of Rome. If they do not make use of them to subvert a Protestant government, they must resist the ruling passions and pro-

pensities of the human mind. . . . If we go a step further in innovation, if we agree to what is called reform, the country is lost. I very much fear we have already made a precipitate and indiscreet experiment. The right reverend prelate says that the Catholics demand emancipation, that the people of Great Britain demand it for them, and that Great Britain will no longer assist the Protestants of Ireland in a system of oppression. The crooked folly of man could not have suggested a more mischievous observation. Great Britain desires to maintain her connexion with Ireland, and she can only maintain it, by maintaining the descendants of the English settlers, who, with few exceptions, form the Protestant interest here, and they in time, however foolishly some of them may have acted in the last ten years, must know they can maintain their own position only by adhering to Great Britain.

“The descendants of the old Irish who constitute the Catholic interest feel that they can never recover the situation which their ancestors held in Ireland but by separation from Great Britain, and therefore, if any man in Great Britain or Ireland is so wild as to hope that by communicating political power to the Catholics of Ireland they can be conciliated to British interests, he will find himself utterly mistaken. Great Britain can never conciliate the descendants of the old Irish to her interests upon any other terms than by restoring to them the possessions and and the religion of their ancestors in full dominion and splendour.”

Lord Clare having in this style—which has certainly become as familiar, as Mr. Froude says the style of the Bishop of Killala has—expressed his views as to the impolicy of admitting the Catholics to the full rights of citizenship,<sup>9</sup> the bill passed through committee and quickly became law.

<sup>9</sup> Though Clare, in the above speech, attempted practically to



Thus, were the labours of John Keogh at last crowned with triumph; thus was the honest advocacy of Grattan rewarded with success. Tone<sup>1</sup> and the

justify the maintenance of the penal code, he made the following observations with reference to that code in 1800:—"With reference to the old code of the Popery laws there cannot be a doubt that it ought to have been repealed. It was impossible that any country could continue to exist under a code by which a majority of its inhabitants were cut off from the rights of property. But in the relaxation of these laws there was a fatal error. It should have been taken up systematically by the ministers of the crown, and not left in the hands of every individual who chose to take possession of it as an engine of power or popularity (Speech of Lord Clare, as quoted in Plowden's "Historical Review," &c. vol. ii. p. 342, n.). It has to be said that when a minister of the crown did take the question up in 1793, he received little encouragement from Lord Clare to continue in a policy of "systematically" relaxing the penal code.

The most important amendment was one moved by Clare, limiting the right of Catholics to carry arms to persons possessing property to the value of 300*l*. In the original bill the right was confined to persons possessing property to the value of 100*l*.

Writing of the speeches of the Bishop of Killala and Clare, Grattan says, "The Bishop who had no law was the Statesman, the lawyer who had no religion was the bigot."—Grattan to Richard Burke: Burke, "Works and Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 199.

<sup>1</sup> The ultimate fate of Tone may not be without interest to the reader. Throwing himself with all his energies into the rebellious movement of 1794-98, he organized a French expedition to Ireland in the latter year. Four ships of the French fleet arrived off Lough Swilly on the 10th of October. They were immediately engaged by the English fleet, and defeated. Tone, amongst others, was taken prisoner. His French comrades were treated as ordinary prisoners of war. He was treated as a rebel. On the 10th of November he was tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be hanged. He begged to be permitted to die a soldier's death—to be shot. His request was refused. The sentence of the law was, however, never carried out. Tone committed suicide by opening an artery in his neck with a penknife, and after lingering in much agony for eight days after the infliction of the wound, died on the 19th of November, 1798.

Of Tone Mr. Goldwin Smith says, "Though known amongst Englishmen, he, . . . brave, adventurous, sanguine, fertile in resource, buoyant under misfortune, warm-hearted, . . . was near being as fatal an enemy to England as Hannibal was to Rome."

A stone, erected by Thomas Davis and others in 1843 to the

Presbyterians had not worked altogether in vain; Valmy was attended with results undreamt of in the philosophy of its victors.

memory of Tone, was quickly chipped away for relics. Its place has, however, been taken by a more substantial memorial, surrounded by iron-work.—Webb, "Compendium of Irish Biography," p. 533.



## Part II.

## THE ABOLITION OF THE FORTY-SHILLING FRANCHISE.

POSSESSED of the franchise, the Catholics gained little by the acquisition. What the Legislature gave with one hand, the Ascendency took away with another. The votes of the Papist peasants became in reality the votes of the Protestant landlords.

"From the year 1793 to the year 1825," said Mr. Brownlow, an Ulster member in the House of Commons in 1829, "the freeholders were not free agents. They were driven by their landlords to the county-town, and locked up there until they gave their votes for their landlord's favourite candidate."<sup>1</sup>

"Look, my lords, at the evidence of Archdeacon French before the Committee of 1825," said Lord Holland in the Lords in the same year. "'I have seen,' he says, 'herds of voters driven to the poll like cattle by a man with a large whip, riding on a mule.' I asked him whether he saw the man use the whip in beating the voters. He replied, 'I did not see the man use the whip in that way.' I then asked how he knew that the whip was intended for the voters, and not for the mules. To which he replied that the whip was of such a kind, so large and so long, that the mules could not be struck with it, but that the voters might."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Brownlow, *Hansard*, vol. xx. New Series, p. 1336.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Holland, in the House of Lords, April 6th, 1829.

One more authority may be quoted, Lord Stanley. "The forty-shilling freeholders," said his lordship, "were practically nothing more than a part of the live stock upon the estate of the landlord."<sup>3</sup>

For three and thirty years the Catholic freeholders made no attempt to exercise the franchise as freemen. Then, at length, on the occasion of the Waterford election of 1826, they rebelled against the authority of the landocracy, and under the guidance of O'Connell elected a candidate of their own choice.<sup>4</sup> Two years later they rebelled again, and, in defiance of the edicts of the landlords, returned O'Connell for Clare. But the Clare election marked the forty-shilling freeholders for destruction. As long as those electors had voted according to the commands of their landlords, they were vouchsafed a political existence. When they evinced a determination to vote according to the dictates of their conscience, that existence was promptly put an end to.

"The forty-shilling freeholders," said Lord Anglesey, "were first elected for electioneering purposes. As long as they allowed themselves to be driven to the hustings like sheep to the shambles without a will of their own, all was well; not a murmur was heard. But the moment these poor people found out the value of their tenure, the moment they exercised their power constitutionally, that instant they are swept out of political existence."<sup>5</sup>

O'Connell was returned for Clare on the 5th July, 1828. On the 5th of March, 1829, Sir Robert Peel introduced a bill to disfranchise the forty-shilling freeholders,<sup>6</sup> substituting in their stead 10*l.* freeholders.

The Tory Minister made no secret of the reasons

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, vol. xiii. Third Series, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Charles Beresford was defeated by Mr. Villiers Stuart.—*"Annual Register,"* 1826.

<sup>5</sup> Lord Anglesey, as quoted by Mr. Spencer Walpole in his *"History of England,"* vol. ii. p. 519.

<sup>6</sup> "Peel had never recovered from the shock which he had experienced when the forty-shilling freeholders had rebelled in a body



which impelled him to this course. The "present exercise of the forty-shilling franchise is," he said, "liable to abuses which require decided, uncompromising reform." What he meant by the "present exercise of the franchise," Sir Robert made sufficiently plain, for he referred by name to the Waterford and Clare elections. Neither did he conceal his meaning as to the "abuses" which needed "reform," for he said "the landlord has been disarmed by the priest;" "spiritual denunciations" have supplanted "proprietary influence;" "the weapon" which the "landlord has forged with so much care, and has heretofore wielded with such success, has broken short in his hand." The "breaking short" of this "weapon" in the hand of the landlord, by the forty-shilling freeholders, was an abuse which in the opinion of the minister merited complete disfranchisement.<sup>7</sup> Thus the offence of a large body of Catholic electors in voting with their priests, under the direction of a great Catholic lay leader, in favour of Catholic emancipation, was to be atoned for only by political extinction.<sup>8</sup> The very men whose independent and courageous conduct had enabled the English minister to do what he himself deemed a great act of justice, viz. to emancipate the Catholics—were in reward for their exertion to be "reformed" out of existence. This was the judicious way in which the era of emancipation happened to be inaugurated.

against their landlords and voted with the priests." Mr. Spencer Walpole, "History of England," vol. ii. pp. 507, 509.

<sup>7</sup> Hansard, vol. xx. New Series, p. 764. The number of forty-shilling freeholders, according to Lord Londonderry, was 191,000.—Hansard, vol. xxi. New Series, p. 579.

<sup>8</sup> "I am not overfond of the influence of the Roman Catholic priests, or of the influence of the priesthood of any other Church, and I have always endeavoured to keep myself as clear of it as possible; but at the same time, if the people are to be driven to the poll at elections like gangs of slaves, or herds of cattle, it may be as well that they should be driven by drivers of their own choice."—Lord Holland, Hansard, vol. xxi. New Series, p. 429.

On the 19th of March Peel moved the second reading of the bill. Its rejection was proposed by Lord Duncannon, who asserted that "but for the constitutional exercise of their franchise by the forty-shilling freeholders of Louth, Waterford and Clare, the measure would never have been heard of." Referring to Peel's remark that the influence of the landlord had been supplanted by the influence of the priest, his lordship continued, "it is absurd to allege, as a pretext for this bill, the conduct and influence of the Catholic priesthood; for all who know how that influence is exercised, know first that it is felt chiefly when it runs with current popular feeling,<sup>9</sup> and that it is ever exercised with a view to obtain peaceable submission to the laws." Lord Palmerston and Huskisson supported Lord Duncannon. The former felt "an insurmountable dislike to the bill, believing it to be unjust and unnecessary, and conceived in a spirit, not of conciliation, but of punishment and vengeance." A bill of that kind, he said, would not be tolerated in England. If there were abuses in connexion with the exercise of the franchise in Ireland (as there were also abuses in connexion with the exercise of the franchise in England) it was the duty of the Government to "correct those abuses, not to take away the property itself." But Duncannon, Palmerston, and Huskisson raised their voices in defence of the forty-shilling freeholders in vain. The second reading was carried by a large majority—223 to 17 votes.<sup>1</sup> The third reading was moved

<sup>9</sup> O'Connell once told the following story with reference to the Clare election:—"The Rev. M. Coffee [a Catholic clergyman] marched at the head of a body of freeholders into the town of Ennis, which he was bringing up for the purpose of voting for Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, a most estimable gentleman whom the forty-shilling freeholders turned out of Clare for joining the Administration of the Duke of Wellington. The moment the freeholders arrived in the town, they took off their hats, gave a hearty cheer, bowed to the Rev. M. Coffee, and walked off, leaving the reverend gentleman standing alone."—Hansard, vol. xiii. Third Series, p. 573.

<sup>1</sup> A bill for the suppression of the Catholic Association was read a



on the 20th of March. Lord Duncannon again moved the rejection of the bill, but again in vain. The third reading was carried by a majority of 220 to 20 votes.<sup>2</sup> The bill passed quickly through the House of Lords, and became law before the end of the month.<sup>3</sup> So perished politically the forty-shilling freeholders; so terminates the sequel to the story of 1793. The Tories gave, and the Tories took away; they gave without grace, and they took away without mercy.<sup>4</sup>

second time in the Commons on the 19th, and a third in the Lords on the 24th of February, 1829.—Hansard, vol. xx. New Series, pp. 1329-63.

<sup>2</sup> See 10 George IV. cap. viii.

<sup>3</sup> List of the minority: Banks, H. (Dorsetshire), Dickinson, W. (Somersetshire), Dawson, A. (County Louth), Fitzgibbon, Hon. R. (County Limerick), Fane, J. (Oxfordshire), Lord Hatham (Leominster), Lord G. Lennox (Chichester), Lennard (Maldon), Lord Milton (Yorkshire), Henry Grattan (Dublin), Lord Mandeville (Huntingdonshire) Hon. J. O'Neil (County Antrim), C. Pelham (Shropshire), Lord Palmerston (Cambridge University), Sir R. Palk (Ashburton) Sir W. Scott (Newport), Lord Uxbridge (Anglesey), Col. Webb (Gloucester), Hon. H. R. Westenra (County Monaghan), Sir R. J. Warrender (West-lina).—Hansard, New Series, vol. xx. pp. 1372-93.

<sup>4</sup> Amongst the peers who opposed the bill were the Duke of Richmond, Lord Farnham, the Marquis of Clanricarde, the Earl of Malmesbury, the Earl of Winchelsea, the Earl of Haddington, Lord Gort.—Hansard, April 6th, and April 19th, 1829.

## Part III.

## THE IRISH REFORM BILL OF 1832.

THE Irish Reform Bill was introduced on the 19th of January, 1832, and read a second time on the 25th of the ensuing May.<sup>1</sup> Its proposals were as follows:—

First, as to counties, it was proposed to retain the 10*l.* freehold franchise of 1829, and to extend the right of voting to leaseholders of sixty years possessing a beneficial interest in their holdings of the clear yearly value of 10*l.*, and to leaseholders of fourteen years with a beneficial interest of the value of 20*l.* Secondly, as to boroughs, it was proposed to limit the franchise to 10*l.* freeholders, and to 10*l.* occupiers, and to leaseholders of such terms as would give the right of voting in the counties; finally it was proposed to disfranchise the corporations,<sup>2</sup> and to increase the representation by giving one member each to the cities of Galway, Belfast, Limerick, Waterford, and Dublin.

<sup>1</sup> Between the first and second readings of the bill some doubts seem to have existed as to whether the Government would press it forward. "I really doubt," says Lord Campbell, "whether the Irish Reform Bill will pass through the Commons, and it is rumoured that the Government will abandon it. . . . The common notion prevailing among Liberals in England is that Ireland is wholly incapable of laws and liberty, and must be governed by the sword."—"Life of Lord Campbell," vol. ii. p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> In Limerick, Belfast, Carlow, Sligo, the right of election was vested in twelve self-elected burgesses. In Limerick and Kilkenny [and Dublin], it was in the corporation and freemen.—May, "History of England," vol. i. p. 360.



To this bill the Ascendency objected because it went too far; the popular representatives, because it did not go far enough. The objections of the former were general, and may be stated in a single sentence: any measure, they said, tending to the extension of the franchise in Ireland would certainly operate in a manner fatal to the Protestant interests; the objections of the latter were specific and detailed, and must be set forth at greater length.

1. Previous to 1829, they said, there was an "extensive and a sufficient county constituency in Ireland."<sup>3</sup> That constituency consisted of 200,000 electors. But by the substitution of 10*l.* for forty-shilling freeholders in 1829 the number was reduced to 26,000 electors.<sup>4</sup> Was that a state of things to be endured? Was it not idle to speak of "extending" the franchise in Ireland until a beginning had been made by the restoration of the forty-shilling freeholders?

2. The 10*l.* leasehold of sixty years franchise was a "delusion," because, "with the exception of probably 100 or 200 electors in one or two counties, no such tenure existed, or ever had existed in Ireland."<sup>5</sup>

3. The 20*l.* leasehold of fourteen years was equally delusive, the qualification being too high.

4. The proposed addition of five members to the representation was not enough; 105 members for a country with a population of 7,700,000 were insufficient, especially when it was borne in mind that they had to sit in a hostile Parliament.

5. The proposal of giving an additional member to Dublin University was preposterous. That constituency already returned one member while the four universities of Scotland did not return so much between them. Edinburgh University alone had on its books 2000 students; Dublin on its, 1500. Nevertheless, Edinburgh

<sup>3</sup> O'Connell, *Hansard*, vol. xiii. Third Series, p. 771.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Leader, *Hansard*, vol. xiii. Third Series, pp. 580—583, 798—800; O'Connell, *ibid.* pp. 769—778.

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Leader, *Hansard*, vol. xiii. Third Series, p. 800.

was to remain wholly unrepresented, while Dublin was to have two members.

The County of Cork had a population of 800,000 persons, and it contained in territory one-seventh of the whole soil of Ireland. Cork was to have two members; Dublin University two. Of the eight new members to be added to the representation of Scotland not one of them was given to her universities, which were more or less identified with popular feeling in the country; while of the five new members to be added to the representation of Ireland, one member was to be given to an institution consisting of "a community of acrimonious religionists with whom the people could not sympathize, or who could not sympathize with the people—who were characterized by monastic narrowness and the pride of priestcraft, and in whom all the virulence of faction, the virulence of domination, and the sacred rancours of polemics<sup>6</sup> were combined."

6. In fine, the bill, regarded from the most favourable standpoint, would only have the effect of raising the county constituency (which up to 1829 consisted of 200,000 electors) from 26,000 (the reduction brought about by the abolition of the forty-shilling franchise) to 30,000 electors.<sup>7</sup> Thirty thousand county electors for a country with a population of nearly eight millions! Was that such an "extension" of the franchise as ought to satisfy the Irish people?<sup>8</sup>

To give effect to their objections, O'Connell and the popular party did not deem it necessary to oppose the second reading of the bill;—to give effect to theirs, the

<sup>6</sup> Sheil, Hansard, vol. xiii. Third Series, p. 601. See also Speech of Sir Robert Heron, *ibid.* p. 596.

<sup>7</sup> O'Connell, Hansard, vol. xiii. Third Series, p. 813: Under the bill the constituencies in the cities and boroughs, exclusive of Dublin and Belfast, would, according to Mr. Leader, be raised from 16,907 to 18,898. The constituency of Dublin would be raised from 5700 to 14,720; that of Belfast from 13 to 2300.—Hansard, vol. xiii. Third Series, p. 580.

<sup>8</sup> See Debates on Irish Reform Bill, Hansard, vols. ix. and xiii. Third Series.



Ascendency did. The second reading was, however, carried by 246 to 130<sup>9</sup> votes.

In committee, O'Connell and his colleagues, proposed at successive stages:—(1) the restoration of the forty-shilling franchise in fee—a franchise similar to that which was to be preserved in England; (2) the enfranchisement of 4*l.* freeholders; (3) the restriction of the representation of Dublin University to one member; (4) the reduction of the 10*l.* freehold franchise of 1829 to 5*l.*; (5) the reduction of the 20*l.* leasehold franchise, created by the bill, to 10*l.*; (6) the enfranchisement of 30*l.* leaseholders of nineteen years; and (7) the increase of the county representation by the addition of five members. Each of these proposals was rejected; the first by a majority of 122 to 73; the second without a division; the third by a majority of 147 to 97; the fourth by a majority of 177 to 44; the fifth was withdrawn; the sixth was negatived by a majority of 161 to 9; and the seventh was negatived without a division. The steady rejection of his amendments by the Government, and the unconciliatory disposition evinced by Stanley, much irritated O'Connell. He had, at the outset, approached the discussion of the bill in an unhostile manner. His speech on the second reading was, upon the whole, moderate, and in some respects friendly to ministers. "I shall," he then in effect said, "vote for the second

<sup>9</sup> The Irish members composing the minority were: General Archdall (Fermanagh Co.), Sir R. Bateson (Londonderry Co.), Capt. Blaney (Monaghan Co.), Lord Castlereagh (Down Co.), Col. Clements (Leitrim), Lord Cole (Enniskillen), Hon. A. Coll, Col. Conolly (Donegal Co.), E. J. Cooper (Sligo Co.), the Hon. H. L. Corry (Tyrone), Walter Ferrand (Tralee), Sir A. FitzGerald (Londonderry), J. G. Gordon (Dundalk), R. Hancock (Athlone), Sir E. Hayes (Donegal), Viscount Ingestrie (Armagh), T. Jones (Londonderry Co.), the Hon. J. H. Knox (Newry), Anthony Lefroy (Longford Co.), H. Maxwell (Cavan), Capt. Meynell (Lisburn), Col. Perceval (Sligo Co.), P. Pusey, Col. Rochfort (Westmeath), J. Shaw (Dublin University), Sir H. Stewart (Tyrone Co.), Lord Tullamore (Carlow), W. Wigram, J. Young (Cavan).—Hansard, vol. xiii. Third Series, p. 177, also *ibid.* vol. iv. Third Series, p. 62 *et seq.*

reading of this bill, though I do not at all approve of its details, because I believe it to be sound in principle, and I hope to be able to secure its improvement in committee.”<sup>1</sup> When, however, he perceived that the Government was resolved to reject his proposals for amending the bill, his manner and conduct quickly changed. His moderation was soon turned into violence, his friendliness into uncompromising hostility. As each amendment was rejected his anger increased; and as the passion which he exhibited reacted on the House, his rage grew more and more intense, until at last it seemed as if the lash of his merciless invective fell upon all classes and creeds of Englishmen. He attacked the Whigs for their ingratitude in returning the support which the Irish people had generously given them in carrying a liberal English Reform Bill<sup>2</sup> by the offer to Ireland of a narrow and an inadequate measure of enfranchisement.

<sup>1</sup> O’Connell was not opposed to a “reform” of the Forty-Shilling Franchise. He was opposed to its complete abolition. His view was that the Forty-Shilling Franchise in Ireland should be assimilated to the Forty-Shilling Franchise in England. In England the freehold was held in fee simple; in Ireland under a lease for life (see Peel’s speech, Hansard, vol. xx. New Series, pp. 768-69). O’Connell was desirous of the abolition of the forty-shilling freeholders who held under lease; and for the establishment throughout the country of forty-shilling freeholders holding in fee. (O’Connell’s Collected Speeches, vol. i. p. 209; vol. ii. p. 61.) The Forty-Shilling Franchise in England was created by an Act of Henry VI.; in Ireland by an Act of Henry VIII. (33 Henry VIII. cap. 1.)

<sup>2</sup> “Mr. O’Connell,” says Lord Campbell, “had cordially supported the [English] Reform Bill, and indeed, may be said to have furnished the means of carrying it against a majority of English members.” (“Life of Lord Campbell,” vol. ii. p. 154). Lord Campbell should have added “and against a majority of Scotch members too,” for such was the fact, as will appear from the following analysis of the division in the Commons on the second reading:—

AYES.			NOES.		
England . . .	238		England . . .	241	
Scotland . . .	13		Scotland . . .	26	
Ireland . . .	53		Ireland . . .	36	
	—304			—303	

(Hansard, vol. iii. Third Series, p. 818; date March 21st, 1831.)



He denounced the English Catholics for their baseness in allying themselves with Orange Ascendencists to prevent the restoration to the franchise of the forty-shilling freeholders by whom they were emancipated.<sup>3</sup> He assailed Palmerston for his inconsistency<sup>4</sup> and partisanship in voting against the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders when the proposal came from his political foes, and in voting for their disfranchisement, when the proposal came from his political friends. But it was Stanley whom, among all others, he singled out for denunciation and abuse. He described the Irish Secretary as an "underling" who had "from the very outset of his career distinguished himself as the enemy of the liberties of Ireland." Dominant in disposition, despotic in government; overbearing in manner, and insolent in address; out of all sympathy with Irish popular feeling, and averse to all Irish popular demands; "one who could conciliate nobody; a person in whom no party could confide," he was, the agitator said, pursuing a policy of exasperation in Ireland which would inevitably end in "strife and bloodshed."

Stanley retorted in a powerful philippic, impeaching O'Connell's loyalty, and characterizing his speech as "a disgrace to any one claiming the character of a gentleman." "With words of conciliation on his tongue, his practice," said the Chief Secretary, "was to scatter abroad the principles of disunion and irritation; to seize every opportunity of exciting the people to discontent, and poisoning their mind against the Government. His trade was agitation; his object, personal ambition; his palpable aim, the separation of the two countries."

Hume defended O'Connell in a vigorous speech.

<sup>3</sup> The English Catholic members, Mr. Petrie, Mr. Blunt, and Mr. Jerningham, had voted in the majority against O'Connell's motion to restore the forty-shilling franchise.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Palmerston had also voted with the majority on the amendment.

“The right honourable gentleman,” he said, “has charged the honourable member for Kerry with agitating the country, and seeking to attain his objects by abusing the Government. My honourable and learned friend stands forward in this House to redress his country’s wrongs, and how is that to be done? How but by agitating and abusing the Government? How but by agitation and the exhibition of physical force? By such means was Catholic emancipation carried, and the passing of the English Reform Bill secured.” These bold doctrines and strong statements “drew” Sir Robert Peel, who rose instantly to denounce Hume’s “unparalleled audacity” in “telling the House that he would control its deliberations by physical force.” “I will tell the honourable member,” said the minister who granted Catholic emancipation, and admitted that the concession was “forced” from him, “that I, for one, never will submit to this menace of physical force—to subject the House to which is nothing less than a vile and degrading tyranny. I will not sit in this House to see its functions thus treated, to hear principles which are fatal to all government and subversive of the peace of society. If the deliberations of this House are to be controlled by the menace of physical force, I, for one, will never consent to participate in the mockery of legislation; I will not act under the influence of such a tyranny as that with which we have been menaced by the honourable member for Middlesex.” Sir John Newport now endeavoured to throw oil on the troubled waters, but not to much purpose. The tempest which O’Connell had raised was scarcely subdued when the night’s sitting terminated. Some days were now wisely permitted to elapse before the sittings of the committee were resumed. On their resumption, on the 25th of June, Stanley commenced the business by proposing that the franchise should be extended to 10*l.* leaseholders of twenty-one years. O’Connell immediately



expressed his satisfaction at the proposal (though still describing the bill as an utterly inadequate measure of justice), and suggested that the term of twenty years should be substituted for the term of twenty-one, as calculated to confer a more extended franchise. Stanley at once accepted the suggestion. The storm was succeeded by a calm. The great combatants had (for the time) exchanged the tocsin of war for the pipe of peace. The bill then passed smoothly through committee, O'Connell having abandoned, in "despair," the hope of further amending it, and, without undergoing any material alteration, was read a third time on the 18th of July. It was read a third time in the Lords on the 30th of the same month.

The foregoing sketch of the Irish Reform Bill may fitly be closed with the following brief extract from Sir Erskine May's "*History of England*."

"This measure," says Sir Erskine May, referring to the Bill, "was the least successful of the three great Reform Acts of 1832. Complaints were immediately made of the restricted franchise which it had created; and the number of electors registered proved much less than had been anticipated."

"After repeated discussions, a measure was passed in 1850, by which the borough franchise was extended to householders rated at 8*l.*, and further additions were made to the county franchise."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> May, "*History of England*," vol. i. p. 430; see also 13 and 14 Vic. cap. 69. "The qualifications required for the county franchise was lowered so as to include the owners of freeholds rated at 5*l.*, and occupiers rated at 12*l.*" (Langmead, "*Constitutional History of England*," p. 729.)





## BOOK III.

# THE TITHE COMMUTATION ACT OF 1838.

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### Part I.

#### THE INTRODUCTION OF TITHES INTO IRELAND.

TITHES were introduced into Ireland by the Anglo-Normans. Before the English invasion, as since, the Irish Catholics supported their Church on the voluntary principle. But at the Synod of Cashel in 1175, and at the Synod of Dublin, in 1186, decrees were made directing the payment of tithes to the clergy. These decrees were only obeyed within the Pale, and no effort was made to secure their enforcement beyond it until the time of the Reformation. Then, in the thirty-third year of the reign of Henry VIII., an Act was passed to provide for the extension of the system all over the country, and to secure conformity to it. This Act remained a dead letter until the reign of Elizabeth, when, simultaneously with the establishment of the Protestant religion in the island, as a State institution, the payment of tithes was rigidly exacted.

At first the privilege of receiving tithes was confined to the Protestant Episcopalians; but on the colonization of Ulster by James I. the Presbyterians were permitted to enjoy that advantage with their Episcopalian brethren.

From the reign of James until the arrival of Cromwell, Protestants, Episcopalians and Presbyterian, worked harmoniously together in the north of Ireland; the Presbyterians did all the work, the Episcopalians received half the profits, and the Papists paid both sects.<sup>1</sup>

During the civil war the Episcopalians and Presbyterians sided with the Royalists, and when Cromwell came they were, in consequence, deprived for a time,—the first partially, the second completely—of their livings. Henry Cromwell, on his appointment as Lord-Lieutenant, was desirous of excluding the Presbyterians permanently from State aid, but Oliver objected. Peace being restored, the Protector said that the Presbyterians ought to be conciliated, and he wrote directing Henry to adopt a policy of “kindness” towards them.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of the Protector’s interference on their behalf, the Presbyterians recovered their “right” to tithes. This “right” they enjoyed until the Restoration,

<sup>1</sup> The suggestion that the Presbyterians should share the tithes with the Episcopalians came from James himself, and was favoured by Primate Usher. The main body of the Episcopalians were at first indisposed to accept the suggestion, unless the Presbyterians submitted to Episcopalian ordination—that is to say, unless Presbyterian ministers to be presented to livings allowed themselves to be ordained by Protestant bishops—a proposal which the Presbyterians firmly rejected. A “compromise,” as the Presbyterians called it, but really an arrangement which involved an abandonment of principle by the Episcopalians, was ultimately agreed to. The bishops consented under royal pressure, and indeed under the pressure of their own primate, to attend at Presbyterian meetings for ordination, and to “lay on hands” with the Presbyterian ministers—a plan which the latter insisted was more in conformity with scriptural doctrine than the system of individual ordination by a superior ecclesiastic, practised by the Episcopalians. See Evidence of Dr. Montgomery, Moderator of the Synod of Ulster before Select Committee (Lords and Commons) on Irish Tithes in 1832.

<sup>2</sup> For such ministers as had a conscientious objection to receive tithes, Henry Cromwell directed that an income of 100*l.* a year should be provided by the State.—*Ibid.* and Reed’s “History of the Irish Presbyterians.”



when they were finally and permanently driven from their livings, and thenceforth the right to tithes became the monopoly of the Episcopalians.<sup>3</sup>

The Presbyterian laity were never willing tithe-payers. They regarded the impost as an unfair tax on industry, for which no scriptural warrant could be found. However, in the earlier days of their settlement in Ulster they deemed it prudent—hemmed around as they were by a hostile population—not to cause dissensions among their own people by offering any resistance to the payment of tithes. But when their position became more secure in the province, and when, later on, their own ministers were excluded from the privileges of tithe-gatherers, they soon exhibited a manifest dissatisfaction with the system, and so it must be added did their Episcopalian fellow-colonists.

In the reign of Anne the disinclination of both Presbyterians and Episcopalians to pay tithes became very marked. Much of the land held by farmers at that time was used for grazing purposes, and the graziers, Presbyterians and Episcopalians alike, refused point-blank to pay any tithes on pasturage lands. The clergy pressed their demands, contending, justly enough, that a tithe on pasturage lands was as fair as a tithe on tillage, adding, that the graziers were better able to pay than the tillers. But the graziers stood boldly out against the clergy, and told the landlords that they would rather give up the lands and leave the country than pay the tithe.

The landlords becoming alarmed at the prospect of losing their Protestant tenants, and shrinking from the idea of the lands passing into the hands of Papists, backed up the graziers. The agitation grew

<sup>3</sup> See Evidence of Dr. Montgomery and Dr. Doyle before Select Committees (Lords and Commons) on Irish Tithes in 1832; also Neal's "History of the Presbyterians," Reed's "History of the Irish Presbyterians," the pamphlets called "Presbyterian Loyalty," and a pamphlet entitled "A Sample of jet-black Prelatic Calumny."

apace. The interference of Parliament was invoked, and legislation on the subject of tithes demanded. Pending the action of Parliament, the clergy pressed for the tithe; but the graziers persistently refused to pay. "Wait," they said in effect, "until Parliament meets, and until we see what is going to be done." Finding the graziers determined to stand out, the clergy took legal proceedings against them. Then the graziers clamoured loudly, and insisted on all legal proceedings being stayed until Parliament had dealt with the question. The landlords again came to the support of the farmers, and on March 18th, 1735, a series of resolutions were carried through the Irish House of Commons, condemning the tithe on pasturage, urging the necessity of legislation on the subject, and declaring that any lawyer who should prosecute a demand for tithes on pasturage, until Parliament had dealt with the matter, would be guilty "of contempt of the dignity of the House." These resolutions were quickly followed by the famous Tithe Agistment Acts, which exempted pasture-lands from the imposition of tithes. Such was the way in which an exclusively Protestant and landlord Parliament, sitting in Dublin, dealt with the opposition offered to tithes by the Anglo-Protestant colonists of Ireland in the eighteenth century.\*

The Tithe Agistment Acts were attended by important results. Pasture-lands, being exempt from the tax, increased greatly in the northern, midland, and eastern counties; while tillage, being alone subject to it, declined everywhere. This continued to be the state of affairs till 1780 when considerable uneasiness being felt at the decline of tillage lands, bounties were offered by Parliament to encourage their future cultivation.

The result of this action was the rapid increase of

\* See evidence of Dr. Montgomery before Committees of 1832, and the Journals of Irish House of Commons, March, 1735.



tillage; and the penal enactments no longer standing in the way, the Catholics rushed in, and quickly became the chief tillers of the soil. But as the chief tillers of the soil, the burden of the tithe fell upon them, and, finally, in 1785, they rose against the system.

From 1785 to 1830, resistance continued to be offered, at various intervals, to the payment of tithes by the Presbyterians of the north, and the Catholics of the south of Ireland. In the north, the resistance was generally passive; in the south it was generally active. The northerners fought the system in the courts, the southerners in the field. The latter attacked it in principle, protesting against the payment of tithes to an alien and hostile Church from which they did not receive the slightest benefit; the former attacked it in detail, objecting from time to time to the levying of tithes on certain specified articles. When asked to state the law according to which these articles were exempted from tithe, the Ulster men answered, "According to custom."

The clergy then took legal proceedings against the defaulters, with whom, however, the Ulster juries were frequently found to be in sympathy, and in whose favour they often returned verdicts against the weight of evidence. By thus attacking the system in detail, the Presbyterians succeeded gradually in having potatoes, flax, and other articles tithable in the south, exempted from tithes in the north.

With reference to the southerners, in fairly well-to-do times they paid the tithe under protest. In seasons of distress they asked for reductions, and when no reductions were made they refused to pay, and resisted the efforts of the parsons to compel them. They did not dream of going to the courts. They had no faith in them. British law in Ireland was, they felt, the law of the parsons and the landlords—their enemies. By the landlords and parsons the law was made or administered, and they knew by

experience how little they—mere pariahs unconsidered and despised—could expect from it.<sup>5</sup> Their resistance to tithes, therefore, took the form of rebellion against the law; and with such instruments of warfare as in their state of enforced uncivilization they could grasp, they went out to fight—literally to fight—against an unjust and iniquitous system. The “resources of civilization” were used against them, but in vain; and in many a year between 1785 and 1830, the clergy, though backed by the civil and military forces placed at their disposal by the Executive, were obliged to forego their unrighteous claims. The manner in which the tithes pressed upon the peasants of the south, and the circumstances of desperation under which they fought against the system, will be understood when it is stated that the great tithable articles in the southern districts were potatoes—articles not tithable in the north, be it remembered—and that potatoes were the staple food, in fact the only food, of the people.<sup>6</sup> It is, indeed, scarcely an exaggeration to say that, when the southern peasants waged violent wars against tithes in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, they did but fight for very existence.

The insurrectionary movement of 1792-98 was, as is well known, initiated in the north; and there can be very little doubt that the Presbyterians were, in a great measure, induced to join the United Irishmen organization by reason of their rooted hatred of tithes. The Government, alarmed at the conduct of the Presbyterians during these years, quickly resolved

<sup>5</sup> Gustave de Beaumont quotes, in his “Ireland, Political, Religious, and Social,” the following proverb, current amongst the peasantry in the south of Ireland when he visited the country in 1835-7: “To go into the ecclesiastical court to contend with a minister is going to law with the devil in a court held in hell.” See Gustave de Beaumont’s “Ireland,” &c.

<sup>6</sup> “Generally speaking,” says Dr. Montgomery, referring to the exemption from tithes of certain products in Ulster, “tithe has not the oppressive character in the north which it has in the south.” See Evidence before Select Committees of 1832.



to conciliate the sturdy Ulster colonists, and with this view, the Regium Donum was granted in 1803. But the royal gift did not reconcile the Presbyterians to the tithe system ; and accordingly, we find them in 1830-38, sympathizing with the Catholics in their efforts to throw off the oppressive and galling burden.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See evidence of Dr. Montgomery, Mr. Blake (Chief Remembrancer of the Exchequer), Mr. Pierce Mahony (Crown Solicitor), and others, before Select Committees on Tithes in 1832.

## Part II.

## THE TITHE WAR, 1830—1838.

## CHAPTER I.

PARSON MACDONALD OPENS THE CAMPAIGN ; THE PEASANTS OF GRAIGUE “TAKE THE FIELD,” AND THE “BATTLE” OF CARRICKSHOCK IS FOUGHT.

THE state of the case, respecting the question of tithes in Ireland in 1830-38, was, very briefly summed up, this. The population of the country consisted of 7,943,940<sup>1</sup> persons, of whom 852,064 were Episcopalian Protestants, 642,356 were Presbyterians, and 21,808 members of other forms of Protestant dissent ; the Catholics numbered 6,427,712 souls. The Church of the 800,000 Protestant Episcopalians was established and endowed ; the Church of the 600,000 Presbyterians was endowed<sup>2</sup> but not established ; the Church of the 6,000,000 Catholics was neither established nor endowed ; the 21,000 Protestant

<sup>1</sup> This was the population, according to the Commissioners of Public Instruction, in 1834. The population in 1831 was 7,784,934 ; and in 1841, 8,175,124.

<sup>2</sup> *Regium Donum*. “The Presbyterians,” says Dr. Montgomery, “are first paid, by a small stipend from their congregations. A great portion of the Presbyterian ministers receive what is termed a royal bounty.” Dr. Montgomery gave it as his opinion that the Presbyterians ought not consistently with their principles to have accepted this “royal bounty.” See Evidence before Select Committees of 1832.



Dissenters maintained their Churches by voluntary contributions.

The 800,000 Protestant Episcopalians belonged to the wealthy, the 6,000,000 Catholics to the poorest classes. The latter supported their clergy according to their means with generosity;<sup>3</sup> the former had theirs supported for them by the State and the Papists. The places of worship of the one body were, comparatively speaking, well-built, commodious edifices, attended by scant congregations; the places of worship of the other were ill-raised structures, utterly inadequate to supply the wants of the people, who in hundreds and thousands flocked on the Sabbath to their doors. "What are the generalities of tithe-payers?" the Rev. Theophilus Blakeley, Dean of Anchory, and rector of a parish in Donegal, was asked by the Commons' Committee of 1832. He replied, "They are generally very poor, so poor that they cannot in some districts provide places of worship for themselves. . . . I have seen a train of people kneeling on the roads outside the chapels."<sup>4</sup> "On an Irish Sabbath morning," says Sydney Smith, "the bell of a neat parish church often summons to worship only the parson and an occasionally-conforming clerk, while, two hundred yards off, a thousand Catholics are huddled together in a miserable hovel, and pelted by all the storms of heaven."<sup>5</sup> At church time," says M. Duvergier de Hauranne, in his '*Lettres sur l'Irlande*,' "the ringer rings the bell for the curate and the sacristan; the sacristan takes up his halberd for the ringer and curate, and the curate preaches for the two—sweet exchange of good offices

<sup>3</sup> "The Roman Catholics, in proportion to their scanty means," says Dr. Montgomery, "pay a great deal more to their clergy than the Presbyterians do to theirs." See Evidence before Select Committees on Tithes of 1832.

<sup>4</sup> See Evidence of the Rev. T. Blakeley before Commons' Committee on Tithes in 1832.

<sup>5</sup> Sydney Smith, quoted in McCarthy's "*Epoch of Reform*," p. 96.

for which the country is obliged to pay.”<sup>6</sup> In 1832 O’Connell produced the following statistical tables for the benefit of the House of Commons :—

				Catholics.	Protestants.
No. 1—	Showing 8 parishes in which there were			18,129	0
No. 2—	“ 8 “ “ “			16,077	6
No. 3—	“ 10 “ “ “			41,274	70
No. 4—	“ 16 “ “ “			66,635	243

“In one of these returns,” said O’Connell, “there is a parish mentioned as containing one Protestant, to which the following curious note is appended, ‘not likely to increase, being an old man.’”

O’Connell’s tables were supplemented by others presented to the House by Lord John Russell a few years later. Lord John Russell’s tables were as follows :—

Parishes.	Protestants.	Catholics.
Taghmon . . . .	133	2920
Ballycormac . . . .	10	501
Ballynitty . . . .	21	390
Dunlark . . . .	159	1460
Drumcar . . . .	120	1528
Monachebone . . . .	9	737
Moyleary . . . .	13	1148
Cuppog . . . .	1	530
Rathdrummon . . . .	7	662
Carrickbogget . . . .	0	332
Port . . . .	5	500
Ullard . . . .	50	2213
Graigie . . . .	63	4779
Ossory . . . .	4	107
Balsoon . . . .	7	313 <sup>7</sup>

To the above tables I may add the following statement, taken from the late Justice Shee’s interesting work on the “Irish Church :”—

Parishes.	Inhabitants.	Catholics.	Anglicans.	Ministers’ Income.
Mansfieldtown (Armagh) .	1067	1063	4	£216
Templebreedan (Emly) .	1414	1412	2	93
Castletown (Cloyne) . .	3296	3279	17	414
Clonmult (Cloyne) . . .	1196	1195	1	176

<sup>6</sup> “Lettres sur l’Irlande,” p. 214.

<sup>7</sup> Russell, House of Commons, March 30th, 1835, p. 371.



The ministry of the Established Church consisted of four Archbishops, eighteen Bishops, and about two thousand of the lesser clergy; the revenues were approximately as follows:—

Endowments (yearly)	£600,000
Church lands held by the bishops	100,000 <sup>8</sup>
Church Cess	69,000
Tithes (unascertained).	

It is not easy to state precisely what the total amount of the Church revenues were. Lord Althorp said that they did not exceed 800,000*l.*; O'Connell said that they did.<sup>9</sup> Lord John Russell put down the figure at 791,721*l.*,<sup>1</sup> and Gustave de Beaumont, on a moderate calculation, at 880,000*l.*<sup>2</sup>

With reference to the item "Church cess" above-mentioned, an explanation is, perhaps, necessary. I shall give it in the words of Lord Althorp: "Church cess was a tax imposed for maintaining churches, and for meeting the expenses of religious service. In Ireland this rate, though paid by a Catholic population, was under the exclusive management of a Protestant vestry. It was [unlike tithes] an uncertain tax which varied according to the purposes for which it was applied. It might be increased by abuses of management, or it might be diminished by frugality; but in neither case had the Catholic the means of exercising any control over the money so levied upon his property." Thus, in addition to the grievance of having to pay a tax to a Church to which they did not belong, the Catholics had to submit to the further grievance of having to pay this particular tax in obedience to the decrees of a Pro-

<sup>8</sup> Lord Althorp stated that the bishops only derived an income of 100,000*l.* yearly from the Church lands, though the rental amounted to 600,000*l.* "The tenants," he said, "who occupy the land have five-sixths of the yearly value of it."—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xv. p. 567.

<sup>9</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xv. pp. 567, 876.

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, March 30th, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> "Ireland," vol. i. p. 311.

testant vestry from whose deliberations they were excluded.<sup>3</sup>

But it is no part of my present purpose to dwell on the ridiculously unjust position occupied by the Protestant Episcopalian Church in Ireland in 1830-38. There are few who will attempt to justify that position now. "Few," says Burke, "are the partisans of departed tyranny." Few, also, may I not be permitted to add, are the partisans of departed scandals.<sup>4</sup> To show how the Protestant Episcopalian Church in Ireland was attacked and defended between 1830 and 1838, and to show what came of the contest, is alone the task which I have set myself in the pages immediately following.

Three chief causes contributed to produce an agitation against itself in 1830. They were, first, the public spirit created by O'Connell during the struggle for emancipation—a spirit whose existence injuriously affected the perpetuation of the unjust privileges and monopolies of the favoured Church; secondly, the operations of a proselytizing association known as the "New Reformation Society"—a society whose action

<sup>3</sup> "Annual Register," 1833, p. 87. It will be essential to bear in mind the above details with reference to the ministry and revenues of the Church when we come to deal with the Church Temporalities Act of 1833.

<sup>4</sup> "The mere existence of this Church," says Gustave de Beaumont, "proves that there is in human institutions a degree of selfishness and folly to which it is impossible to ascribe a limit." ("Ireland," &c. vol. ii. p. 201.) "The Irish Establishment," says the Protestant Archdeacon Glover, "is an anomaly unparalleled in the Christian universe." (Answer to a letter of Dean Pellew, May 16th, 1835.) "This Church," says Mr. John Lemoinne in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* "is in Ireland the Church of the stranger, the badge of conquest, the personification of four centuries of tyranny. So long as this exotic tree, planted in Ireland by force, shall continue to suck up and absorb the substance of a whole people, which refuses to sit under its accursed shade, Ireland will never know peace, and England, let her be well convinced of it, will never know repose."—*Revue des Deux Mondes*, July 15th, 1843, p. 351.



much stirred up feelings of religious animosity and sectarian ill-will; and thirdly, the distress that prevailed in many parts of the country, and whose prevalence rendered it very difficult for the peasantry to pay the landlord, the parson, and the priest, and to feed and clothe themselves. Of these three causes the second and the third were the more active—the second, perhaps, the most active. Proselytizing associations have always been cordially disliked in Ireland; but of all the proselytizing associations ever established in the country, the New Reformation Society was, beyond doubt, the most thoroughly detested. The New Reformers commenced their operations in 1824, when the battle of Emancipation was being warmly contested, and instead of confining their exertions at so critical a moment to purely religious matters, as rational beings would have done, they, with that want of discretion and sound judgment for which the Irish proselytizers have invariably been remarkable, plunged hotly into the political arena, allying themselves with the opponents of the popular claims for freedom. Picking up here and there smart young Episcopalian clergymen who could speak well and abuse well, the Reformers moved throughout the country, denouncing the errors of Popery, assailing the popular chiefs, vilifying the Catholic priesthood, and “sneering” at the “superstitious and idolatrous practices” of the people.<sup>\*</sup> Such was the eminently judicious way in which the New Reformers sought to advance the Protestant cause in Ireland, at a period when that cause was at the height of its unpopularity. Dr. Montgomery, in his evidence before the Commons’ Committee

<sup>\*</sup> See Evidence of Mr. Dunn (Tithe Commissioner), and of the Rev. T. Blakeley, before Select Committees (on Irish Tithes) of 1832. Mr. Blakeley had joined the New Reformation Society, as well as the Bible Society and the Scripture Reading Society, but he left them all, as did other Protestant Episcopalian clergymen, in consequence of the mischief which they were doing to the cause of Protestantism in Ireland. Mr. Blakeley said that the members of these societies were influenced, not by religious zeal, but “political rancour.”

of 1832, said that the Catholic peasantry of Ireland "knew little of the Protestant Episcopalian parson, save in the character of tithe-proctor." This remark is not, I think, capable of general application. In many cases the Protestant Episcopalian parson rendered services of kindness and charity to the peasantry among whom he lived, and by whom he was not seldom regarded as a benefactor and a friend.<sup>6</sup> But a remark capable of very general application, and more applicable to the New Reformers than to any of their class, is: that the Irish people saw nothing of the proselytizer, save in the capacity of national enemy and public pest.

Unfortunately for the Established Church, many of its ministers had been induced to join the New Reformation Society. The Church in consequence came to be associated in the minds of the people with a discredited and hateful organization, and suffered accordingly. The Reformers continued to carry on the war against Popery from 1824 to 1830. In the latter year, when their religious zeal or "political rancour," as Mr. Blakeley put it, was yet unabated, and the popular dislike to their doings unappeased, O'Connell and Dr. Doyle opened fire on the tithe system. The Reformers had made the "iron hot," and the great Agitator, and, in many respects, the equally great Bishop, thought the time had come to "strike" it, and to strike it forcibly. In a memorable sentence, for which he was much censured at the time, Dr. Doyle struck the key-note of the new agitation. "Let your hatred of tithes," he said, "be as lasting as your love of justice."

However, despite the speeches and letters of O'Connell and Dr. Doyle, the people showed but little disposition to take the field against the tithe system up to the end of 1830. In the October of that year they were still passive. It was not until the end of

<sup>6</sup> See Evidence of Dr. Doyle, Mr. Blakeley, and the Rev. T. Langrishe, before Select Committees, &c., of 1832.



November that they exhibited signs of life and activity; and these were immediately drawn forth, not by the labours of O'Connell and Dr. Doyle, but by the action of a member of the New Reformation Society. This member was Mr. MacDonald, the curate of Graigue.

The parish of Graigue, or Graigue-na-managh, lies on the confines of the Counties of Carlow and Kilkenny respectively, part of it being in one county, and part in the other. At the time to which I am referring, the population numbered 4779 Catholics and 63 Protestants.<sup>7</sup> The rector, Dr. Alcock—who was much respected in the parish—had, owing to ill-health, recently left Graigue, and taken up his residence at Cheltenham, appointing Mr. MacDonald as curate to do duty for him. Mr. MacDonald was unfortunate in his relations with the parishioners, Catholic and Protestant. In the characters of magistrate, tithe-proctor—for he collected his tithes in person—and New Reformer, he had succeeded in making himself generally unpopular. As a tithe-proctor and a proselytizer he naturally became obnoxious to the Papists. But even as a magistrate and a New Reformer he contrived to displease and annoy the members of his own class and creed. He quarrelled with the magistrates, who ultimately refused to sit on the bench with him, and he quarrelled with the members of his own congregation, upon one of whom he committed an assault in the church.<sup>8</sup>

After these beginnings, it is not to be wondered at that Mr. MacDonald should have fallen foul of the parish priest. Of him Dr. Alcock had never during his residence in the parish demanded tithes, adopting in this respect a practice followed by many clergymen of the Established Church. Mr. MacDonald does not

<sup>7</sup> See Evidence of Dr. Doyle before Select Committees (on Tithes) in 1832.

<sup>8</sup> By some the population is stated to have consisted of 6000 Catholics and 30 Protestants, but I take Lord John Russell's figures.

seem to have approved of this practice. He apparently saw no reason why the priest should be picked out for special favour in the matter of the payment of tithes; possibly, as a New Reformer he saw a great many reasons why he should not. Anyhow, he determined that both priest and peasant should contribute to his support and maintenance as Protestant curate of Graigue; and he accordingly demanded tithes of the parish priest, Father Doyle. Father Doyle refused to pay, and MacDonald seized his horse. The news of this demand and seizure quickly spread throughout the parish, and the peasantry, rallying round the priest, struck against the payment of tithes.

His supplies being thus cut off, Mr. MacDonald sought counsel of the resident magistrate of the district, Colonel Sir John Harvey. Sir John Harvey, who was a man of good judgment and popular sympathies, suggested that, in the first instance, time should be given to the tithe-payers, and friendly negotiations opened with them. Colonel Harvey's advice was followed by Mr. MacDonald, whereupon Colonel Harvey himself initiated the friendly negotiations he had suggested. In the course of these negotiations the magistrate found some of the peasants willing to pay—but not to pay Mr. MacDonald. "We will pay Dr. Alcock," they said, "or we will pay you for Dr. Alcock, but we won't give a shilling to MacDonald." Others he found determined to pay neither MacDonald nor Dr. Alcock, declaring that the question was not one of money, but of principle, and that the payment of tithes should be put an end to altogether. To Colonel Harvey's arguments urging them to discharge their legal obligations, they answered, "Oh, the law will soon be done away with. Let the parsons wait until Parliament meets; maybe Parliament will pay them; we won't, anyhow. Daniel O'Connell will get the tithes taken off us, as he got us emancipation." From the peasants Colonel Harvey went to Father Doyle, and asked him to use his influence with his parishioners to induce them to pay. Father Doyle



said that, even if he were inclined to use his influence in this way, it would be of no avail. "Matters are gone too far now, Colonel Harvey," he said; "the people have thoroughly made up their minds not to pay tithes any more, and all Ireland is watching Graigue." The failure of his negotiations, which had been carried on over a period of several months, was communicated by Colonel Harvey to Mr. MacDonald; whereupon MacDonald resolved to wait no longer, and requested Colonel Harvey to take the necessary steps for enforcing the law and collecting his tithes. It was now the end of February, 1831, and Harvey immediately prepared to take those steps. He collected a strong force of military and police, and with them seized the vantage-points of the parish.

The village of Graigue, which lies in a beautifully-situated valley on the banks of the Barrow, was occupied by a body of 350 police. Thomastown was held by a troop of the 1st Dragoon Guards, and Gauzan by a detachment of the 21st Fusiliers. Altogether Colonel Harvey had at his disposal a force of 600 men. In March "hostilities" commenced. Colonel Harvey's plan of campaign was this: he determined to make a raid on all the cattle in the vicinity of Graigue, and to move the whole lot off under an escort so strong that the peasants would not dream of resistance, and that the law might thus be enforced without any risk of bloodshed. The peasants were well aware of the strength of Colonel Harvey's force, and also shrewdly suspected what the plan of attack would be. They accordingly resolved to take great precautions to safeguard the cattle, and they knew so much of the law as to be aware that cattle placed under lock and key could not be seized. Their plan of defence therefore was to "hurry" the cattle off the moment the military and police should come up, and to place them in legal security. The better to carry out this plan, the cattle were collected in groups at various points around the village; sentinels were placed in charge of them;

directions were given to have Colonel Harvey closely watched; and the *mot d'ordre* was issued that the moment his force appeared, a general rush should be made for the cattle-folds, and the cattle swept under cover before the military and police arrived.

Colonel Harvey, on his part, caused a sharp look-out to be kept on the movements of the peasants, and directed that the first favourable opportunity should be seized for taking them by surprise.

On the 3rd of March, having heard that all was quiet in the valley of Graigue; that the men were at work ploughing in the fields; the women engaged in various avocations; and perfect peace and stillness prevailing everywhere, Colonel Harvey gave orders to advance. The police and soldiers moved rapidly up the hills by which the valley is surrounded; but before they had reached the summits their attention was arrested by the blowing of horns, the ringing of chapel bells, the shouting and whistling of men, and all the sounds of a great commotion. On reaching the summits they looked upon a lively and an exciting scene. The men had unyoked their horses from the ploughs and were galloping off at great speed in all directions over the plain. Thousands of peasants, mounted and on foot, were seen dashing into the valley and filling up the spaces through which the troops had to pass to reach the points where the cattle were known to be collected. The women rushed after the men, making for the houses, and hurrying before them the children, who, screaming and yelling, joined in the general chase. The position of affairs was clear at a glance; the peasants were hastening to the improvised cattle-folds for the purpose of placing their flocks securely under lock and key. To intercept their movements and to reach the cattle-folds before them, the troops set off in full chase helter-skelter. An exciting and an amusing race ensued, but the peasants won. When Colonel Harvey's men reached the cattle-folds, there was not so



much as a pig to be seen—except under lock and key. During the manœuvres of the military, and the defensive operations of the peasants, not an angry word passed—not an expression of ill-will was interchanged. Indeed, to Colonel Harvey and the military the whole scene appeared supremely ludicrous, and painfully undignified. When the “engagement” was over, many of the peasants came up to the magistrate and said, “We wish no harm to the soldiers and police, colonel, and we don’t want to do them any harm; but we will not pay any tithes ever again, and we will resist always as we resisted to-day.”

For two months Colonel Harvey, with his force of 600 men, persevered in his efforts to collect Mr. MacDonald’s tithes, and at the end of that period he had succeeded in collecting precisely one-third of the amount due by the whole parish. He then desisted, and early in May withdrew his little army, leaving the peasants of Graigue in the peaceful enjoyment of their victory.

The example of Graigue was quickly followed throughout the Counties of Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford, and Tipperary, and the strike against tithes soon became general. Collisions between the people and police unhappily also became of frequent occurrence. The most serious of these collisions were the affrays of Newtown Barry, and Thurles, Kilkenny, Castlepollard, and Carrickshock.

On the 18th of June some cattle seized for tithe by the Rev. Alexander McClintock, rector of Newtown Barry, were put up for sale. The people had collected in large numbers to prevent the sale, and to make a demonstration generally against the tithe system. On the cattle being brought out under an escort of police, the mob charged the police, seized the cattle, and carried them off in triumph. The police promptly rallied, charged the mob, and recaptured the cattle. The latter, apparently determined not to be baffled in their designs, quickly collected again and crowded

upon the police and sheriff's officers. The resident magistrate in charge, feeling alarmed at what he considered the threatening attitude of the peasants, called out a division of the yeomanry, mustering 190 men, each man being provided with fifty rounds of ball cartridge. Who began the encounter which ensued, it is difficult to say. Some assert that the yeomanry were at once received by the people with a volley of stones. Others declare that the attitude of the people was perfectly passive, when the yeomanry fired on them. The one thoroughly well authenticated fact is, that the appearance of the yeomanry was followed by a most sanguinary conflict—the people (who were without fire-arms) assailing the yeomen with stones, sticks, and slanes; the yeomen charging the people with fixed bayonets, and pouring into them a steady and well-directed fire. The conflict was soon over. Twelve of the peasants were almost instantaneously shot dead, and twenty fatally wounded. The yeomen escaped almost scathless. The mob were effectually dispersed, but the sale of the cattle was not carried out. The people succeeded in their immediate design, but at a high cost.

The action of the yeomanry at Newtown Barry seemed so questionable to the Government, that an inquiry into the conduct of the yeomanry was ordered; and as a result of this inquiry, bills for wilful murder against the captain and sergeant in command of the corps were sent up to the grand jury at the next assize. The grand jury threw out the bills, but suggested that if bills charging manslaughter were sent up they would "find" them. Bills charging manslaughter were then sent up, whereupon the grand jury found a true bill against the sergeant, but threw out the bill against the captain. The sergeant was put on his trial, but no witnesses came forward to prosecute, and he was discharged. So terminated the affray of Newtown Barry.



In July, Archdeacon Cotton, the rector of Thurles, caused processes to be served on the tithe-payers of his parish. We have a description of the tithe-payers of Thurles and their landlords, from Archdeacon Cotton, which is worth quoting. Writing to the Chief Secretary, Mr. Stanley, he says, "The greater part of this parish is the property of Lord Llandaff, who has no residence here, nor gives employment, nor spends money in the place. The other proprietors are almost wholly absentees. The town, which formerly contained several distilleries, now swarms with paupers, among whom the land is subdivided, and that at a rent often very high. Under these circumstances you will feel no surprise when I mention that I have to look for my tithes from about 650 occupiers, most of whom are in a needy condition, some of them having to pay so small a sum as *fourpence!*" and all of them, his reverence might have added, being members of the Catholic religion. The process-server, accompanied by an escort of police, proceeded to execute his work early in July. The peasants collected in hundreds to resist the service, and after some of the processes had been served, called upon the police to give up the process-server. The police refused, but said that if the peasants dispersed, and allowed them to retire to Thurles unmolested, they would serve no more processes for the present. On these conditions the peasants consented to disperse, and the police returned to Thurles, taking the process-server with them.

In August the work of process-serving was recommenced. The peasants again collected to resist the law, and again called on the police to surrender the process-server. The police refused, but agreed, as on the former occasion, to retire if the people would disperse, and this the latter declined to do. Apprehending an attack, the police sent the process-server to the rear, and prepared to return to Thurles. But the people, resolving to have that functionary "*this time,*" rushed

at the police, attacking them with sticks, stones, pitchforks, and slanes. The police returned the attack with a steady fire, strewing the ground with the bodies of wounded peasants, and safely effecting, without any casualties, their retreat on Thurles. At Thurles, as at Newtown Barry, the peasants suffered severely, but in the one case as in the other, they resisted the carrying out of the law with success. The work of tithe collecting had to be completely abandoned in Archdeacon Cotton's parish. Some weeks later collisions took place between peasantry and police at Castlepollard, in the County Westmeath, and in the town of Kilkenny, when many of the former were again shot down, the police escaping unhurt.

So far, the peasantry had come off very much the worse in their encounters with the police, though they had been successful in their main design—resistance to the payment of tithes. Little sympathy was expressed by the Ascendency for the peasantry in their disasters, and no desire was evinced by the clergy, or by the Castle who backed the clergy, to stay, even temporarily, the work of process-serving, and tithe-gathering, on account of the popular mishaps which it entailed. The Ascendency said the law must be maintained; let the people obey the law; let them pay the tithes, and they will not be shot down. On the other hand, Dr. Doyle and O'Connell felt acutely the popular sufferings and disasters. The law which you seek to maintain, they said to the Orange Party and the Castle, is monstrously unjust, and the policy of the Government in shooting down the people in order to enforce it, is iniquitous and insane. Suspend all action, they urged, until Parliament meets and deals with the question. Such was the course adopted in similar circumstances, in 1735.\* Let the precedent of 1735 be followed now.

\* Ante, p. 368, and Evidence of Col. Harvey before Select Committees on Tithes, 1832.



But the Ascendency and the Castle answered *non possumus*; and the struggle between the peasantry and the authorities went on.

On the 26th of December, 1830, a large gathering of people collected around the house of Dr. Hamilton, the rector of Knocktopher—a gentleman not unpopular in the parish (where the Catholics were 40 to 1 to the Protestants), though his tithes were “set high,” and regularly exacted. Dr. Hamilton despatched one of his servants to learn their business; and they sent back word saying, “We want a reduction of tithes; we want to see Dr. Hamilton.” Dr. Hamilton refused to see them, declaring that he would hold no intercourse with a mob which had approached his house in a threatening manner. “But,” he added, “I am prepared to receive a respectable deputation from the tithe-payers; and if such a deputation will wait upon me this day week, I shall hear what they have to say.” The peasants expressed themselves quite satisfied with this proposal, and peaceably withdrew.

On the 3rd of January, 1831, a deputation, consisting of twelve of the most respectable tenant-farmers of the neighbourhood, waited on Dr. Hamilton, who was attended on the occasion by Colonel Harvey, by Mr. Greene, the resident magistrate of the district, and others.

Dr. Hamilton received the deputation apparently in an irritated and a petulant mood. “What do you want?” he said, when they were ushered in. “Are you tired of me? Do you want to get rid of me?” “No, your reverence,” the deputation replied, “we are not tired of you; we would never get a better. You have lived amongst us, and spent your income amongst us. All we want is a reduction. The people are determined on it, and we beg you to consent to a small reduction.” “I have lived among you,” answered Dr. Hamilton, “for thirty-five years. Have I during that time done any act of harshness towards you?” “No, your reverence; but at the same time, sir, you are draw-

ing from us in tithe 1700*l.* a year, and your reverence's father drew only 350*l.*" "Yes," said Hamilton, "but it is not more than the value of the tithe." "But, sir, what value do you give us for the tithe?" "I tell you what it is," said Hamilton, evading this question, "you are refusing to pay tithes now, you will refuse to pay rents by-and-by." "There is a great difference, sir," retorted the spokesman of the deputation, "between tithes and rents. We get some value for the rents; we get the land anyway for them. But we get no value at all for the tithes. We pay our own clergy, and we haven't any business with any other!" "Well, and what reduction do you want?" said the rector, coming ultimately to the point. The deputation answered that they would be satisfied with a reduction of five per cent., but this reduction Hamilton firmly declined to make. After some further conversation and argument the deputation withdrew, having failed completely in the object of their visit. As they were leaving, they said to Colonel Harvey, who enjoyed the privilege, rarely possessed by English officials in Ireland, of commanding popular confidence: "Colonel, if his reverence will give us the five per cent. reduction, he will be paid every shilling of his tithes; if he does not, he will not get a farthing of them."

The deputation having failed, Colonel Harvey, as was his wont, endeavoured to negotiate a friendly arrangement or compromise between the parson and the tithe-payers, but without success.

It may be stated that in Knocktopher as at Graigue, the peasantry were divided into two parties—a moderate party and an extreme party; the one willing to pay on certain conditions, the other indisposed to pay at all. The immediate effect of the failure of the deputation—which represented the moderate section—was to throw the parish completely into the hands of the extreme men (who were led by a hedge school-master, an old United Irishman), and this circumstance, conjoined with Dr. Hamilton's stubborn



resolve not to grant a reduction, led to the breakdown of the negotiations opened by Colonel Harvey.

In March, as there was no prospect of a settlement, and as the peasantry manifested a stronger determination than ever not to give way, Dr. Hamilton wrote to Colonel Harvey, requesting that strong measures should be taken to put the law in execution. "A military force," he said, "ought to be sent to collect the tithes. . . . The people are in a state of rebellion, . . . they ought to be compelled to pay."<sup>1</sup> But Colonel Harvey does not seem to have been inclined to take strong measures to "compel the people to pay." His view appears to have been that measures ought rather to be taken to alter than to enforce the law. "The people," he says, writing to the Under Secretary at Dublin Castle, in March, the very day on which he received Hamilton's letter, "are quieter, but still looking for legislative relief." And again, in April, he writes, "I am of opinion that nothing but a legislative enactment, in other words a change in the law, will allay the agitation."<sup>2</sup> As Colonel Harvey evinced no disposition to place a military force at the service of Dr. Hamilton, to enable him to collect his tithes, Dr. Hamilton communicated directly with the Castle, asking for advice and assistance. The Castle advised that legal proceedings should be taken against the tithe-payers, and promised to provide whatever forces might be deemed requisite for carrying out the law.

In November, the legal proceedings advised by the Castle were commenced, and tithe processes issued. In December, the business of process-serving began. On the 12th of that month, a process-server, named Butler, accompanied by a police force numbering thirty-nine men, under the command of Mr. Green, resident magistrate, and Captain Gib-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix to Report of Commons' Committee on Tithes, 1832, No. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Nos. 11 and 15.

bons, sub-inspector, set out on his mission. The peasants, who had collected in small batches, followed the police and process-server from point to point on their march, but made no effort to impede their progress. Many processes were served, and the police and process-server retired safely after their day's work, without let or hindrance from the people.

On the 13th, the work was resumed, and Dr. Hamilton himself rode out in the morning to learn what progress had been made. He met Captain Gibbons, and received all particulars from him. "We got on excellently yesterday," said the chief of the police, "not the slightest interruption from any one." "I hope you will get on peacefully to-day also," said Dr. Hamilton, "and I trust that there will be no collisions with the people, and above all no bloodshed." "Oh, there is no fear of that," said Captain Gibbons, "I have got a force which could disperse any Irish mob." Dr. Hamilton felt reassured, and the work of process-serving was peacefully carried out on the second day as it had been on the first. The peasants, however, had collected in larger numbers than on the previous occasion, and followed the proceedings of the police with many expressions of irritation and hostility. As the latter were returning homewards in the evening, the peasants crossed their line of march in large numbers, and blocked the way. The police halted. The leader of the peasants, "a man in a kind of military uniform, and wearing a sash," stepped forward, and said: "Things passed off quietly yesterday, and they passed off quietly to-day; but they won't pass off quietly to-morrow, if you begin at this work again; so we warn you in time." He then retired, the peasants dispersed, and the police marched on without further interruption.

On the morning of the 14th the process-server and the police set out once more in the discharge of their duties. They had not proceeded far on their way when the blowing of horns and the ringing of



chapel-bells were heard, and the peasants were seen gathering in hundreds to the summons, coming armed with sticks, pitchforks, slanes, and scythes. The man in the semi-military uniform and the sash, who had confronted the police on the previous evening, was conspicuous as their leader.

The police held on their course, having taken precautions to guard themselves against attack, while the peasants steadily followed them from place to place, marching in divisions, and in quasi-military order. Some hours passed, and several processes were served without peasants and police coming into collision. Between one and two p.m. the police turned in the direction of the hamlet of Higginston to finish up their three days' work, and serve the remainder of the processes. On the line of march to Higginstown, Captain Gibbons chose his way through a narrow defile or pass, with high stone walls on either side. This defile is known in the neighbourhood by the name of Carrickshock. A worse line of march than that through the pass, or as the peasants call it, the "boreen," of Carrickshock, could not, Colonel Harvey said, be taken.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Mr. Greene said the line of march was excellently chosen for defensive purposes. But, be the question of the ill or well choosing of the line of march as it may, Captain Gibbons had scarcely reached the middle of the "boreen" when the blowing of horns was again heard, and before the chief of the police could realize the situation, the peasants seized the entrances to the pass with a rush, and thronged along the stone walls.

Their leader then advanced to Captain Gibbons, who was mounted, and said, "We don't want to harm the police. We want the process-server. Give him up to us, and we won't interfere with the police at all." Gibbons answered, "I shall not give him up. It is my duty to protect him, and

<sup>3</sup> Select Committees on Tithes, 1832.

I shall do my duty." The peasant in reply urged that the people were determined to have the process-server, and would not go away without him. After some further conversation, Gibbons expressed his willingness to give up the work of process-serving for the day, provided the people dispersed. The peasant replied that the police might do anything they liked if they gave up the process-server. "That," said Gibbons, "is out of the question." The parleying then ceased. The peasant returned to his own party, and Gibbons ordered his men to march forward. As the police advanced, the leader of the peasants, backed by his followers, once more confronted Gibbons, demanding the surrender of the process-server. Gibbons again firmly declined, and called on the peasants to give way and let the police pass on. The peasants refused to yield an inch of ground until the process-server was surrendered, declaring their determination to put down the tithe system. Gibbons then ordered his men to "present arms," and placing himself at their head, gave the word "fire;" at the same time drawing his revolver, and shooting the leader of the peasants. The police fired with effect, and many of the peasants fell killed or wounded. But the police fire was quickly returned by a volley of stones from the ranks of the peasants, and Gibbons, struck on the temple by one of these missiles, dropped from his horse dead. The peasants then rushed straight for the police, and a desperate hand-to-hand conflict ensued; the former using their scythes, slanes, and pitchforks, the latter charging with the bayonet.

The conflict lasted for about an hour, and resulted in the complete rout and almost total annihilation of the police force, eleven of whom were killed and seventeen wounded. The casualties among the peasantry were also serious.\*

\* Twelve of the peasants were indicted for the attack at Carrickshock. Two fled. Three were acquitted. In one case the jury disagreed, and the prosecution was ultimately abandoned.



The news of this unfortunate affray soon spread throughout the country, creating consternation and panic in Ascendency and official circles. The bishops immediately issued directions to the clergy not to press for the payment of tithes until Parliament had dealt with the subject, and the Castle acquiesced in the adoption of the policy of prudent restraint so advised.

Accordingly, the "truce," for which Dr. Doyle and O'Connell had asked in vain after the disasters of Newtown Barry and Castle Pollard, of Kilkenny and Thurles, was granted after the catastrophe at Carrickshock.

On the 6th of December, 1831, Parliament had met. On the 15th of December committees were appointed in both Houses to inquire into the subject of tithes. From these committees Catholics were excluded, "as if," said O'Connell, "Catholics had nothing to do with tithes but to pay them." The witnesses examined were almost exclusively Episcopalian Protestants, and the inquiry was limited to the mere question of the collection and payment of the tax, and the distress of the clergy—the question of the justice or injustice of the tithe system was not considered at all. That tithes could no longer be extracted by the clergy from the peasantry without bringing odium on the Church, and entailing the maintenance of a standing army for the purpose, was abundantly proved to the satisfaction of the committees. Some alteration in the law seemed absolutely necessary in the interests of the Church itself, and the alteration suggested by the clergy was the conversion of the tithes into a land tax. Let the landlords pay us, the clergy said, and they can afterwards settle with the tenants.

Another matter of paramount importance in the opinion of the committees was how the immediate needs of the clergy, many of whom had been reduced to a state of actual want, were to be met; and the

only feasible way of meeting them seemed to be the concession of a temporary grant by Parliament. The committees advised the concession of such a grant, suggesting that the Government should be empowered to collect the amount advanced, from the Irish tithe-payers.

On the 8th of March resolutions were moved in both Houses for the purposes of giving effect to the views and suggestions of the committees. It was proposed (1) that a sum not exceeding 60,000*l.* should be paid to the clergy; (2) that the Government should be empowered to recover the amount so advanced from the tithe-payers; that (3) a measure amending the tithe laws should be introduced some time in the future. These proposals the Irish members opposed as a mere attempt to palter with a great question. The effect of the Government resolutions, they pointed out, would simply be to make the Lord-Lieutenant "tithe-proctor-general of all Ireland."<sup>5</sup> Let the distress of the clergy, they said, be by all means relieved, but let it not be relieved at the expense of the peasantry, whose distress is greater, and whose position with reference to the subject of tithes is much more just. Let not the Government expose themselves to public obloquy by "cramming the tithes down the throats of the peasantry at the point of the bayonet."<sup>6</sup> Let them approach the question, not in a spirit of coercion and duress, but of concession and conciliation. Let tithes be abolished; let the Irish Protestant Episcopalian Church be reduced to a state of perfect equality with all the other Churches in Ireland, and the people would be content. They would not be content with any measure of tithe reform which fell short of accomplishing this end.

But the arguments and expostulations of the Irish members were addressed to the House in vain. The resolutions were, after a protracted discussion, carried by large majorities, and a bill embodying them became

<sup>5</sup> O'Connell.

<sup>6</sup> Sheil.



law on June 1st, 1832.<sup>7</sup> Two months later another bill was passed (on August 16th) making the composition of tithes, which had hitherto been voluntary and temporary, compulsory and permanent.<sup>8</sup> In this manner the legislature approached the question of tithes in 1832. Completely disregarding Irish public opinion, ministers sought rather to bolster up than destroy the tithe system; to stand by the Ascendency than to yield to the people. What came of the ministerial policy we shall see.

<sup>7</sup> 2 and 3 William IV. cap. 41; see also Hansard, Third Series, vol. xi. pp. 1235—1364.

<sup>8</sup> 2 and 3 William IV. cap. 119 (passed August 16th, 1832).

## CHAPTER II.

## BOYCOTTING IN DUBLIN, AND BLOODSHED IN THE PROVINCES.

THE truce which ensued after the catastrophe of Carrickshock lasted up to April, 1832—the Ascendency and Catholics watching with keen interest the proceedings in Parliament. In April, while the fate of the Government measures remained yet undecided, the truce was broken by the Rev. J. Coote, rector of Doon, in the County Limerick, and the second campaign of the tithe war was opened.

Mr. Coote, imitating the example of Mr. MacDonald of Graigue, had, contrary to the general practice of the Ascendency clergy, demanded tithes of the parish priest of the district. The priest refused to pay, and Mr. Coote seized his cow. The 17th of April was fixed for the sale of the cow. It may safely be said that never before or since has a cow been sold under similar circumstances of distinction. Two pieces of artillery, sixty men of the 12th Lancers, and five companies of the 92nd Highlanders, with a strong force of police, escorted the unfortunate animal to the place of sale, where not less than four thousand peasants had assembled to witness the sight.

Amid a scene of great excitement and uproar, the cow was ultimately “knocked down” to the priest’s brother for the sum of 12*l*. The military then retired, leaving the village in the hands of the police. But the soldiers had scarcely proceeded a mile outside of



the village when the peasants, armed with sticks and slanes, attacked the police in force, driving them into their barracks for shelter, or hunting them out of the town. A mounted orderly was at once despatched to recall the troops, who quickly returned, the Lancers leading the way. Unawed by the presence of so formidable an array of "horse, foot, and artillery," the peasants fell on the Lancers, pouring volley after volley of stones into them, inflicting serious injuries on the commanding officers. The Lancers promptly charged, scattering the peasants, who had pushed close up to them, in all directions. But the main body of peasants still evinced a determination to hold their ground and renew the conflict, when the Highlanders came up and opened fire on them. The peasants, many of whom had been wounded, then retreated, and order reigned in Doon.

In May another remarkable tithe sale was attempted rather than took place. Thirteen cows belonging to a farmer named Cotter, and seized for non-payment of tithes by the Rev. Deane Freeman, rector of Rathcormac, in the County Cork, were put up for sale on the 30th of the month. Two companies of the 5th Foot and two of the 92nd Highlanders attended "to keep the ground" on the occasion. An immense multitude of peasants assembled to prevent the carrying out of the law, and so great was the uproar and confusion they caused, and so persistently did they obstruct the auctioneer in the discharge of his duties, that the sale had to be abandoned.

Some days later, Mr. Freeman having expressed a determination to have the cows put up for sale again, a mass meeting was held in the neighbourhood, and the following resolutions were passed:—

"1. It is requested that no auctioneer will lend himself to the sale of cows distrained for tithes.

"2. It is requested that no person will purchase cows distrained for tithes.

"3. It is *Resolved*, that the citizens will have no

intercourse or dealings with any person who aids in the sale of the cows as auctioneer or purchaser."

These resolutions had the desired effect. Neither auctioneers nor purchasers could be found to "aid in the sale of cows distrained for tithes."

Towards the middle of June, when the hopes entertained of obtaining redress from Parliament were disappointed, the agitation became more intense and extreme. The doctrines of passive resistance and exclusive dealing were preached and practised almost everywhere.

Tithe funerals (at which coffins, with the words "Burial of Tithes" written on them, were carried, and followed by multitudes of peasants) took place frequently. Anti-tithe meetings were constantly held, and violent speeches denouncing the tithe system were habitually delivered.

In brief, the cry, "No tithes! No Church!" was raised higher and louder than ever.

"We will not cease to agitate," said a farmer named Nash, at one of these meetings at Moincoin in the County Kilkenny, "until justice be done to Ireland by her Saxon rulers; and if justice be not done, then I am sure that every field will become a Bunker's Hill, and every breen a Carrickshock."

"My ancestors," said Sir Robert Nagle, a Protestant gentleman, a justice of the peace, and a deputy-lieutenant, at another meeting, "my ancestors fought and bled with the people, and though I may not be called on to go so far, I will never forsake the principles on which they acted."

To such a degree was the practice of exclusive dealing carried, that Catholic labourers refused to work for Protestant landlords, and Catholic citizens declined to deal with Protestant shopkeepers. The Ascendency press became very wrathful at these violent boycotting courses, and urged the Protestants to adopt retaliatory measures. Two can play at the game of exclusive dealing, said the Orange Tory



*Evening Mail*, and if Catholics refuse to deal with Protestants, let Protestants refuse to deal with them. We defy you, retorted the Catholic *Evening Post*, to play at the game of exclusive dealing with us. But, try it. Why, if the practice of exclusive dealing were but pushed to its extremest limits by the Catholics, every Protestant shopkeeper in three out of the four provinces would be hopelessly ruined in less than a month. A case soon occurred which satisfied the Ascendency party that they could not safely play at the game of exclusive dealing with the Papists; that, in fact—the presence of English soldiers, and the support of the Ascendency by English bayonets always excepted—the latter were complete masters of the situation.

The anti-tithe organizers of Dublin caused notices to be served on the five following leading gentlemen of the county, calling on them not to pay tithes: Lord Cloncurry, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Bourne, Mr. Bagot, and Mr. Graydon. The notices were disregarded. “Orders” were then issued, directing their servants and labourers to leave the employment of those gentlemen, and the orders were instantly obeyed. A meeting was next held at Athgoe, near Rathcoolie, and Lord Cloncurry, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Bourne, Mr. Bagot, and Mr. Graydon were “summoned” to attend it, and “explain” their conduct in disobeying the popular decrees. Mr. Graydon—whose servants and labourers had struck work, leaving his hay uncut, and one hundred cows unmilked—alone attended. He expressed his “regret” for having disobeyed the notices, and promised that he would not again pay tithes. This “explanation” was accepted as satisfactory, and Mr. Graydon’s labourers were directed to return to his employment. The meeting was then adjourned for a week, to give Lord Cloncurry, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Bourne, and Mr. Bagot, another opportunity of appearing and “defending” themselves. Mr. Graydon was requested to attend the adjourned meeting, doubtless *pour encourager les autres*.

The adjourned meeting was held on Oughterard Hill, near the residence of Lord Cloncurry. An immense concourse of people attended, and the chair was taken by a Mr. Neill. In the vicinity of the chair a circle was formed for the inculpatated parties to enter. Mr. Graydon was the first called on to appear. He immediately entered the ring, and renewed his previous promise. Mr. Armstrong was next called. He "answered to his name" this time, and expressing his "regret for having incurred the displeasure of the people," promised he would never pay tithes again. Mr. Bagot and Mr. Bourne did not attend, but their agents appeared for them, and promised in their behalf that neither would pay tithes for the future. A labourer of Mr. Bourne's was then called to "explain" why he had not left Mr. Bourne's employment with the other labourers, when ordered so to do. He stepped into the circle and said, "Well, gentlemen, the truth is, I was so drunk that I didn't know what I was doing; but, be jabers, I'd rather be strung up than work for him again if 'twas contrary to instructions." This "explanation" was accepted, and the offender dismissed with a "caution." Lastly, Lord Cloncurry was called on; he did not answer, but a number of labourers in his employ came forward to say that they were sent by his lordship "to speak for him." "Well," said Mr. Neill, "and what have you got to say? why did Lord Cloncurry pay the tithe?" "He didn't pay it," said the spokesman of the Cloncurry party, "and he was always a good friend to the people, and always against the tithe, and he hasn't paid a shilling in tithe to Dean Langrishe since the Dean came to the parish." This was a strong and satisfactory statement, and no attempt having been made to contradict it, Mr. Neill was about to pronounce "judgment" in favour of Lord Cloncurry, when one of his lordship's adherents, with more zeal than discretion, sprang forward and, with the object, doubtless, of showing how completely the law was in



abeyance in the parish, shouted, "and what's more, the divil a copper of rent the dane pays me lord." This declaration was received with a roar of laughter. "Oh," said Mr. Neill, "that won't do. Lord Cloncurry and the Dean think they can settle the matter finely between them in this way, but we won't be satisfied with any arrangement of that sort. Lord Cloncurry must promise that he will not pay tithes, without any reference to the matter of rent between himself and Dean Langrishe. Will Lord Cloncurry make that promise?" The labourers said they didn't know; that they only came to say what they were told, and what they believed to be true, and that they wouldn't interfere further in the business. "But," said Mr. Neill, "if you cannot give that promise for Lord Cloncurry, you must promise us not to go back and work for him." "And if we do not go back to work for him," said the spokesman of the labourers, "who will support us and our families?" "We will," said Mr. Neill. The labourers then asked for time to consider what they should do. Time was granted them, and they retired for a quarter of an hour to deliberate. They then returned and said they had made up their minds "to go with the people anyways, and that they would not go back to Lord Cloncurry." This announcement was received with cheers, amid which, and of cries of "Down with the tithes," "Down with the Church," the meeting broke up, and peacefully dispersed.

In the whole history of Irish agitation I doubt if any record can be found of proceedings more high-handed than those of the Dublin Anti-tithers against Lord Cloncurry, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Bourne, Mr. Bagot, and Mr. Graydon. The effect of those proceedings on the Ascendency was electrical. They were astonished and alarmed at the intrepidity, perseverance, and firmness of the peasants. The utter helplessness of their situation in the absence of English support was most forcibly brought home to them, and the Ascendency press did not counsel Protestants to

play at the game of exclusive dealing with Catholics any more.

The tide of agitation now rose higher and higher, and the popular determination to give no quarter to the tithe system grew in intensity and force. Anti-tithe meetings continued to be held all over the southern provinces, and uncompromising denunciations of the Establishment were everywhere freely indulged in. Among the many meetings held at the time to condemn the tithe system, the assemblage which gathered within sight of Carrickshock in July, under the presidency of Pierce Butler, J.P., D.L., must rank as one of the most imposing and remarkable. It was estimated that not less than 100,000 peasants and farmers, of whom 5000 came on horseback, attended.

The men marched from the various outlying districts *in divisions, moving in military style, and in obedience to commands given by chosen leaders in military phraseology.* Having met on the ground, the several divisions were drawn up in military form, and certain bodies of peasants "paid off" to keep order. Mr. Butler was voted by acclamation to the chair. Strong resolutions were passed, and strong speeches were made, condemning and denouncing tithes, but the proceedings throughout, notwithstanding the quasi-military display, were characterized by law-abidingness, regularity, and good temper. The business of the meeting over, this vast assemblage quietly broke up, moved with decorum off the ground, and returned quietly to their homes.

It could not be suggested that the peace was broken, that any law was violated by the gathering at Carrickshock. The people had met under the presidency of a Protestant and a magistrate. They had conducted themselves faultlessly. Nevertheless, the Ascendency party cried loudly to the Castle to interpose and prevent such gatherings in the future. The reason of this appeal was obvious. The Ascendency knew full well that if many such meetings were held, that if



many Protestants like Pierce Butler were drawn into the popular ranks, the tithe system would not last a twelvemonth. They felt that if the Irish peasants were to meet often by hundreds of thousands under the presidency of Episcopalian Protestant gentlemen, English public opinion might soon be startled into recognizing the folly of the statesmanship which attempted to rule Ireland according to the dictates of an expiring faction. Therefore, they put forth all their powers to impel the Government to suspend the right of public meeting. Now, said the Orange press, is the time for the Government to strike. Now they have an opportunity of coming down on a man of mark, and, by so doing, of inspiring the peasantry with awe. An example ought to be made of Mr. Pierce Butler. He ought to be deprived of the commission of the peace. An "example" was made of Mr. Pierce Butler; he was deprived of the commission of the peace. The Castle next issued a circular suppressing the right of public meeting.<sup>1</sup> Troops were then poured into the country, and all preparations made for putting down the agitation, and upholding the Ascendency. The moment O'Connell heard of the Castle circular, he despatched a manifesto from London, calling on the people to obey it, though it was "illegal, unconstitutional, and monstrous," adding, "I shall return to Ireland soon, and shall take prompt measures to assert the popular rights, and advance the popular cause." The circular was obeyed. No more great meetings were held.

O'Connell returned to Ireland in August, disappointed and disgusted with the proceedings in Parliament. It seemed to him that the only hope for the country now was in the Repeal of the Union, and he instantly unfurled the Repeal banner. Addressing

<sup>1</sup> The circular authorized the magistrates to prevent any meeting which they considered likely to lead to a breach of the peace. The authority so given amounted practically to the suppression of public meetings.

a mass meeting in Limerick on the 15th of August, he said, "I know the British Parliament well, and I know that you cannot find information or capability [there] to serve Ireland true. The Repeal of the Union must now be our watchword—our national cry." O'Connell's Limerick speech was followed up by a vigorous letter from Dr. Doyle to Lord Anglesea, denouncing the policy of coercion on which the Castle now seemed bent. "When, my lord," wrote the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, "the dervish was asked by Alexander the Great what he thought of the conquest of India by that warrior, he took the dried sheepskin from off his shoulders, spread it on the floor of Alexander's hut, and having walked upon it—the skin yielding to the pressure of the foot, and rising when the foot was removed—he said, 'Such will be your conquest of India.' The allegory may be instructive to your Excellency."

But the Castle was already committed to a policy of coercion. The Government had resolved to put down the agitation with a strong hand, to enforce the law at all costs and hazards. Equally resolved were the peasantry to maintain the agitation—to defy the law. The result was a struggle between the Government and the people, signalized by a number of encounters which can scarcely be described otherwise than as a series of pitched battles.

On the 5th of September, the Rev. Mr. Gavin, rector of Wallstown, proceeded with a staff of valuers to value for tithes the lands in his parish. Parson Gavin and his staff were accompanied by a party of police, a detachment of the 92nd Highlanders, and a detachment of the 14th Foot, the whole force being under the command of one admiral, two generals, and three magistrates—Admiral Evans, General Barry, General Annesley, Gerald Nagle, Brazier Gray, and George Bond Low. It may be observed that the population of Wallstown consisted of 3163 Catholics and 1 Protestant.



Having valued a few farms without interruption, Mr. Gavin and his imposing escort arrived about noon on the lands of a "strong" farmer, named Blake. Blake seems to have been informed that his land could not be legally valued, as the crops upon it were growing crops. The legal point thus suggested Blake gladly availed himself of to make a demonstration against the tithe system. He collected a force of about 500 peasants, and posted them at the foot of a hill, upon its summit, and around it, thus occupying a commanding position. With about 200 men, he himself, accompanied by a man named Doyle (who seems to have been practically the leader of the "insurgents"), took his stand on the right of the hill, commanding one of two by-roads which led from the main thoroughfare into his farm. On the left side of the hill, at some distance from Blake's party, and commanding the other by-road, about 150 peasants were placed under the leadership of a man named Ryan. In the fields of another farm, which was separated from Blake's land by the main road, more peasants were placed, clearly with the design of hanging on the rear of any hostile force which might move along the road. The peasants were armed with sticks, slanes, reaping-hooks, and pitchforks. They were also supplied, though not very plentifully, with stones. Having arrived at the gate opening into Blake's farm, Admiral Evans (who was chief in command of the police and soldiers) halted. Observing the position and attitude of the peasants, the Admiral held a council of war, and it was decided that the police and Highlanders, under the command of General Annesley, should enter the farm, and that the 14th, under the direction of Lieutenant Grierson and the magistrates, should remain on the high-road to watch the peasants in the rear, and await orders. While the Admiral was holding a council of war, Blake advanced to the gate and asked what the soldiers and police wanted. "We have come," said the Admiral, "with the Rev. Mr. Gavin to see the

valuation quietly carried out, and I hope there will be no resistance, and that you will ask the peasants to disperse." Blake answered, "I will not, sir—if I can—allow my land to be valued for the tithe." "But we are determined that the valuation shall be carried out and the law obeyed; open the gate quietly, and let us in." "I will not open the gate," said Blake; "and if the valuers come on the land, we'll drive them off." Blake then withdrew, and joined the peasants at the hill-side.

Admiral Evans ordered the gate to be forced open; this being done the police and the Highlanders entered, and took up their position in the field facing the hill where the peasants were stationed.

The police were placed in the front rank, and the Highlanders, under General Annesley, ordered to form squares at a short distance behind them. Having made his dispositions, Admiral Evans rode up to the peasants, and called upon them to disperse.

"Let us have no disturbance," he said; "do not attempt to resist the law." "We will resist," said Doyle, who now stood at the head of the peasants; "we won't yield a foot but by force." "I beg of you," urged the Admiral, "not to be so obstinate. I will go on my knees to beg of you to retire." "It will do no good," said Doyle; "lives will have to be lost on some side before the valuation is carried out to-day." "You leave me no alternative," said the Admiral; "I must now read the Riot Act." He then read the Act, and said, "I now call upon you in the name of the law to disperse." The peasants shouted back, "We won't. No tithes! no Church! no minister! no by-laws!" Evans then returned to his men, and in a loud voice gave the order to the police to "Prime and load; ball cartridge."

"I gave this order in a loud voice," Admiral Evans subsequently said, "in the hope that the peasants would be frightened at the sound of the 'ball cartridge,' but they remained unmoved." Evans next directed



the valuers to go forward and commence their work. The valuers did so, but when they had gone some way from the soldiers and police, a handful of peasants rushed at them, driving them right out of the field on to the roadway.

Admiral Evans then said to General Annesley: "There is nothing for it; I must fire." Instructions were next sent by General Annesley to Lieutenant Grierson to work round to the rear of the peasants, driving the men in the fields across the road before him, and dispersing Ryan's party, by whom the flank of Doyle's "division" was protected. While these instructions were being carried out by Grierson, the peasants, under Doyle, had thrown themselves into a position of attack, the pitchforks and slanes being, to use Lieutenant Grierson's words, "presented at the charge."

"For the last time I call upon you to disperse," shouted Admiral Evans from his place at the head of the police. "Never," shouted back Doyle from his place at the head of the peasants. "Present arms; fire!" said the admiral, repeating the last words thrice. The police fired, but not, apparently, with very much effect. The fire was almost immediately returned by a volley of stones, and then Doyle, placing himself at the head of his men, roared, "Now, boys, at them. Hurrah for O'Connell! Faugh a ballagh!"<sup>2</sup> In a moment, and with a spring, the peasants were in upon the police, who, surprised by the quickness and audacity of the attack, gave way, and Doyle and his followers, cutting boldly through their ranks, suddenly came face to face with the Highlanders. Doyle was a prudent fellow, and quickly shouted to his comrades, "Back, back," whereupon the peasants halted in front of the squares. For a moment there was a pause. In the centre of one of the squares, apparently in a place of assured safety, sat Parson Gavin on horseback. One of the

<sup>2</sup> Clear the way.

peasants, catching sight of him, seized a reaping-hook to which a long cord was attached, and flinging it with much dexterity straight for the rector, landed it securely on his reverence's neck. This successful feat was received with a burst of cheers and laughter from the peasants. The peasant of the reaping-hook tugged vigorously at the cord, almost pulling the rector (who had grasped the cord at the other end to ease the pressure of the hook on his neck) from his horse. For a minute the rector's neck was in serious peril. Then a Highlander dashed forward and struck the peasant—who had advanced far beyond his own ranks in the struggle—to the ground with the butt-end of his musket. The next moment the Highlander was felled with a blow from a stone. The owner of the reaping-hook, who had regained his legs, rushed at the prostrate Highlander, and seizing his gun, was bearing it off in triumph, when the Highlander's comrade sprang forward and ran the peasant clean through the body with his bayonet. "Now, boys, at them again," shouted Doyle; and the peasants recklessly flung themselves on the squares. Meanwhile Grierson had come up with Ryan's party and was successfully attacking them. Urged by the magistrates to fire, he refused to do so, but, very reluctantly, charged the peasants with the bayonet. The peasants stoutly resisted. The magistrates again called upon Grierson to fire, and Grierson again refused. The magistrates then rushed in among the soldiers, and on their own responsibility shouted vigorously, "Fire, fire, fire." The soldiers fired one round, and with effect. The peasants, fighting and returning the fire of the soldiers with volley after volley of stones, retreated up the hill, falling farther and farther away from Doyle's party. That party, still struggling with the Highlanders, now beheld the defeat of Ryan, and saw Grierson's soldiers advancing upon themselves. Thus taken on the flank by the men of the 14th, while the Highlanders were pressing them home in front, the peasants



broke and fled, leaving Parson Gavin the victor of the day. The valuation was then triumphantly carried out, and the rector left the field, scarcely rejoicing—for blood had been shed,—but, doubtless, consoling himself with the reflection that he had only done his duty—done what the law empowered him to do. That 3163 Papists should be bayoneted and ball-cartridged into paying him tithes, in order that he might minister to the spiritual wants of one Protestant, did not, apparently, strike Parson Gavin as at all open to objection.

During the affray—in which the military took part with manifest unwillingness—many of the soldiers and police had been badly bruised and injured, but none killed. Of the peasants four were killed, and many seriously wounded. An inquest was subsequently held on the bodies of the peasants who had fallen, and a verdict of “justifiable homicide” returned.

The Ascendency press was jubilant over the result of the encounter at Wallstown. The law had been enforced, the rights of the clergy upheld, and a wholesome, though severe, lesson given to the peasantry. Thenceforth it was to be hoped that, convinced of the determination of the Executive to maintain order—to “show no mock lenity”<sup>3</sup> to public offenders—the peasantry would learn to obey the law, and agitators and demagogues would cease to denounce the established institutions of the land. As to the effect of the Wallstown affray upon the conduct of the “agitators and demagogues,” O’Connell did not allow the Ascendency party to remain long in doubt. In a trenchant letter to the “Reformers of England,” he denounced the proceedings of “Parson Gavin and his generals and admirals” as “illegal and monstrous,” and assailed the Established Church as a scandal and a disgrace. “I assert,” he said, “as a constitutional lawyer, that Parson Gavin was justified by no law in entering James Blake’s fields to survey or estimate the growing

<sup>3</sup> *The Age.*

crop. I say he and the magistrates were trespassers, and that James Blake was well within his right in resisting them. . . . But, Reformers of England, how long will you suffer the people of Ireland to be butchered in order that the overthrow of an iniquitous and a doomed system may be suspended."

The English press—Tory and Whig—was enraged at O'Connell's conduct in attempting to defend the action of the peasants at Wallstown. O'Connell must be put down," said the *Guardian*, "or he puts down the Government." "Public opinion in England," said the *Courier*, "backed by a large and powerful party in Ireland, will put the tyrant and demagogue to flight." "The reckless agitator," said the *Globe*, "must be effectually encountered, or the Government will assume the exterior of weakness." The *Standard* went farther. O'Connell was not only to be put down, but "Ireland must be made Protestant, essentially Protestant, or Ireland will be lost to England." How Ireland was to be made "essentially Protestant," according to Ascendency views, may be gathered from the following announcement, which appeared in the semi-official *Saunders' News Letter* in October: "Twelve thousand attachments for arrears of tithes—now the property of the Crown<sup>4</sup>—have been issued from the Crown Office; and it is the fixed intention of the Government to collect them at the point of the bayonet if necessary."

In October another collision between the police and the peasantry occurred. Captain Burke, inspector of police, with a party of men, was proceeding to post up tithe-notices (under the Composition Act) in the neighbourhood of Rathkeeran, County Waterford, when a mob of 200 peasants assembled and, as he thought, threatened to bar his progress. He called upon them to disperse. They refused to obey. He then pulled out his watch, and said, "I will give you ten minutes to disperse, and if you do not disperse at the end of that

<sup>4</sup> Under the 2 and 3 William IV. cap. 41.



time, I will fire on you." The peasants still refused, and persisted in following the police.

Having arrived at a certain point, Burke determined to make a stand. He moved his men into a field and drew them up near the entrance to a "boreen." The peasants flocked after him. With reference to the details of what then occurred, the accounts given by the police and peasants, respectively, differ. According to the former, the peasants took up a position in the field facing the police. Inspector Burke called upon them thrice to retire, and they thrice declined to do so. Burke then ordered his men to "prime and load." Scarcely was the order given when a young girl, named Catherine Foley, placed herself at the head of the peasants, and said, "Now, boys, is your time [before the police had finished loading, apparently]; attack them, and don't spare a man." The peasants immediately rushed forward, assailing the police with stones, sticks, and slanes. The police fired, and charged with the bayonet. A fierce struggle ensued, and was only terminated on the arrival of a detachment of the 70th Regiment to the support of the police, when the peasants retreated. According to the peasants' account, the police began hostilities, and wantonly fired on the people, who were at the time quietly assembled in the field, and whose object, in following the police, had been, not to attack them, but to make a peaceable demonstration against tithes. The undoubted facts of the case—whoever began hostilities, and whatever was the object of the peasants in following the police—are these. The police fired and killed twelve of the peasants, wounding many others. Catherine Foley was shot full in the face, a "musket-ball entering at the right side of the mouth, passing through the base of the skull, and penetrating the spine, causing instant death." <sup>6</sup> An inquest, presided

over by three coroners, was held on her body; twelve jurymen, whose "respectability" was vouched for by an Ascendency organ, the *Kilkenny Moderator*, were empanelled; they sat for twelve days, and finally found a verdict of "wilful murder" against Captain Burke. Captain Burke was committed to prison for three days. He was then released, and no further proceedings were taken against him. One other undoubted fact has to be related. The Protestant rector—the Rev. Francis Newport—was, owing to the popular fury excited against him after the "slaughter" of Rathkeeran—compelled to leave the parish.

The state of the country had now become desperate. Side by side, as it were, with the tithe war, the eternal land war was being waged. Landlords, agents, or bailiffs were habitually shot; tenants were terrorized, and merchants and traders appalled at the awful doings of the secret societies. Raids for arms were constantly made on the houses of the gentry, and parties of police were, not infrequently, attacked in the open day by bands of Whitefeet, Blackfeet, Terryalts, Rockites, or Molly Maguires, and put to flight. All law was held in abeyance; and the Executive was regarded with contempt, alike by the "disloyal" classes who set at nought its decrees, and by the "loyal" classes who looked in vain to see those decrees effectually enforced. The spirit of anarchy was almost wholly triumphant. The spirit of order was almost completely laid. In the midst of the confusion, tumult, and outrage incident to the tithe and land wars, came the general election of 1832 to intensify the popular excitement. O'Connell went to the country with the cry of "No tithes, and Repeal;" the Ascendency with the cry of "The Protestant Establishment in its integrity," and "The Union." In December the elections were over. 45 Repealers (who were also "Tithe Extinguishers"), 25 "Tithe Extinguishers" (who were Unionists), 12 Whigs (who were "Tithe Extinguishers" and Unionists), and 23 Ascendency



members were returned. Thus, the country had declared against tithes by a majority of 82 to 23, and for the Union by a majority of 60 to 45. In England, the elections were favourable to the Whigs, and the Government of Lord Grey remained in office.<sup>6</sup> That Government was constituted as follows:—

ENGLAND.

Earl Grey . . . .	First Lord of the Treasury.
Viscount Althorp . . . .	Chancellor, and Under-Treasurer of the Exchequer.
Lord Brougham . . . .	Lord High Chancellor.
Lord Durham . . . .	Lord Privy Seal.
Viscount Melbourne . . . .	Secretary of State for the Home Department.
Viscount Palmerston . . . .	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Viscount Goderich . . . .	Secretary of State for the Colonial Department.
Rt. Hon. Sir James Graham . . . .	First Lord of the Admiralty.
Lord Auckland . . . .	Master of the Mint.
Rt. Hon. Charles Grant . . . .	President of the Board of Control.
Duke of Richmond . . . .	Postmaster-General.
Lord Holland . . . .	Chancellor of the Duchy.
Lord John Russell . . . .	Paymaster of the Forces.

*Out of the Cabinet.*

Rt. Hon. Sir J. Hobhouse . . . .	Secretary at War.
Sir James Kempt . . . .	Master-General of Ordnance.
Duke of Devonshire . . . .	Lord Chamberlain.
Marquess of Wellesley . . . .	Lord Steward.
Earl of Albemarle . . . .	Master of Horse.
Marquis of Winchester . . . .	Groom of the Stole.
Viscount Duncannon . . . .	First Commissioner of Land Revenue.
Rt. Hon. Chas. P. Thomson . . . .	Treasurer of the Navy and Vice-President of the Board of Trade.
Sir William Horne . . . .	Attorney-General.
Sir John Campbell . . . .	Solicitor-General.

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<sup>6</sup> The elections in England and Wales resulted in the return of 394 Reformers, and 110 Tories; in Scotland, of 44 Reformers and 9 Tories.

## IRELAND.

The Marquess of Anglesey	.	Lord Lieutenant.
The Hon. E. G. Stanley	.	Chief Secretary
Lord Plunket	.	Lord High Chancellor.
Lieut.-Gen. Sir. R. H. Vivian	.	Commander of the Forces
Rt. Hon. James Blackburn	.	Attorney-General.
Philip Crampton	.	Solicitor-General.



## CHAPTER III.

STANLEY SHOWS HIS HAND AND COBBETT SPEAKS OUT.

PARLIAMENT met on the 29th of January, 1833. The question of the hour was Ireland. How were the terrible disturbances in that country to be put down? every one asked. By redress, said O'Connell; by coercion, said the Ministers. On the 5th of February the Speech from the throne was delivered by the king in person. It stated that the disturbances in Ireland had greatly increased since the close of last session; that "a spirit of insubordination and violence, rendering life and property insecure, defying the authority of the law, and threatening the most fatal consequences if not promptly and effectually repressed," prevailed.

To quell this "spirit," his Majesty appealed to Parliament to "adopt such measures of salutary precautions, and to entrust to me such additional powers as may be found necessary for controlling and punishing the disturbers of the public peace." Referring to the question of Repeal, the speech declared that the Legislative Union between the two countries should "be maintained by all the measures in my power, as indissolubly connected with the peace, security, and welfare of my people;" and respecting the subject of the Church, "a measure by which, upon the principle of a just commutation, the possessors of land may be enabled to free themselves from the burthen of an annual payment," was promised.

The address was moved in the Lords by the Marquess of Conyngham, and seconded by Lord Kinnaird, and adopted after a short and dull debate, in which a good deal was said about foreign affairs and very little about Ireland. In the Commons, there was a protracted, and stormy discussion, in which Ireland formed the one topic of discourse. O'Connell moved, as an amendment to the address, for a committee of the whole House to consider the king's speech. In a powerful and violent oration, he stigmatized the speech as "bloody and brutal," and denounced Stanley as the evil genius of the Government. Was it not shameful, he said, that the first message sent by the first Reformed Parliament to Ireland should be one, not of conciliation, but of coercion; not of peace, but of war? It was clear to him that the grievances of the people were not to be removed; that their constitutional expressions of discontent were to be stifled. The principle of Ascendency was manifestly to be maintained, the policy of excluding Irish Catholics from all positions of power in their own country to be perpetuated. Four years had elapsed since the passing of the Catholic Relief Act, but no change had as yet taken place in the system of English government in Ireland. The policy of the Castle still was no Papist need apply. There was not a single Catholic judge or stipendiary magistrate in the country. The thirty-two sub-inspectors of police were all Protestant, so were the five inspectors-general. All the high sheriffs, with a single exception were Protestant; the vast majority of the unpaid magistrates and of the grand jurors were Protestant also. Did the Government expect that the Irish people could be coerced into law or order as long as Catholic Emancipation was permitted to remain a dead letter — as long as practical justice was denied then. He had warned the Government last year that their first instalment of coercion would fail, and it had failed. He now warned them again that no measures of coercion, however



stringent, would be effectual in putting down agitation, and restoring peace, until the popular grievances were redressed; and foremost amongst those grievances at the moment was the subject of the Established Church. He called upon the Chief Secretary to rise in his place and state distinctly whether that Church "was to be cut down or not." That was the question to which the Irish people wanted a clear and definite answer.

The Chief Secretary contemptuously declined to say whether the Irish Church was "to be cut down or not." It was idle, he said, to talk of measures of concession until the disturbances which disgraced the country, and for which the hon. member for Dublin (O'Connell) had, by his violent courses, so largely rendered himself responsible, were put down. To demand the redress of Irish grievances whilst the spirit of rebellion in Ireland remained unquelled, was to ask Parliament "not to deliberate, but to crouch before dangers which were threatened." Respect for the law should first be established, attachment to the Government first secured; then it would be fitting to consider the question of grievances. How was this respect and attachment to be gained? By force. "A Government to be loved must be feared."

Stanley's speech, and, perhaps, more than the speech, Stanley's manner, seems to have much exasperated the Irish members, and even to have excited the disapproval of some of the English representatives. Colonel Davies, member for Worcester, declared that "the right hon. gentleman's speech was in every sense an insult to the people of Ireland, and proved, in every phrase, how totally unfit he was for an office which afforded so many opportunities of endangering the peace of the empire. Enshrined in a fancied aristocratic superiority of birth and station, the right hon. gentleman seemed to think it was quite beneath his lofty reputation to hold out the olive branch to Ireland." Mr. Roebuck said that "the right hon. gentleman seemed to play with

men as if they were so many puppets, and not human beings like himself, of strong feelings, passions, and high emotions." What was his sole remedy for the disordered condition of Ireland? The abrogation of trial by jury and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. "I would recommend a far different policy to the right hon. gentleman—one, too, which, evidently, has never entered into his head, though, forsooth, a member of a Liberal administration. I would recommend him to treat Ireland honestly. Yes, for the first time try the effects of those exploded virtues, honesty and justice. Legislate for Ireland as if its inhabitants were rational beings; address them—if indeed the right hon. gentleman knew how—by an appeal to their understanding. Attempt not to redress their grievances by force, when excision is the obvious and fitting remedy." Mr. Lytton Bulwer followed in the same line. Stanley, he said, was ruining the Government. His remedy for Irish disorder was the remedy which the Tories had proposed for English disorder during the Reform agitation—"force." But Irish disorder could not be put down by force, and if the Chief Secretary wished to know the reason why, let him ask the member for Leeds [Macaulay]. When it was proposed to put down the Reform agitation by force, the hon. member for Leeds declared that force would not suffice for the purpose; "because," he said, "you cannot govern a gallant nation by the laws of quarter sessions; because it is in vain, though you have the law on your side, if you have the people against you; because there is only one power that makes the law strong, and that is the consent, the public opinion of the people for whom the law is made." Lytton's quotation from his speech "drew" Macaulay, who, however, without dwelling much upon the question of coercion or redress, contented himself with delivering a telling harangue against the Repeal of the Union.

Stanley, and the Irish Government were defended by Althorp in a feeble, and by Peel in a forcible



speech. Peel said that from the condition of things in Ireland, the necessity of coercive measures seemed manifest, though he always dreaded such measures, for he feared that, while their effect for good could only be temporary, they "would leave behind a rankling wound of which the soreness would long be felt." He had always been in favour of "trying the ordinary law" in preference to coercion. He had always said "there is great evil in coercive measures; you cannot rely on them for any permanent good, but there is great risk that they will relax the energy of the ordinary law, and that they will widen the breach between the richer classes, for whose protection, and the poorer classes, for whose punishment, they appear to be intended." Nevertheless, he would vote for a Coercion Act for Ireland, because it seemed to be "imperiously required" by the "emergencies of the State." The discussion having now lasted three nights, Peel suggested that the time had come for bringing it to a close. O'Connell shouted vigorously, "No, no." Mr. Ruthven, O'Connell's colleague in the representation of Dublin, then moved the "adjournment of the debate." The Government opposed the motion, which was rejected by a majority of 301 to 65.

The Irish members then moved "the adjournment of the House," which was also opposed by the Government, and negatived without a division. Finally, the Government consented to an adjournment of the debate. On the fourth night, February the 8th, the debate was brought to a close. O'Connell's amendment was rejected by a majority of 428 to 40.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The forty members who supported O'Connell were:—

England (5)—Attwood, T. (Birmingham), Cobbett (Oldham), Faithful, G. (Brighton), Fielden, J. (Oldham), Kennedy, James (Tiverton).

Scotland (2)—Kinloch, G. (Dundee), Wallace, R. (Greenock).

Ireland (34, including tellers)—Baldwin, Dr. (Cork City), Barron, H. W. (Waterford), Butler, Hon. P. (Kilkenny), Chapman, M. L. (Westmeath), Finn, W. J. (Kilkenny), Fitzsimon, N. (King's County), Fitzgerald, T. (Louth), Grattan, H. (Meath), Keane, Sir R. (Waterford), Lalor, P. (Queen's County), Lynch, A. H. (Galway),

An amendment of the Right Hon. Charles Tennyson (member for Lambeth) to the effect, that an inquiry into the causes of discontent in Ireland was necessary; and that Parliament should be left free to consider the question of the legislative union between the two countries, was then put and rejected by a majority of 393 to 60.<sup>2</sup>

On the 11th of February the report was brought up, when Mr. Longdale, a Catholic, and member for Beverley, took the opportunity of stating, in reference to an observation made by Dr. Lushington, member for the Tower Hamlets, that he, as a Catholic, did not consider himself precluded by his oath from voting against the Irish Church Establishment. Mr. Ward, member for St. Alban's and another English Catholic, spoke to the same effect. Hume called upon the Government to state their views on the subject, and Althorp, speaking for the Government, declined emphatically to do anything of the kind. O'Connell then

MacLaughlin, L. (Galway), Nagle, Sir R. (Westmeath), O'Brien (Clare), O'Connell, Maurice (Tralee), O'Connell, John (Youghal), O'Connell, Morgan (Meath), O'Connor, Fergus (Cork Co.), O'Dwyer, A. C. (Drogheda), Roche, W. (Limerick), Riche, David (Limerick), Roe, R. (Cashel), Rorke, J. H., Ruthven, E. (Kildare), Sheil (Tipperary), Sullivan, R. (Kilkenny), Talbot, J. H. (New Ross), Walker, C. (Wexford), Wallace, T. (Carlow Co.), White, L. (Longford Co.), Vigors, N. A. (Carlow). Tellers—O'Connell, D., Ruthven, G. S.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Tennyson's amendment was supported by all the members who voted for O'Connell's amendment, and by the following additional members:—

England (13)—Beauclerk (Surrey), Brotherton (Salford), Butler (New Shoreham), Fryer (Wolverhampton), Gaskell (Wakefield), Grote (London), Harvey (Colchester), Humphry (Southwark), Hutt (Hull), Lloyd (Stockport), Molesworth, Sir W. (Cornwall), Palmer, General Philips (Manchester), Potter (Wigan), Roebuck (Bath), Warburton (Bridport).

Ireland (2).—French (Roscommon), O'Reilly (Dundalk).

Tellers—Bulwer, L. (Lincoln), Tennyson (Lambeth).

It will be observed that out of 82 Irish popular representatives, made up practically of Repealers and Whigs, but 35 (nearly all Repealers) followed the popular leader in these divisions. For Debate on the Address and the divisions, see Hansard, Third Series, vol. xv. pp. 90, 462.



rose, and having explained the meaning of the oath to be that Catholics, like Protestants, were bound to support the Church as long as "it was law," but were not precluded from endeavouring to alter the law, plunged into the question of Repeal, delivering a long and vigorous speech upon the subject. Spring Rice replied in a speech equally long, but not equally vigorous. After the delivery of speeches by Cobbett (who inveighed against the evils of Irish absenteeism and the abuses of the Irish Church), by John Browne (Whig member for Mayo, who supported the Government), and by Morgan O'Connell, and John O'Connell, the Speaker was about to put the question that the report "be brought up and read," when Henry Grattan (Repealer) rose and said that he had to move an amendment which he had "forgotten moving earlier in the evening." The Speaker said, "The time is not yet arrived. If you were formerly too late, you are now too soon. It will be necessary for you to wait until you come to some words of the report you object to." At this juncture Cobbett flung himself again into the arena. "I rise," he said, "to move an amendment." "Perhaps," said the Speaker, "the hon. member will state what part of the report he means to move should be omitted." "I object," answered Cobbett, "to every tittle of it after the words, 'Most Gracious Majesty.'" The Speaker, clearly suspecting that the Repealers, and their English friends were bent on pure obstruction, had bowled Henry Grattan over very easily. But he scarcely attempted to bowl over the editor of the *Register*. That, Manners Sutton, doubtless, considered, would be a work quite in excess of his capabilities, as in truth it was. Cobbett, having occupied about three-quarters of an hour in introductory observations of a diffusive and not altogether relevant character, the House grew very impatient, and exhibited marked symptoms of dissatisfaction and annoyance. Several members on the Ministerial benches called "Question, question," and a general determina-

tion to put down the member for Oldham was evinced. But the member for Oldham was not to be put down. The more he was interrupted, the more he warmed to his work; the stronger the resolution shown to crush him, the higher his indomitable and rebellious spirit rose. "I appeal to you, sir," he said, addressing the chair, when his voice could scarcely be heard amid the din of confusion and tumult which greeted his utterances; "I appeal to you if I have not a right to be heard; please to be so good as to keep order." This sentence was received with a burst of ironical laughter. When order was for a moment restored, Cobbett faced his assailants, and, according to his wont, placing his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets, and looking like an irremovable statue, said, with calmness and deliberation, "You'll not silence me; that I'll assure you. You may rely on it, if you do not hear me I shall move the adjournment of the House. I was quite prepared for this, and I am not to be put down. The people, I say, expected that some measures would be proposed by Ministers for their relief; instead of which Ministers ask for the power of throwing the people into dungeons." This outburst produced a scene of the greatest excitement and confusion, and the House once more tried to shout Cobbett down. But Cobbett was irrepressible. "If I be not heard," he reiterated, "I shall move an adjournment. I will not spare you one word. You shall hear every word I have to say." Cobbett then produced his "amendment," which was a composition as long as the king's speech itself, and which expressed the regret of Parliament that his Majesty had not been advised to adopt a policy of concession instead of coercion for Ireland; and that some measures for relieving the burthens of the English people had not been announced. This amendment Cobbett now went on to support in a speech as slashing as one of his own articles in the *Register*, and in the course of which he made the following singularly felicitious attack upon the Irish



Chancellor of the day, Lord Plunket. The Government, he said, were determined to put down O'Connell, because the Irish leader had denounced the Union. But what had a great living Irish Constitutional lawyer said on this subject, and what was done to him? He then quoted from Plunket's famous Anti-Union speech the well-known sentence, "For my part, I will resist the Union to the last gasp of my existence—to the last drop of my blood—and when I feel the hour of my dissolution approaching, I will, like the father of Hannibal, take my children to the altar, and swear them to eternal hostility against the invaders of their country's freedom."

Now [continued Cobbett], where is the man who held this language? Is he in England, or is he in Ireland? Is he in the ranks of the Ministerialists opposite, or is he in the ranks of the Repealers around me? He is in Ireland. But what is he there? Lord Chancellor! Yes, this old Hannibal (Hannibal, indeed!) is actually Lord Chancellor of Ireland. . . . Well, but what has become of the young Hannibals? I should like, if anybody can tell me, to know if they have been sworn. I have them all in a paper before me, every Hannibal of them. Here they are; [reading from the paper], first comes—

Lord Plunket, as Lord Chancellor of Ireland,  
with a yearly income of . . . . . £8,000

Then come his sons:—

The Hon. and Rev. Thomas Plunket, as Dean of  
Down, in the gift of the Crown, consisting of a  
union of six parishes, the tithes and glebe of  
which amounted in 1831 to . . . . . £2,863

There is a capacious soul for you! There is a shepherd for you! Nothing less than six flocks could content him.

The Hon. John Plunket, as Assistant Bar-  
rister of the County of Meath . . . . . £600

As Crown Prosecutor on the Munster Cir-  
cuit . . . . . 800

As Counsel for the police . . . . . 300

— £1,700

For this gentleman, business will be made out of the coercive measures. Next comes—

The Hon. David Plunket, as Prothonotary of the  
Court of Common Pleas, and examiner . . . . . £1,500

besides his patronage not brought into calculation, and which is as follows—

Three clerks at 500 <i>l.</i>	£1,500
Two assistants at 500 <i>l.</i>	1,000
One other assistant	200
One clerk of pleadings	400
Other clerks	1,000
	———— £4,100

The Hon. Patrick Plunket, as Secretary to the Bankrupt Commission	£900
As Purse-bearer to the Chancellor	800
As Counsel to the Chief Remembrancer	300
As Crown Prosecutor on the Leinster Circuit	900
	———— £2,900

The Hon. William Plunket, incumbent of the living of Bray, Co. Wicklow, with a house and 24 acres of land, the tithes of which amount to . . . £470

The Hon. Robert Plunket, a living in England, value unascertained.

So the Hannibals are coming here to practise their peculiar kind of warfare “against the invaders of their country’s freedom.” I next come to the nephews of old Hannibal, the father of these half-Hannibals. The first on the list—

W. McCausland, Secretary to the Chancellor (appointed to this situation when under 20 years of age)	£2,000
James McCausland, as Secretary to the funds of Erasmus Smith’s schools	£500
As Solicitor to the Hibernian schools	100
As Solicitor to the Benchers of the King’s Inn	200
As one of the law-agents of Charitable Donations	500
	———— £1,300

Then come Hannibal’s brothers-in-law—

The Rev. Oliver McCausland, rector of Tanlaght-pinlagan, Co. Derry, with a house and glebe of 191 acres, and tithes amounting, as under the composition, to . . . £1,000

William McCausland, as law-agent to the Board of Charitable Donations. . . . £500

Here are no less than ten distinct Hannibals, all of whom were to go to the altar to swear eternal hostility to that very measure for desiring to repeal which the hon. and learned



member for Dublin is characterized as a traitor—who divide amongst themselves 22,233*l.* of the public money. I think [summed up the editor of the *Register*] I have exhibited to the House a pretty piece of apostasy. But there is more in this matter than apostasy. There is persecution. Apostates are always persecutors. Men become apostates for the sake of plunder, and turn persecutors because they know they cannot keep the plunder unless they destroy those with whom they had been accustomed to co-operate, and whose resentment they are fully aware they have excited by their perfidy.”

As soon as the excitement produced by this burst of Cobbett had subsided, Mr. Fielden, member for Oldham, rose to second the amendment. Attwood followed Fielden, and expressed his determination to vote neither for the amendment, which he considered unpractical, nor for the address, of which he disapproved. “I am no friend to the Repeal of the Union,” he said, “but if I find that this House wants either the power or the will to apply efficient remedies to the evils which afflict Ireland, then I shall declare myself a Repealer.”

After a few observations from Hume, who, speaking amidst cries of “Divide,” condemned the Irish policy of the Government; the House divided on Cobbett’s amendment, which was rejected by a majority of 323 to 23. Finally, Attwood proposed an amendment to the effect that coercive measures should not be introduced until remedial legislation had first been tried, and had proved ineffectual for the pacification of the country. This amendment was negatived without a division, whereupon the report on the address was agreed to.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For Debate on Report to the Address, see Hansard, Third Series, vol. xv. pp. 476—550.

## CHAPTER IV.

## COERCION AND REDRESS.

ON the 12th of February, 1833, Lord Althorp, in the Commons, introduced a bill to reform the Church, and on the 15th of the same month, Earl Grey, in the Lords, introduced another bill to coerce the country. Lord Althorp's measure, in its main features, proposed: (1) the imposition of a tax on all benefices worth over 200*l.* a year; (2) the application of the proceeds of such tax, estimated at 609,000*l.*, to the purposes to which the proceeds of the Church cess were devoted;<sup>1</sup> (3) the abolition of the Church cess; (4) the reduction of the archbishoprics from four to two, and of the bishoprics from twenty-two to twelve; and (5) the appropriation of the amount saved by the reduction of the archbishoprics and bishoprics (estimated at 60,000*l.*) to secular or State purposes. O'Connell welcomed this measure as a step in the right direction. It did not, he said, go far enough, or nearly far enough. The subject of tithes, out of which much of the disturbances in Ireland had sprung, was left untouched, and the question of Disestablishment, which was practically *the* question in contention, was not approached at all. Nevertheless, the abolition of the Church cess would be a substantial boon; and the proposal to appropriate the amount saved by the reduction of the bishoprics to State purposes, recog-

<sup>1</sup> Ante, p. 375.



nized a principle which gave backbone to the bill. The Ascendency members, on the other hand, were strongly opposed to the measure. It did not seem to them that the Church needed any reform. Church cess<sup>2</sup> was a perfectly just tax. Twenty bishops were not too much for the needs of the Establishment; while the proposal to appropriate the amount saved by the extinction of one half their numbers, was an act of spoliation and sacrilege—a violation of the coronation oath. This proposal, in fact, which gave O'Connell most pleasure, gave the Ascendency party most pain. Leave, however, was given, without a division, for the introduction of the bill.<sup>3</sup>

On the 15th of February, as I have already said, Earl Grey introduced a coercion bill in the Lords. The measure substantially invested the Lord-Lieutenant with absolute powers in the government of Ireland, and established martial law. On the mere motion of his Excellency, public meetings could be suppressed, districts declared disturbed; the curfew law put in operation, and offenders tried by military tribunals. The force of coercion could scarcely farther go. Nevertheless, the bill passed through the Lords—as, it is but fair to their lordships to say, only coercion bills pass through their lordships' House—with reckless, and indecent haste. It was introduced on Friday, the 15th of February, read a second time on Monday, the 18th, committed on Tuesday, the 19th, reported on Thursday, the 21st, and on Friday, the 22nd, read a third time, and passed. But two remonstrating voices were raised during the very perfunctory discussion to which the bill was subjected,—the voice of Lord Cloncurry, who “earnestly recommended its postponement until remedial measures had first been tried,”<sup>4</sup> and the voice of Lord Teynham, who de-

<sup>2</sup> Ante, p. 375.

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xv. pp. 562 *et seq.*, and 874.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 755.

nounced it as "a violent and dangerous infringement of the liberties of the Irish people."<sup>5</sup>

A different reception awaited the bill in the Commons, where O'Connell had resolved to offer it an uncompromising opposition. On the 18th of February, while the measure was still in the Lords, the Irish leader, availing himself of the opportunity afforded by a motion for supply, raised a debate upon the whole question of the grievances and government of Ireland. He was ably supported by Sheil and Hume. Sheil read, with effect, extracts from speeches against coercion delivered by Lord Brougham, and Lord John Russell, in 1822 and 1824. Hume attacked the Government with vigour, and said that, if Ministers were faithful to true Liberal principles, they would drop the Coercion Bill, and at once disestablish the Church. Stanley said the Coercion Bill would not be dropped, and expressed the determination of the Government both to reform the Church, and put down the disturbances.

At the sitting of the House on Wednesday the 27th, another skirmish occurred between the Irish members and the Ministerialists. When it was over, Lord Althorp rose to introduce the coercion bill, and then the real fight began. We have seen that the bill passed through the Lords in six nights. In the Commons six nights were occupied on the motion for leave to bring it in; the debate on the second reading lasted two nights, and six nights were taken up in the discussions in committee.

Lord Althorp introduced the bill in a tame and ineffective speech. He showed that Ireland was in a state of disturbance. But he failed altogether to satisfy the House that the disturbances were of such a nature as to justify the extreme measures proposed by the Government. Mr. Tennyson moved, as an amendment, the postponement of the bill for a

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Third series, vol. xv., p. 932.



fortnight to afford time for further inquiry, as, he said, Lord Althorp had made out no case for coercion. The House evinced a disposition to agree with Mr. Tennyson, and to support the amendment, when Stanley rose, and, in a speech of great eloquence and power, incontestably demonstrated, by the recital of deeds of bloodshed and violence which "made the blood run cold,"<sup>6</sup> the existence, to an inordinate and a terrible extent, of disaffection and anarchy in Ireland. Having detailed the murders, the burnings, the mutilations, the houghing of cattle, and all the frightful incidents of Irish agrarian warfare; having, in brief, completely proved the utter break-down of the law, the Chief Secretary turned on O'Connell and his followers, and charged them with practical complicity in the doings of the Irish anarchists and rebels. Forsooth, he said, the honourable member for Dublin represented himself as a lover of order, as one desirous of pacifying the country. How had he tried to maintain order? how to pacify the country? By recommending a run on the bank for gold? By sending Mr. Tom Steele to stir up the Whitefeet and Terryalts in Clare? Oh, no! He had not advised a run for gold: quite the contrary. For had he not written, "Let me implore of you not to injure commercial credit by calling for a run on the bank for gold"? Why, that was excellent advice. But the marvel was, why such advice should be given at all. Perhaps, the next sentence in the honourable member's letter would explain; "that run will take place of itself to the last bank-note, if the atrocious Algerine code be enacted." The honourable member spoke in the spirit of prophecy, not, as it might be supposed in the vein of suggestion. Neither had the honourable member sent Mr. Steele to Clare to encourage the Whitefeet and Terryalts in their lawless courses. Quite the reverse; for, had he not dubbed his faithful lieutenant the "head pacificator of Ireland," and

<sup>6</sup> Peel.

were not the speeches of the "head pacificator" most mollifying in their tendency. Let the House hearken unto Mr. Steele's own account of what he said to the people of Clare. "I told the men of Clare," said Mr. Steele, "that if . . . a crisis were to arrive in consequence of any atrocious act of the Government, . . . and that O'Connell should command us to have recourse to arms, and blood, and convulsion, instead of our usual constitutional warfare, . . . I would not order the Clare men to go into Cratloe Wood to cut down trees for pike-handles, but that I would first send them to cut down the trees in my own domain of Lough O'Connell, and that I would, of course, not be idle, nor a mere looker-on, in the conflict." That was the way in which Mr. Steele set to work to "pacify" Clare. But let the House hearken unto Mr. Steele again. Speaking of the Government, this "pacificator" said, "Grey is an atrocious tyrant, Brougham is the most tyrannical of the whole set. The people foolishly think a good deal of the king, but I think no more of William IV. than of a man in a tripe shop." Pacifying and elegant! But one more extract of Mr. Steele's account of himself in Clare. "I asked the people," he said, "if O'Connell ordered them, would they take Steele for their leader, and they all shouted out, 'We would follow you through the gates of hell.'" This was the style in which Mr. Steele endeavoured to put down the rebels in Clare. Such was the man whom the great Agitator had despatched to uphold the reign of law and order in one part of the country, while he himself in another was denouncing the House of Commons as "658 scoundrels," and attacking the representatives of Ireland in that House who refused to vote at his bidding.

In conclusion, Stanley said that the curse of Ireland was agitation and demagogism, and declared that until the agitators and demagogues were suppressed, there would be no security for law and order, life and property, in the country.



On Thursday, the 28th, Sheil replied to Stanley, seeking in vain to minimize the number of outrages, and the extent to which disorder prevailed; but pointing out with effect that the most peaceable counties (on the admission of Stanley himself) were Galway, Limerick, Kerry, and Clare—"the O'Connell country"—while the most disturbed were Carlow, Kilkenny and Queen's County, where O'Connell's influence was not so largely felt. Macaulay answered Sheil, saying that he was induced to vote for the bill in consequence of the violent speeches of O'Connell, and, that of the two evils—the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and the maintenance of disorder in Ireland—he considered the first evil preferable to the second. Henry Lytton Bulwer having, at an advanced hour, moved the adjournment of the debate, Lord Althorp, appealing to O'Connell, suggested that the "first reading might be concluded to-morrow." O'Connell replied that he would make no promises, and he would submit to no dictation.

On the morrow the debate proceeded. The event of the night was an eloquent, though unsatisfactory and inconclusive speech by Peel in favour of the bill. The Conservative leader commenced by saying that "coercion was no cure;" and he then went on to defend the clergy, and censure the landlords, but never for a moment paused to suggest what might be a "cure" for Irish disorder. Mr. Ruthven moved the adjournment of the debate. Lord Althorp protested against the motion, suggesting that it was made for purposes of obstruction, not discussion. The motion was, however, pressed to a division, and rejected by a majority of 466 to 66.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The minority were:—Attwood, Baldwin (Cork), Baillie (Bristol), Barron, Bayntun (York), Beauclerk (Surrey), Bellew (Louth), Blackney (Carlow Co.), Buckingham (Sheffield), Edward Lytton Bulwer, Henry Lytton Bulwer, Pierce Butler, O'Neil Daunt, Faithful (Brighton), Fancourt (Barnstaple), Fielden (Blackburn), Finn, Fitzgerald, C. Fitzsimon, N. Fitzsimon, French, Grattan, Grote (London), Gully (Pontefract), Harvey (Colchester), Humphrey



The debate was then resumed by Mr. Lloyd (Stockport), who spoke against the bill, amid much interruption and tumult. Finding that the House was resolved not to hear Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Baldwin moved the adjournment of the debate; Maurice O'Connell seconded the motion, which was finally agreed to.

On Monday, March 4th, the debate was continued amid some scenes of liveliness and excitement, created chiefly by the English opponents of the bill. At 11.30 p.m., Mr. Buckingham, one of those English opponents, rose to address the House, but could not obtain what he considered a satisfactory hearing, whereupon he at once moved the adjournment of the debate. Lord Althorp protested against such a motion being made at half-past eleven o'clock, and O'Connell advised Mr. Buckingham to withdraw the motion for the present, saying that, if the House did not hear him, he could make it again. The motion was accordingly withdrawn, and Mr. Buckingham concluded his speech without further interruption.

Early on Tuesday morning the debate was once more adjourned on the motion of Attwood. On Tuesday evening it was resumed, when O'Connell delivered a strong speech against the bill. It was, he said, the "assassination of the Constitution," "the great triumph of the Tories over the Whigs." It would, however, fail in suppressing the disturbances.

(Southwark), Ingilby (Lincolnshire), James (Carlisle), Kinloch (Dundee), Lalor, Langton (Somersetshire), Lynch, MacLaughlan (Galway), Major Macnamara, Sir William Molesworth (Cornwall), Sir R. Nagle (Westmeath), O'Connell, Maurice O'Connell, John O'Connell, Morgan O'Connell, O'Connor Don, O'Dwyer, O'Ferrall, O'Reilly, Philips (Manchester), David Roche, W. Roche, John Roe, Roebuck, Ronayne, Rorke, E. Ruthven, Scholefield (Birmingham), Sheil, Lieut.-Col. Stawell (Kinsale), Sullivan, Tennyson, Col. Torrens (Ballon), C. K. Tynte (Bridgewater), C. J. Tynte (Somersetshire), Vigors (Carlow), Wallace (Greenock), Warburton (Bridport), Col. Williams (Ashton). Tellers—Hume, E. Ruthven.

Thus the minority (exclusive of tellers) was composed of 35 Irish members, 27 English members, and 2 Scotch members. Of the tellers, 1 was English, 1 Irish.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xvi. p. 100.



X It would succeed only in exasperating the people. The resistance to tithes would be continued while the slightest attempt was made to collect them. White-footism would not be put down while the unjust powers of landlordism remained unrestrained. Let tithes be abolished, let rack-renting be prevented, and order would prevail in Ireland. But it was idle for him to attempt to advise the Government. "If I advise you, it will be said I threaten; if I prophesy, I shall be taunted with provoking what I prophesy. Such is the miserable condition I am in, that I cannot tell you of your danger without having it said that I am creating that danger. I abandon giving you advice. I know what is its value; but I avoid giving it. . . . You ask us to trample upon the Constitution, but you give us no proof that by so doing tranquillity will be restored to the country. . . . I tell you that tranquillity will not be restored to the country until you do us justice. . . . There was a time when a ray of hope dawned upon Ireland. It was when the present Parliament first assembled. We saw this Reformed House of Commons congregate. We knew that every man here had a constituency; we knew that the people of England were represented here; we knew that the public voice not only would influence your decision, but would command your votes; we believed that you would afford us redress of our grievances—and you give us an act of despotism." But the ablest, the most far-seeing, the most statesmanlike speech delivered during the whole discussion was made by Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer. It, above all the other speeches, possesses a living interest yet. Its notes of warning, its prudent suggestions, its sagacious counsels, have their uses still. He would not, he said, dispute the statement of the Chief Secretary as to the prevalence of disorder and anarchy in Ireland. The question was how that disorder and anarchy were to be put down. The Government said by coercion tempered by concession. He said by con-

cession, and concession only. It was admitted that the grievances of her people were mainly the cause of disorder in Ireland; and yet the Government, instead of striking directly and promptly at the root of the disease, by instantly removing those grievances, were simply attempting to deal with the symptoms by suppressing the agitation and tumults which justly sprang from the popular discontents. Others might oppose the bill because it was "tyrannical and oppressive." He would oppose it solely on the ground of its inefficacy and mischievousness. It was a remedy worse than the disease It was proposed to "pacify Ireland by domiciliary visits, court-martials, by ——. Oh, rare pacification! The right honourable gentleman has not been to Ireland in vain. He has learnt at least the science of practical bulls; he would pacify a country by maddening its people." Referring to the argument that "innocent" persons would not be affected by the Act, Sir Edward said, "If you suspend the Constitution, you suspend it for all alike; you make no exception from the dread ban of general excommunication. You subject the innocent and the guilty alike to spies and informers; to the arbitrary perils of suspicion; to those dark uncertainties of terror in which every man stands in fear of his neighbour. You give temptation to the accusation of private revenge; you give a field to all the mercenary, all the malignant, all the individual motives which are ever brought into operation by the suspension of law and the insecurity of political freedom. . . . When this law was in force before, men turned it to the most fearful purposes. It was not the peasant who was invaded in his own person; he was outraged in that of his sister or his wife.<sup>s</sup> It was a law that benefitted, not the trembling landlord, but the daring violator; it had operated, not in behalf of the

<sup>s</sup> O'Connell mentioned a case in which a brother had been arrested in order that his sister might be more completely placed at the mercy of a seducer.



security of property, but against rights still more sacred than even property itself. It was in the recollection of this state of things, that the Chief Justice of Ireland had said, that he remembered the date of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, and the still more summary court-martial, and that no description could convey any adequate notion of the horrors that then existed. And by whom is it decreed that these horrors, of which no description can convey an adequate notion, are to be renewed? By the most liberal and enlightened Ministry that, with respect to the affairs of England, this empire has ever known, by the very men who, in times of greater danger—times not of peace but of war, not of outrages but rebellion—stood foremost against the enactment of those very laws they now call upon us to pass. We take the time for exercising new coercions at the very moment when by our new experiment of conciliation we have veritably declared that seven centuries of coercion have been unavailing. . . . I am sure that no people on the face of the earth can be governed by the system his Majesty's ministers propose. To-day coercion—to-morrow concession. This quick alternation of kicks and kindness—this coaxing with the hand and spurring with the heel—this system—at once feeble and exasperating—of allowing the justice of complaint, and yet stifling its voice—of holding out hopes and fears, terror and conciliation, all in a breath—is a system that renders animals and human beings alike, not tame but savage, is a system that would make the most credulous people distrustful, and the mildest people ferocious. . . . But you flatter yourselves that under shelter of those laws you will be able with effect to apply your remedial measures; it is just the reverse; they will blight all your remedies, and throw their withering shadow over all your concessions. I do not fear an open rebellion against the armed force and discipline of England; but if you madden the people, it is impossible to cal-

culate the strength of insanity. Indeed, I think that an open rebellion is the least evil to be feared. I fear more, a sullen, bitter, unforgiving recollection, which will distrust all our kindness and misinterpret all our intentions; which will take all grace from our gifts; which will ripen a partial into a general desire for a separate legislature, by a settled conviction of the injustice of this, so that at last the English people themselves, worn out with unavailing experiments, wearied with an expensive and thankless charge, and dissatisfied with a companionship which gives them nothing but the contagion of its own diseases, will be the first to ask for that very dismemberment of the empire which we are now attempting to prevent."

Sir Edward concluded his impressive address by quoting an equally impressive extract from Lord Brougham's speech on the second reading of the Reform Bill. Replying to some observations which had been directed against the political associations of the time, Lord Brougham said,—

Those portentous appearances, the growth of later times—those figures that stalk abroad, of unknown statures and strange forms—unions and leagues, and musterings of men in myriads, and conspiracies against the Exchequer—whence do they spring, and how come they to haunt our shores? What power engendered those uncouth shapes—what multiplied the monstrous births till they people the land? Trust me, the same power which called into frightful existence, and armed with resistless force, the Irish Volunteers of 1782; the same power which rent in twain your empire, and conjured up thirteen republics—the same power which created the Catholic association, and gave it Ireland for a portion. What power is that? Justice denied—rights withheld—trial by jury disallowed—wrongs perpetrated—yea, domiciliary visits—the force which common injuries lend to millions. 'This it is that has conjured up the strange sights at which we now stand aghast! And shall we persist in the fatal error of combating the giant progeny, instead of extirpating the execrable parent. Good God, will men never learn wisdom by their own experience? Nor can you expect to gather in any other crop than they did who went before you, if you



persevere in their utterly abominable husbandry of sowing injustice, and reaping rebellion.

Much has been said on the subject of coercion both before and since this speech of Lord Lytton's was delivered; but I doubt if the case against that policy has ever been more ably stated. It was certainly not more ably stated by any of the speakers who opposed the Coercion Bill of 1833.

On Wednesday morning, March 6th, the House at last divided on Tennyson's amendment, which was rejected by a majority of 466 to 89.<sup>9</sup> The bill was then read a first time.

The debate on the second reading, which was carried by a majority of 363 to 84,<sup>1</sup> took place on the

<sup>9</sup> The minority consisted of the following members: Aglionby (Cockermouth), Attwood, Baldwin, Barron, Barry, Bayntun, Beauclerk, Bellew, Henry Lytton Bulwer, Butler, Blackney, the Marquess of Blandford (Woodstock), Barnes (County Durham), Briscoe (Surrey), Brotherton (Salford), Buckingham, Butler (Exeter), Chapman (Westmeath), Cobbett, Cornish (Totnes), O'Neil Daunt, Dobbin (Armagh), the O'Connor Don, Wyn Ellis (Leicester), Faithful, Fancourt, Fielden, Finn, Fitzgerald, C. Fitzsimon, N. Fitzsimon, French, Fryer (Wolverhampton), Galway (County Waterford), Gaskell (Wenlock), Gillon (Linlithgow), J. Grattan, H. Grattan, Grote, Gully (Pontefract), Whittle Harvey (Colchester), Hume, Hutt, Ingilby, James, Kemp (Lewes), Kinloch, Lalor, Lambert (Wexford), Langton, Lister (Poole), Lynch, McLaughlan, Major Macnamara, Sir W. Molesworth, Sir R. Nagle, O'Connell, Maurice O'Connell, Morgan O'Connell, Charles O'Connell, Maurice O'Connell, John O'Connell, Feargus O'Connor, O'Dwyer, O'Farrall, General Palmer (Reading), Jasper Parrot (Totnes), Richards (Knaresborough), Rippon (Gateshead), W. Roche, D. Roche, Roe, Roebuck, Ronayne, Rorke, E. Ruthven, E. S. Ruthven, Scholefield, Sheil, Sullivan, Talbot, Tayleure (Bridgewater), C. K. Tynte, C. J. Tynte, Vigors, Walker, Wallace, Warburton, Wigney, Wilks (Boston).

Tellers—Edward Lytton Bulwer, and C. Tennyson; that is to say, there were, exclusive of tellers, 41 English members, 44 Irish, and 2 Scotch. The tellers were both English members.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xvi. p. 277.

<sup>1</sup> The minority was composed as follows:—

England (40)—Aglionby, Attwood, Bayntun, Beauclerk, Barnes, Brotherton, Buckingham, Buller, E. Lytton Bulwer, Henry Bulwer, Cobbett, Cornish, Ewart, Fancourt, Fielden, Grote, Gully, Whittle Harvey, Hawkins, Humphrey, Hutt, Ingilby, Kemp, Molesworth,

8th and 11th of March, and was very dull. Perhaps, the best speeches on that occasion were made by Hume, who described the measure as a “bill to put down O’Connell, and to keep up the Irish Church Establishment,” and by Ronayne, who, in the words of Moore, said,—

“As long as papish spade and scythe,  
Shall dig and cut the Sassanagh’s tithe,  
And papish purses pay the tolls,  
On heaven’s roads for Sassanagh souls,

So long the merry reign shall be,  
Of Captain Rock and his family.”

The bill entered committee on Wednesday, March 13th, and emerged from it without undergoing any material alteration—though its passage was vigorously disputed at every step by the Irish and English members who had opposed the first and second readings—on the 22nd.<sup>2</sup> The leaders of the struggle in committee, were O’Connell (who made speech after speech with unabated energy), Cobbett (who seemed completely in his element), O’Dwyer, Buckingham, Henry Grattan, Sheil, Hume, and Attwood.

Palmer, Parrot, Philips, Richards, J. Romilly, E. Romilly, Scholefield, Strutt, Tayleure, Tennyson, Torrens, C. K. Tynte, C. J. Tynte, Warburton, Alderman Wood, Wilks.

Ireland (40)—Baldwin, Barron, Barry, Bellew, Blackney, Chapman, Daunt, Finn, Fitzgerald, Fitzgibbon, C. Fitzsimon, N. Fitzsimon, Galwey, J. Grattan, H. Grattan, Lalor, Lambert, Lynch, McLaughlan, Macnamara, Mullens, Nagle, O’Connell, C. O’Connell, J. O’Connell, Morgan O’Connell, F. O’Connor, O’Conor Don, O’Dwyer, W. Roche, D. Roche, Ronayne, E. Ruthven, E. S. Ruthven, Sheil, Sullivan, Talbot, Vigors, Walker, White.

Scotland (4)—Gillon, R. A. Oswald, J. Oswald, Wallace.

Tellers (1 English and 1 Irish)—Hume, Maurice O’Connell.—*Ibid.* p. 529.

<sup>2</sup> The Government agreed to two amendments, (1) disqualifying all officers below the rank of captain from sitting on the courts-martial, (2) requiring five members of the court to be unanimous before a conviction could take place. See on this subject, Spencer Walpole, “History of England,” vol. iii. p. 158.



On the 19th of March, Attwood moved, as an amendment, "that this House do suspend all further proceedings on the Irish [Coercion] Bill until remedial measures be passed into law." This amendment was negatived without a division. On the same day the House divided on the courts-martial clause of the bill—which empowered the Lord-Lieutenant, or any person authorized by him, to commission officers of the army in Ireland, not being under the degree of field-officer, to hold courts-martial for the trial of offenders"—with the following result: For the clause, 270; against, 131.<sup>3</sup>

The Bill was read a third time, on the 29th of March,

<sup>3</sup> The minority was composed as follows:—

England (74)—Aglionby, Attwood, Bainbridge, Baring, Bayntun, Beauclerk, Bish, Blandford (Marquess), Bowes, Briggs, Buckingham, E. L. Bulwer, Chandos (Marquess), Clay, H. Curteis, Captain Curteis, Darlington, Dawson, Divett, Duncombe, Ellis, Ewart, Faithful, Fielden, Forrester, Gaskell, Grote, Guest, Guise, Gully, Hall, Handley, Col. Hanmer, Sir. J. Hanmer, Hawkins, Hawthorne, Hudson, Hume, Humphrey, Hull, Viscount Ingestre, James, Kemp, King, Langton, Leicester, Mills, Molesworth, Palmer, Farrot, Philips, Ryder, Ribbon, Roebuck, J. Romilly, E. Romilly, Scholefield, Scott, Stewart, Strutt, Tayleure, Tennyson, Todd, Torrens, Turner, Tynte, Warburton, Wason, Wigney, Wilbraham, Wilks, Windham, Wood, Yelverton.

Ireland (46)—Baldwin, Barron, Barry, Bellew, Butler, Chapman, Viscount Clements, Daunt, Evans, Finn, Fitzgerald, J. Fitzsimon, N. Fitzsimon, Galway, J. Grattan, H. Grattan, Lambert, Lynch, McLaughlan, Macnamara, Jos. Martin, Jas. Martin, Mullins, Nagle, Col. O'Brien, O'Callaghan, O'Connell, Maurice O'Connell, C. O'Connell, John O'Connell, Morgan O'Connell, the O'Connor Don, F. O'Connor, O'Dwyer, O'Ferrall, Perrin, W. Roche, D. Roche, E. S. Ruthven, E. Ruthven, Sullivan, Sheil, J. Talbot, J. H. Talbot, Vigors, Walker.

Scotland (11)—Abercrombie, Dunlop, Ewing, Ferguson, Gillon, Kinloch, R. A. Oswald, J. Oswald, Sharpe, Sinclair, Wallace.

The Irish members who voted with the Government were: Viscount Acheson (Armagh Co.), Earl of Belfast (Antrim Co.), J. D. Browne (Mayo), D. Browne (Mayo), Christmas, Coote (Queen's County), Ferguson (Derry), Fitzgibbon (Limerick Co.), Gladstone (Portarlington), Lord A. Hill (Down Co.), Lord M. Hill (Newry), Howard (Wicklow Co.), Knox (Dungannon), Lamb (Dungannon), Maxwell (Cavan), O'Grady (Limerick), O'Neil (Antrim), Shaw (Dublin University). See Hansard, Third Series, vol. xvi. p. 872.

by a majority of 345 to 86,<sup>4</sup> and it took its place on the statute-book on the 2nd of April following.<sup>5</sup>

On the question of coercion for Ireland, English Whigs and Tories, and Irish Ascendency members, worked together shoulder to shoulder; on the question of redress they parted company. Mr. Stanley steered the Coercion Bill through the House steadily and skilfully; while Lord Althorp ran the Church Reform Bill on shoals and quicksands. The Lords passed the one measure with goodwill and alacrity; they passed the other with dislike and reluctance.

On the 17th of March, Lord Althorp moved the second reading of the bill. Mr. Wynn, member for Montgomeryshire, and a distinguished authority on matters of procedure, took an important technical objection to the motion. The bill, he said, proposed to levy a tax upon the community, and it was a well-established principle that bills of such a nature could only originate in a committee of the whole House. The present bill had not so originated. It would therefore be necessary for the noble lord to retrace his steps, and to postpone the second reading of the bill until a meeting of the whole House had consented to its introduction. The objection was a fatal one. Althorp endeavoured to explain that, as the tax was particular rather than general, and levied on a class rather than on the community at large, the principle in question did not apply. Peel replied that there was nothing in the refined distinction raised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Government had committed a

<sup>4</sup> The minority on the third reading was (allowing for the difference in number) composed as the minority on the first reading, except that Bawes, Briscoe, Buckingham, Buller, Cornish, Ellis, Harvey, James, Kinloch, Tayleure, Doblin, Lambert, O'Neil Daunt, and Blackney, were absent, their places being taken by Clay, Ewart, Hall, Handley, Hawkins, Humphrey, Langton, Philips, Romilly (2), Stormount, Strutt, Farren, Turner. All the Repealers, except O'Neil Daunt, were at their post.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xvi. p. 1283.

<sup>5</sup> 3 and 4 William IV. cap. 3. For Debate on Coercion Bill see Hansard, Third Series, vols. xv. and xvi.



serious mistake, as pointed out by Mr. Wynn, and they were bound to retrace their steps in the manner suggested by that gentleman. O'Connell felt himself constrained to support Wynn and Peel. There was no use, he said, in wasting the time of the House over the subject. The second reading must be postponed. What he wanted to know was, "Who had blundered?"

The second reading was in fact postponed, and a Select Committee appointed to search for precedents as to the question of procedure. The report of the Select Committee being favourable to Wynn's views, a committee of the whole House was formed on the 1st of April, when Althorp submitted to them the three following resolutions: (1) that an ecclesiastical commission should be appointed in Ireland; (2) that a tax should be imposed on all benefices worth more than 200*l.* a year; (3) that Church Cess should be abolished. Lefroy and Shaw, representing the Irish Ascendency party, opposed the resolutions, while Peel threw cold water on them, but they were ultimately adopted, on the Government undertaking, at the instance of the Tories and Ascendency men, that the incomes of existing incumbents should be exempted from the proposed tax.<sup>6</sup>

On the 6th of May, the second reading of the bill was once more moved by Althorp, and once more an error of procedure was brought to light, this time by Mr. Goulburn, assisted by Mr. Wynn. They said, that, prior to the introduction of the clause in the bill

<sup>6</sup> During Peel's speech the following exciting incident occurred. A stranger who occupied a seat under the gallery rushed forward up the floor to the table where the mace lay, and exclaimed, "Stop, Sir Robert Peel! I beg your pardon. I am poisoned by Earl Grey. I declare that I am a poisoned man. I am a poor unfortunate Irishman, and my name is William. I came here to look for justice, and I am poisoned by Earl Grey's orders." The intruder was promptly ejected, amidst cries of "Order." The man was mad.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xvi. p. 1400.

proposing the suppression of the archbishoprics and bishoprics, it was essential that his Majesty should have placed that part of the hereditary revenues of the crown derived from the archbishoprics and bishoprics to be abolished, at the disposal of Parliament. They had searched the records of the House, and had failed to find any such act of his Majesty registered.

Althorp admitted that no specific message had been received from his Majesty on the subject, but contended that no specific message was necessary. The matter had been referred to in the Speech from the throne, and officially mentioned in the committee of the whole House. That was sufficient. Peel did not think so. The Government, he said, had committed another mistake. O'Connell disagreed with Peel and supported Althorp. Ultimately, the Speaker held that if the specific message from his Majesty arrived before the committee stage of the bill was reached, it would be in plenty of time. The second reading was then moved, and carried, after a short and dull debate, by a majority of 317 to 77.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The minority consisted of the following members:—

England (54)—Lord Ashley, Hon. H. Ashley, Bankes, Bell, Bethell, Blackstone, Lord E. Bruce, Chaplin, Dare, Earl of Darlington, Duncombe, Dugdale, Egerton, Major Fancourt, Finch, Fox, W. E. Gladstone, Halford, Hanmer, Hardinge, Lord Henniker, Herries, Hope, Houldsworth, Earl Jermyn, Inglis, Irton, Kerrison, Knatchbull, Earl of Lincoln, Viscount Lowther, Lygon, Mandeville, Lord R. Manners, Nicholl, Lord Norreys, Lord Ossulston, Sir Robert Peel, Pigot, Pollock, Price, Ross, Sanderson, Scarlett, Lord Somerset, Stewart, E. Stanley, Viscount Stormount, Villiers, Welby, R. Williams, J. Williams, Col. Wood, Wynn.

Ireland (18)—Archdall (Fermanagh), Bernard (Bandon Bridge), Bateson (Londonderry Co.), Castlereagh (Down Co.), Lord Cole (Fermanagh Co.), Hon. A. Cole (Enniskillen), Col. Connolly (Donegal), Corry (Tyrone Co.), Gladstone (Portarlinton), Hayes (Donegal), A. Lefroy, T. Lefroy (Dublin University), J. H. Maxwell (Cavan), Meynell (Lisburn), O'Neil (Antrim Co.), Perceval (Sligo Co.), Verner (Armagh), Young (Cavan).

Scotland (5)—Arbuthnot, Gordon, Hay, Johnston, Sir J. Maxwell.

Tellers.—Estcourt (Oxford University), Shaw (Dublin University).  
—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xviii. p. 1010.



On the 13th of May, the "specific message" arrived from the king, and the House went into committee on the bill. At this stage, some English and Scotch Radicals endeavoured to enlarge, while the Ascendency party strove to narrow, the scope of the measure. The Irish popular members, upon the whole, evinced a disposition to remain passive, being content, so far with the bill as it stood.

Three principal amendments were moved by the Radicals: (1) that the temporalities of the Church should be applied to purposes of general utility;\* (2) that the number of bishoprics should be reduced by twenty-two instead of ten; (3) that Irish bishops should in future be excluded from the House of Lords. The Government opposed all those amendments and they were all defeated.

The one alteration in the bill upon which the Ascendency had set their hearts was the omission of the clause (No. 147) enabling Parliament to apply the revenue of the suppressed bishoprics to State purposes. But on the retention of this clause, which, Sheil said, "gave life, heart, and soul to the measure," O'Connell and the English Radicals were bent; and the great struggle in committee took place over it. On the 21st of June, Stanley, with the avowed object of avoiding a conflict with the House of Lords, moved the omission of the clause. This motion brought the Irish members at once into action. O'Connell, who had hitherto remained quiet, now rose and vehemently attacked the Government. He reminded the House how, during the passage of the Coercion Bill, the Irish members had been told over and over again that strong measures of repression would be followed by measures of conciliation equally strong. Nevertheless, the

\* Only eight Irish members supported this amendment, which was proposed by Gillon (Linlithgowshire): Barron, Finn, J. Fitzgerald, C. Fitzsimon, Lynch, Fergus O'Connor, D. Roche, Ronayne. Tellers—Gillon and Rippon (Gateshead).—*Hansard, Third Series, vol. xvii. p. 1316.*

Government had determined to abandon the vital principle of their conciliatory measure. For his part, he would have nothing more to do with it. In the name of the Irish people he repudiated it, and would vote against the third reading. An acrimonious debate ensued, and the House then divided on Stanley's motion, which was carried by a majority of 280 to 149.<sup>9</sup>

The bill, having been seven days in committee, was reported on the 26th of June, and read a third time, without a division, on the 8th of July; an amendment, proposed by Sheil (on the question "that this Bill do now pass" being put from the chair), to the effect that words should be added to the preamble "declaratory of the right of the Legislature to make such

<sup>9</sup> List of the minority :—

England—Aglionby, Attwood, Bainbridge, Beaumont, Barnard, Bewes, Bowes, Briggs, Briscoe, Brocklehurst, Brotherton, Buckingham, Buller, Bulwer, Cayley, Chaytor, Chichester, Childers, Clay, Cobbett, Collier, Curteis, Dashwood, Davis, Divett, Dundas, Hon., Dundas, Capt., Ellis, Evans, W., Evans, Col., Ewart, Faithful, Fellowes, Fielden, Fitzroy, Gaskell, Gisborne, Grote, Guest, Guise, Sir, Hall, Handley, Harland, Harvey, Hawes, Hawkins, Heathcote, Heron, Hill, Hoskins, Howard, Hudson, Hume, Humphrey, Ingilby, James, Jervis, Lambton, Langdale, Lee, Leech, Lennard, Lister, Lloyd, Lopes, Martin, Methuen, Molesworth, Moreton, Morrison, Ord, Palmer, Parrot, Pease, Philips, Potter, Pryse, Richards, Robinson, Roebuck, Rolfe, Romilly, J., Romilly, E., Russell, Scholefield, Stanley, Strutt, Tayleure, Tennyson, Thicknesse, Todd, Tooke, Torrens, Trelawney, Turner, Vincent, Walter, Warburton, Ward, Watkins, Wason, Wigney, Wilbraham, Williams, Williamson, Wood.

Ireland—Baldwin, Barron, Barry, Bellew, Bernard, Blake, Browne, J. D., Browne, D., Callaghan, Chapman, Clements, Coote, Evans, Finn, Fitzgerald, Fitzgibbon, Fitzsimon, C., Fitzsimon, Grattan, Howard, Jephson, Lalor, Lynch, Macnamara, Martin, Nagle, O'Brien, O'Connell, M., O'Connell, J., O'Connell, Morgan, O'Connor, D., O'Connor, F., O'Ferrall, Roche, Ronayne, Ruthven, E. S., Ruthven, E., Stawell, Sullivan, Talbot, J., Talbot, J. H., Vigors, Walker, Wallace, White.

Scotland—Abercromby, Ferguson, Fleming, Gillon, Hallyburton, Oswald, R. A., Oswald, Parnell, Stuart, Wallace.

Teller—O'Connell, M.

Paired off—Bayntun, Hutt, Oliphant, Tynte.



appropriation of the property of the Church as should most conduce to public utility," and which amendment he said he was forced to move in consequence of the omission by the Government of clause 147, being rejected by a majority of 177 to 86.<sup>1</sup>

The measure, even without clause 147, was received with ill-grace in the Lords. The Eldons, the Winchelseas, the Newcastles, the Cumberlands, the Wynfords, and the Rodens, mustered in force, resolved to give it no quarter. On the 17th of July, Lord Roden moved "That the bill be read a second time this day six months." The debate on his lordship's amendment lasted three days. On the third day (July 19th) the Duke of Wellington rose and said he would not take upon himself the responsibility of opposing the second reading of the bill. "I entreat your lordships," he said, "to go into committee on this bill, with the view of rendering it such as it ought to be in order to give to the Church the greatest possible stability." But Lord Roden and his friends thought that the best way to "give the Church the greatest possible stability" was to have the bill thrown out altogether, and they therefore pressed the amendment against the second reading to a division. On the division the amendment was defeated, and the bill read a second time, by a majority of 157 to 98.<sup>2</sup> The representa-

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xviii. p. 1098.

<sup>2</sup> List of minority :—

Present. — *Dukes*—Cumberland, Newcastle, Buckingham. *Marquesses*—Abercorn, Cholmondely, Ailesbury, Londonderry, Westmeath. *Earls*—Winchelsea, Sandwich, Shaftesbury, Abingdon, Aylesford, Selkirk, Orkeney, Dartmouth, Guildford, Digby, Beverly, Mansfield, Longford, Limerick, Mayo, Belmore, Rosse, Charleville, Orford, Brownlow, Beauchamp, Eldon, Falmouth, Howe, Roden. *Viscounts*—Strathallan, Doneraile, Sidmouth, Combermere, Strangford. *Bishops*—Canterbury, Bangor, Carlisle, Rochester, Gloucester, Exeter. *Barons*—Willoughby de Broke, Teynham, Saltoun, Hay, Boston, Douglas, Tenterden, Wynford, Walsingham, Grantley, Kenyon, Saltersford, De Dunsterville, Rolle, Bayning, Bolton, Redesdale, Ellenborough, Arden, Meldrum, Colchester, Ormonde, Forester, Bexley.

tives of the Orange party in the Lords, beaten in their efforts to prevent the second reading, determined to tackle the bill in committee. By one of the clauses of the bill, powers were vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to suspend at their discretion any appointment to a benefice in which no duty had been done for three years prior to 1833. To this clause an amendment—the joint composition of Lord Wynford and the Archbishop of Canterbury—was, on the 25th of July, moved, to the effect that the powers which it conferred should be vested, not in the Commissioners, but in the archbishop of the province, or the bishop of the see, subject to an appeal to the Lord-Lieutenant in council; and that the funds of a suspended benefice should be allowed to accumulate for the purpose of building a church or glebe-house within the parish. The Government opposed this amendment, which, however, was supported by the Duke of Wellington, and carried by a majority of 84 to 82. The bill now seemed for a moment in danger, and Lord Grey moved, on the 26th of July, that the “House should resume,” to afford him an opportunity of consulting the Cabinet as to what course should be taken, having regard to the defeat of ministers “last night.” Lord Grey’s motion was agreed to, but the Cabinet, after due consultation, did not consider the clause in question of vital importance to the bill, which was accordingly proceeded with, and the Lords offering no further embarrassing opposition, it was read a third time (having been six days in committee) on the 30th of July, by a majority of 135 to 81.<sup>3</sup> On the

Proxies.—*Duke*—Dorset. *Marquess* — Thomond. *Lords* — Cardigan, Poulett, Graham, Norwich, Enniskillen, O’Neil, Onslow, Clancarty, Powis. *Viscounts*—Lorton and Exmouth. *Bishops*—Durham, Salisbury, Bristol, Lincoln, Oxford, St. Asaph, Clonfert, Ossory, St. David’s. *Barons* — Forbes, Gage, Loftus, Sheffield, Churchill, Delamere, Wigan, Feversham.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xix. p. 1016.

<sup>3</sup> The minority was composed as the majority on the second reading had been composed. For debate on Church Bill, see Hansard, Third Series vi., vols. xv. xvii. xviii. xix.



14th of August the measure received the royal assent.<sup>4</sup> In the same month, a second measure of a repressive character was also passed into law—the Change of Venue Act, which provided for the trial of all offences “committed in any county in Ireland,” in Dublin, or any adjoining county, at the discretion of the court.<sup>5</sup> Such was the Irish business of the session of 1833.

✕ The Church Reform Bill, as it took its place on the statute-book, pleased neither the Irish Ascendency party nor the Irish people. The former were incensed because the slightest attempt had been made to “reform” the Church. The latter were dissatisfied because the bill had been shorn of what they considered one of its most important features, and because tithes had not been extinguished. They were also impressed by the fact that, whereas a sweeping measure of coercion had been passed in its full strength in April, a measure of redress, weak in its origin, and weaker in its completed state, had not received the royal assent until August. In brief, the Government had tried to please everybody. They had pleased no one. The “alternating policy of kicks and kindness” produced general dissatisfaction.

<sup>4</sup> 3 and 4 William IV. cap. 37.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* cap. 69.

## CHAPTER V.

“FORCE IS NO REMEDY.”

THE Ascendency felt themselves consoled, to a certain extent, for the reduction of the bishoprics and the abolition of Church cess, by the possession of the Coercion Act. The Church had been “spoliated,”<sup>1</sup> but the Papists were to be crushed. “Law and order” would now be maintained, agitation and demagogism put down, and what was left of the Ascendency—and a great deal was left of it—preserved in undiminished power and glory.

Prior to the meeting of Parliament, and shortly after the appearance in the press of a semi-official announcement to the effect that a coercion bill would be introduced at the commencement of the session, there was a cessation of tithe and agrarian hostilities in Ireland. At this the Ascendency rejoiced. Coercion, they said, was already bearing fruit. The very threat of a Coercion Act had produced good results. Parliament then met, and while the Coercion Bill was being pushed through there was a renewal of hostilities. At this the Ascendency were much disappointed. The threat of coercion had, they observed, already ceased to produce good results; and they denounced the Repeal members for delaying the progress of a measure which was destined to bring peace to Ireland—a measure under whose beneficent operations the Papist lion would lie down with the

<sup>1</sup> The “Church Temporalities Act” was called by the Ascendency the “Church Spoliation Act.”



Ascendency lamb; not, however, but there were a great many Ascendency men who believed, like the American journalist, that, "if ever the [Papist] lion did lie down with the [Ascendency] lamb, it would be with the lamb on the inside of him." At length, the bill passed, and there was, simultaneously with its passage, another cessation of hostilities. Now, at last, cried the Ascendency, the agitators are silenced, the disturbers of the public peace subdued. But the Orange faction were fated again to be disappointed. The reality of coercion was destined to prove as ineffectual as the threat had proved.

In April, O'Connell "gave the word" for a renewal of hostilities. Writing to Barrett, of the *Pilot*, he said, "The die is cast, we must now go for Repeal. Warn the atrocious Whitefeet that they have been playing the game of our enemies." In the same month, while a soldier was standing at the door of an hotel in Kilkenny, a peasant walked close up to him, and, striking him full in the face, said, "There is martial law for you." The soldier rushed at the peasant, but was induced by some bystanders to desist, and re-enter the hotel. O'Connell followed up his first letter to the *Pilot* by many other letters, advocating Repeal, and denouncing Anglesey, Stanley, and Coercion. In one of those letters he said, "Europe is threatened with war; that is one fact. We are 8,000,000; that is another fact."

Towards the end of April, the Whitefeet roved about the country as usual, and the Tithe-resisters offered as bold a front as ever to the Executive. On the 24th of the month, a force of fifty infantry, and twenty cavalry, under Captain Gun, proceeded to the village of Kilmurry in the County of Waterford, to collect the tithes of 1831—that is to say the tithes which had been paid in advance by the Government to the clergy. The peasantry, seeing the military approach, rushed into their houses, barred the doors, and, looking out through the windows, greeted Captain

Gun, and the soldiers, on their arrival, with cheers and laughter. Captain Gun, considering that it was against the law to force an entrance into the house, retired without more ado. In fact, so disturbed was the condition of the country in May, that, the *Wexford Conservative* felt compelled to write, "We regret to state that the spirit of insubordination continues, and breaks forth from time to time in insurrectionary offences." Meanwhile, O'Connell continued to write letter after letter to the *Pilot*, denouncing the Whigs, and stirring up the people. After the miscarriage of Captain Gun's expedition to Kilmurry in April, the advice of the law-officers was taken with reference to the legality of forcing an entrance into houses and fields to collect the tithes of 1831; and the law-officers advised that, as these tithes were Crown debts, houses, &c., could legally be broken into to collect them.

Acting upon this advice, Captain Gun returned to Kilmurry in May. The peasants resorted to their former tactics, but the soldiers broke into the houses, seized the cattle, and carried off many of the peasants, who were sent to jail as debtors to the Crown.

The success of Captain Gun's second attack did not, however, damp the spirits of the peasantry in the slightest degree. Whenever an attempt was made to collect tithes, it was resisted, and whenever the landlords tried to enforce their "rights," the Whitefeet were "up" and, unhappily, "doing." So deplorable had the condition of things become by the end of May, that the *Kilkenny Moderator* wrote, "We regret to find that outrages are again beginning to disturb the peace of the country." In June, a detachment of the Dragoon Guards, and of the 29th Regiment, with a force of police, proceeded, under the charge of Captain Hoare, Captain Lucas, Captain Nangle, and Marshal Commons, J.P., to serve tithe processes in the neighbourhood of Carrigtwohill, in the County Cork. On reaching a point on the march, Captain Lucas, who commanded the party, observed the peasantry concentrating in



large numbers around the house of a farmer who lived near the hamlet of Innesheera. Some of the peasantry had lined the sides of a hill at the back of the house, while others had occupied and "fortified" a large garden, surrounded by stone walls, lying (a little to the side of the house) between the hill and the main road. Captain Lucas, feeling that the peasantry meant to make a stand at this place, ordered the Dragoons to move up the hill, and drive the peasants off, while the 29th and the police were directed to take up their position on the main road, and in the adjoining fields, fronting the garden. On the approach of the dragoons, the peasantry retreated from the hill-sides and rushed into the garden, where a strong body of "rebels," armed with slanes, scythes, and pitchforks, and plentifully supplied with stones, were assembled. The dragoons drew up at the rear of the garden, and the 29th and the police fell into line at the front. Marshal Commons, having called in vain upon the peasants to clear out of the garden and disperse, and having read the Riot Act, Captain Lucas ordered the men of the 29th to advance and take the garden at the point of the bayonet. The soldiers charged right up to the garden, where they were received with a volley of stones, and fiercely attacked by the peasants. Meanwhile, the police, led by Marshal Commons, endeavoured to enter the garden at another point, and with such success was this move made, that, the peasantry, who had concentrated all their strength to encounter the soldiers in front, suddenly found themselves taken in the rear by Commons and the police. Leaving the main body to keep the soldiers in check, a strong party of the "rebels" were despatched to drive back the police. Commons, and some of his men, had succeeded in getting over the wall, and in penetrating the shrubbery. Upon them the peasants now fell with vigour and fury. Commons was knocked down, and trampled under, while the police were cut at right and left with tremendous

effect. For a moment, they rallied, rescued Commons from the grasp of the peasants, and then retreated over the wall, making precipitately for the high-road. All this time, the struggle in front of the garden was being carried on by the soldiers and the main body of peasants with undiminished energy. The soldiers again and again clambered over the wall, and penetrated the garden, but were again and again driven back by the peasants, many of whom vainly sought to snatch the guns out of the hands of their assailants. At length, Captain Lucas directed his men to fall back, and, finding it hopeless to carry the shrubbery by the bayonet, gave the order "to fire." The soldiers fired straight into the garden. The fire was received with cheers, and returned with a shower of stones. The soldiers fired again and again, and again and again the peasants received the fire with cheers of defiance, and returned it with volley after volley of stones. The firing after the third volley ceased. A dragoon was seen to canter from the hill-side down to the plain where the 29th were drawn up, and to communicate with Captain Lucas. Then, Captain Lucas, Captain Hoare, and Marshal Commons were observed in conversation. The peasants, expecting some fresh manœuvre on the part of the troops, prepared to resist it. Suddenly the dragoon was noticed galloping back to the hill-side, and then—to the surprise of the peasants—the troops—cavalry, infantry, and police—were observed marching off the ground, and retreating in the direction of Cork. The peasants quickly emerged from the garden, and once more covered the hill-side and the plain, watching the retreat of the troops, and cheering lustily at what they regarded as their victory over the authorities. Why did the troops retreat? What was the communication made to Captain Lucas by the dragoon?

Immediately after the third volley was fired by the 29th, a dragoon named Maguire fell dead from his horse, pierced through the breast by a bullet discharged by



one of the soldiers below. On learning this painful news, Captain Lucas recognized that, from the position of the soldiers, the fire of the 29th was as likely, or more likely, to hit the dragoons on the hill as the peasants (who fought under excellent cover) in the garden. He then gave the order to retreat,—an order which was gladly obeyed by the soldiers, who invariably regarded the operations of process-serving, and tithe-collecting, as exceedingly “dirty work.” None of the peasants seem to have been killed, though some were wounded, during this encounter at Carrigtwohill.

This affray produced a great sensation in Cork, and much disedified the Ascendency party, who felt that the peasants would be encouraged to fresh acts of resistance and outrage by the success of their efforts at Carrigtwohill. It also had the effect of diminishing the faith of the Ascendency in the efficacy of the Coercion Act. “This rebellious outrage,” said the *Cork Constitution*, “moves and troubles the public feeling, as it naturally should, and many renounce the hope of ever seeing a safe repose maintainable in this country. . . . There were many who imagined that the Suppression Act had ensured at least a suspension of those sanguinary crimes under which the country groaned, . . . but they did not know the stuff of which the Irish agitators were made.” A few days after the affray at Carrigtwohill, fifty men of the Rifles and a small party of the 70th Regiment were, while engaged in posting up tithe notices in Mullinahone, in the County Tipperary, attacked, and forced to fly for their lives, by an immense number of peasants armed with pikes, long poles, slanes, and guns, and marching to the sound of fife and drum.

The next important event of the campaign, immediately after the affrays of Carrigtwohill and Mullinahone, was the appearance of a notice in the *Gazette*,

to the effect that the collection of the tithes of 1831—the Crown tithes—should be “suspended.”

This announcement was received by the Ascendency with surprise and indignation. It was, they said, a concession to the “Tail;” a submission to rebellion. The “Tail,” of course, rejoiced at the announcement, for it seemed to prove the truth of their declarations, that the tithes could not be “thrust down the throats of the people, even at the point of the bayonet.” The fact was that the Government found the collection of tithes an extremely unpleasant, difficult, and expensive operation, and, regarding the matter from a downright business point of view, abandoned the work, as being more costly than remunerative.<sup>2</sup> A period of repose followed the “suspension” of the tithe-collecting work, and during the month of July, and part of the month of August, there was a cessation of hostilities. Towards the end of August, the war broke out again. The cause of the renewal of hostilities was an attempt made to value for tithes some lands near the town of Kilkenny. The walls of the town were covered with placards containing the words, ‘No tithes! no valuation! no surrender!’ and an effort was made, but unsuccessfully, to prevent the valuation being carried out. In September another attempt was made to value lands in Thomastown, County Kilkenny; but the peasants, assembling in large numbers, attacked the valuers and surveyors, destroyed their tapes, smashed their instruments, and drove them off the fields. In the same month, O’Connell issued a manifesto from Darrynane, calling upon the people to persevere in the efforts to put down the tithe system.

“Tithes,” he said, “must be abolished. Ireland never will and never ought to be tranquil until they are. The tithe system must go root and branch; in substance and in name. . . . The passive resistance of last year was a magnificent spectacle, doing honour

<sup>2</sup> See post.



to the heads that conceived, and the hands that boldly persevered in that system. The time, however, is come for more active and energetic measures. Every experiment has failed to compel an acquiescence in the tithe system by the people of Ireland. Menaces; cajolements; force; horse; foot; and artillery; and, above all, the resources and chicanery of the law; all have miserably failed. Stanley lent the parsons 60,000*l.* of the public money, taking to himself all manner of means for recovering the amount—distress, arrest, imprisonment, decrees from the civil bill courts, attachments out of Chancery—the lands, the goods, the persons of the people were all made legally responsible, and everything was summary and expeditious, civil and criminal proceedings being combined to recover back the 60,000*l.* Well, what has been the result? Why, that of the 60,000*l.*, only 12,000*l.* has been recovered. Balance to loss, 48,000*l.* But that is not the total loss. You must add to it (1) law costs estimated at nearly 14,000*l.*; (2) other expenses under the proclamations, estimated at nearly 25,000*l.*; (3) military expenses estimated at nearly 30,000*l.* Add all these together, and you have a total of about 69,000*l.*, or, to keep under the mark, let us say 60,000*l.* How then does the case stand?

Lent to the clergy	.	.	.	.	£60,000
Costs of recovering	.	.	.	.	60,000
					<hr/>
Total	.	.	.	.	£120,000
Amount recovered	.	.	.	.	12,000
					<hr/>
Balance against the Government	.				£108,000 <sup>3</sup>
					<hr/>

This, so far, has been the result of the system of passive resistance adopted by the people." In conclu-

<sup>3</sup> O'Connell seems to have overstated the case with reference to the expenditure of the Government. See Hansard, February 20th, 1834, p. 595.

sion, O'Connell exhorted the peasantry, in his usual formula, to obey the law, but all the same to overthrow the tithe system.

On the 26th of September, the Marquess of Wellesley and Mr. Lyttleton came to Ireland to replace the Marquess of Anglesey and Mr. Stanley as Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary respectively; but there was no change of policy, and no abatement of political excitement and disturbance. In October, the town of Kilkenny—a great centre of disturbance in those days—was placarded with Whitefoot notices, declaring that “we will neither hough cattle, or burn houses, or destroy the country as we did before, but we will go and drop the [land grabbers and agents] on the spot. We are afraid neither of informers, land jobbers, nor pointers.” These notices seem to have been the *mot d'ordre* for a fresh outbreak of agrarianism. During the months of October, November, and December, the Whitefeet held the country in thralldom. Houses were burned, cattle were houghed, and daring murders perpetrated. Such was the religious feeling infused into the land movement by the circumstance of the tithe agitation, that—a rare thing in the Irish agrarian war—Protestants were attacked, and, in some places, forced to fly from the country in terror and despair. “Again,” said the *Kilkenny Moderator*, in October, “the Queen’s County has assumed its former bloodstained character.” “As the winter nights approach,” said the *Leinster Express*, “the assassin once more stalks abroad.” Side by side with the agrarian conflict the tithe struggle still went on, while O'Connell continued to raise the shibboleth of Repeal, and to denounce the policy of coercion. Writing in November, he said, “I was never a bitter Repealer until I was made so by a ‘reformed’ ministry;” adding, “he who forgets or forgives a coercion bill is a miscreant Irishman, upon whom hard words are thrown away;” and winding up with, “I raise the colours of Repeal, and nail them to



the mast-head." At a public dinner, given to him in Cork in the same month, the Irish leader (the "arch-beggarman," as the *Times* said, "in whom the spirit of falsehood and malignity is not yet laid,") used these words, referring to the Coercion Act: "I am not a man to recommend physical force; but this I say, that when the Coercion Act ceases to exist, my heart's blood will be on the bayonet of the man who shall endeavour to resuscitate it." This declaration was received with immense cheering. O'Connell then referred to the Catholic Whigs who had deserted the popular flag. "Sir Robert Kane," he said, "is, I hear, trying to make amends for his conduct on the Repeal question by serving mass at Mount Mellery [laughter]. All I can say is that Sir Robert may serve mass, but he has not served Ireland [cheers]. But I hope the Waterford boys will at the next election not only give Sir Robert time to serve mass, but time to dig in the fields for the remainder of his life." O'Connell concluded this speech, which was one of his most violent, and effective popular harangues, by expressing the hope that "Ireland will suffer the quiet of the grave, or the tranquillity of freedom."

The tithe chronicle of the events of 1833, may be closed with the statements: (1) Mr. Littleton, the new Chief Secretary, succeeded, late in the session, in persuading Parliament to advance 1,000,000*l.* to the tithe-owners, on the security of the tithe arrears, which in 1833 amounted to 1,200,000*l.*;\* (2) Barrett was prosecuted for publishing O'Connell's letters in the *Pilot*; (3) an Episcopalian minister was fired at, but happily missed, in the County Limerick; and (4) O'Connell, referring to the efforts which were being made by the clergy to collect tithes, warned the people that "the parsons are up and stirring, and no quarter can be expected from them." The people, on their part, it may be said, were determined, and doubt-

\* Hansard, Third series, vol. xx. pp. 341, 345, 560, 820, 884.

less strengthened in their determination by O'Connell's manifestoes, not to give any quarter to the parsons. It is only just, however, to O'Connell to state, that the tithe-resisters, who were so largely under his influence, very rarely committed, or attempted to commit, the crime of assassination. Tithe-proctors were often soundly thrashed, and exclusive dealing was freely practised; but for the rest, the peasants in the main resisted the law in the open.

The year 1834 opened with the tithe war still at its height. The landlords now evinced a more practical disposition than they had hitherto shown to come to the rescue of the clergy. Some of them paid the tithes due by their tenants; and all gave proof of attachment to the Church, and anxiety to rally to her standard. The popular leaders, and the peasantry regarded the action of the landlords in arraying themselves on the side of the parsons, with displeasure and irritation. Sheil indited a letter to the "tenants and landlords of Tipperary," calling upon the former "to go for" the total abolition of tithes, no matter what opposition might be offered them, and warning the latter of the fatal consequences likely to attend the course on which they were entering. The payment of tithes by the landlords would, he asserted, be followed by an increase of rents, in which tithes would be included; "and," he said, "a proceeding to recover rent, in which tithe is included, will be followed by a popular outcry against the landlords. Formerly the struggle was between the tenants and clergy; henceforth, if tithes and rents be blended, it will be between tenants and landlords." It is unnecessary to say that this advice, coming from such a quarter, was not heeded by the landlords; meanwhile the tenants fought on. An attempt to post tithe notices in Pallaskenry, in the County Limerick, in February, was successfully resisted by the peasantry, who compelled the police to retire precipitately before them.

Different results attended the efforts of the peasantry



to prevent a seizure of cattle for tithes due to the Rev. Thomas Lock, of Fenboonagh, Newcastle West, in the same County, in April. The military (85th Regiment) and police seized ten pigs. The peasantry attempted a rescue, and attacked the soldiers and police with sticks, stones, slanes, and reaping-hooks. The soldiers and police fired on the peasants, killing three, wounding twenty, and carrying off the pigs in triumph.

## CHAPTER VI.

O'CONNELL "STOPS THE WAY;" STANLEY AND GREY ARE  
"SPILT;" AND THE "COACH IS UPSET."

THE scene now shifts from the country to the House of Commons. It was evident, on the opening of the session of 1834, that Parliament would again be called on to deal with the subject of Irish disturbances. The Coercion Act and the Church Temporalities Act had both failed to pacify the country. Fresh legislation seemed, therefore, necessary for the attainment of this purpose. What would the fresh legislation be? The extreme limits of coercion had practically been reached when Grey's Act was passed. More coercion was, therefore, out of the question. But the boundary-line separating coercion from redress had scarcely been crossed when the Church Temporalities Act was passed. The Government could, therefore, well afford to move a little farther in the direction of concession; and this, in fact, ministers resolved to do. On the 20th of February, Mr. Littleton introduced a resolution proposing that tithes should be commuted into a land-tax, amounting to 80 per cent. of the tithe.<sup>1</sup> He also proposed that the new scheme should not come into full operation for five years, in order to give the Government sufficient time to collect the advances which had been made to the tithe-owners.

O'Connell opposed this resolution, saying that the

<sup>1</sup> Reduced in Committee to 60 per cent. See Walpole's "England," vol. iii. p. 308.



effect of any measure founded on it would only be to change the word "tithe" into "land-tax," making the landlords, instead of the clergy, the collectors of the obnoxious impost. In substitution of the Government plan, he proposed the reduction generally of the temporalities of the Church, and the diminution of its tithes by two-thirds; one-third being left to the Established Church, one-third given to the Catholic Church, and one-third to the State. Lord John Russell condemned O'Connell's proposal, which, he said, amounted to nothing less than "the abolition of tithes altogether," and was "a direct act of robbery, neither palliated nor disguised." Finally, Littleton's resolution was carried by a majority of 190 to 66.<sup>2</sup>

On the 2nd of May, the second reading of a bill founded on Littleton's resolution was moved. Mr. Carew, member for Wexford, proposed, as an amendment, the postponement of the debate for a week. An animated discussion ensued, in the course of which Mr. Blackney, speaking as "a landlord, a magistrate, and a deputy-lieutenant," and expressing "the sentiments of the populous counties of Kilkenny, Tipperary, Carlow, and Kildare," said, "This measure will transfer the odium [of collecting tithes] from the clergy to the landlords. It will render a new insurrection act and the re-embodiment of the yeomanry necessary. Scenes worse than Whiteboyism will be acted if this bill is passed." After Blackney's speech, Ronayne moved the adjournment of the debate, it being then one o'clock. But,

<sup>2</sup> Among the minority were—Attwood, Aglionby, Butler, Brotherton, Bellew, Briggs, Barron, Blake, Clay, Cobbett, Chapman, Davies, Divett, Evans, Ewart, Finn, Fitzsimon, Faithful, Fielden, Fitzgerald, Fryer, Fitzgibbon, Gisborne, Hardy, Hawes, Hutt, Hall, Humphery, Kennedy, Lloyd, Langdale, Lalor, Lambert, Molesworth, O'Connell, D., O'Connell, M., O'Connell, J., O'Connell, Morgan, O'Connell, C., The O'Connor Don, Oswald, Ormelie, Oliphant, Parrot, Roebuck, Richards, Ruthven, E. S., Ruthven, E., Roche, D., Roche, W., Roe, Sheil, Talbot, Vigors, Vincent, Wallace, Walker, Williams, Wood, Wason, Ward.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxi. p. 628.

the motion was opposed by Lord Althorp, and the debate was continued for some hours later, when the House rejected Carew's amendment by a majority of 241 to 74.<sup>3</sup> The debate was then adjourned until the 6th of May.

On the 6th of May, it was resumed, and continued amid exciting and stormy scenes. O'Connell opened the proceedings by moving "that the House be counted." The House having been counted, and 118 members having been declared present, Ronayne, member for Cork, rose to comment on the scantiness of the attendance. Four or five hundred members, he said, could be called together to uphold the pension list, but scarcely one hundred could be mustered when the question for consideration was of the utmost importance to the people of Ireland.

Having characterized the bill as a measure to "perpetuate tithes under another name," the member for Cork next proceeded to attack the Government generally. "I can assure the members of the Administration," he said, "that I would no more think of adopting their notions of honour, than I would think of imitating their consistency." At this sally, Stanley, who seems to have been reclining with negligent ease on the Treasury bench, smiled "contemptuously,"

<sup>3</sup> List of the minority :—

England—Aglionby, Beauclerk, Bish, Brotherton, Davis, Evans, Handley, Hull, Jervis, Parrott, Pease, Potter, Staveley, Trelawney, Vincent, Warburton, Wason.

Scotland—Gillon.

Ireland—Acheson, Baldwin, Barron, Barry, Bellew, Blackney, Blake, Browne, J. D., Browne, D., Butler, Callaghan, Chapman, Dobbin, Evans, Finn, Fitzgerald, Fitzgibbon, Fitzsimon, C., Fitzsimon, N., French, Grattan, Howard, Jephson, Lalor, Lambert, Lynch, Macnamara, F., Macnamara, Major, Martin, J., Martin, T., Mullins, Nagle, O'Brien, O'Callaghan, O'Connell, Dan., O'Connell, Jun., Maurice O'Connell, Charles O'Connell, Morgan John O'Connell, The O'Connor Don, Feargus O'Connor, O'Dwyer, O'Ferrall, O'Reilly, D., Roche, W., Roche, Ronayne, E. S., Ruthven, E., Ruthven, Sheil, Stowell, Sullivan, J. H., Talbot, J., Talbot, Vigors, Walker. Tellers—Carew, Lord Clements.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxiii. pp. 471, 472.



whereupon Ronayne, "rounding" on the Colonial Secretary, continued: "I am not affected by the contemptuous smile with which the right hon. gentleman has honoured me. I am too well accustomed to the insolence with which the right hon. gentleman treats the House on all occasions, to be annoyed by it now. The right hon. gentleman may smile contemptuously as much as he pleases. He may throw his legs upon the table like a man in a North-American coffee-house—" This sentence was received with cries of "Order, order!" "Chair, chair!" from all sides of the House. The Speaker at once interposed, observing that "if any hon. member were guilty of disrespect to the House, he was sure the House would not fail to take notice of it, at the time." Ronayne, in no wise affected apparently by the interposition of the Speaker, reiterated his charge that Stanley "habitually treated the House with gross insolence," whereupon Stanley rose to deny that he had been "intentionally, at any rate," guilty of disrespect to the House. On the present occasion he had smiled at the "palpably preconcerted plan" got up between O'Connell and Ronayne to count the House, in order that the latter might have an opportunity of "talking clap-trap to be duly transmitted to Ireland." "But," continued the Colonial Secretary, "I should advise the hon. member for Dublin [O'Connell], before he moves to have the House counted again, to ascertain beforehand how many of the [five O'Connells] happen to be in attendance. On the present occasion the hon. member for Dublin himself happens to be the only representative of that name honouring the discussion with his presence." This shot "drew" O'Connell, who declared that Stanley, in charging him with having formed a "preconcerted plan" to count the House, had exhibited "his usual disregard of veracity." The Speaker again interposed, and O'Connell immediately withdrew his words. Ronayne then re-

sumed his speech, and wound up by moving that the bill be read a second time "this day six months."

The discussion, which had commenced with a passage of arms between Stanley and the Irish members, terminated with passages of arms between the members of the Government themselves. Stanley, in replying to a question put by Sheil, as to whether the Government would "maintain or abandon the Church Establishment," used words which Lord John Russell feared might be taken as a declaration on the part of ministers to uphold the Church in its integrity, and not to appropriate its revenues, under any circumstances, to State purposes. The Paymaster of the Forces immediately rose to correct any misapprehension which Stanley's words might cause, and to say distinctly that, "if the State should find that the revenues of the Church were not appropriated justly to the purposes of religious and moral instruction, . . . it would be the duty of Parliament to consider of a different appropriation." This statement was received with ringing cheers by the Repealers and Radicals.<sup>4</sup> Major Beaclerc said that Russell's speech "would pour more oil into the wounds of Ireland than any speech made [for years] in the House." Littleton, however, fearing apparently that too much "oil" might be "poured into the wounds of Ireland," rose to explain away Russell's words, as Russell had risen to explain away Stanley's. The question of appropriation was not, the Irish Secretary said, yet before the House; when it was, then would be the fitting time to consider the subject. But Sheil—resolved there and then to "feel" the Cabinet on the appropriation question—asked Althorp point-blank whether the other members of the Government concurred or not in the opinion expressed by Russell. Althorp, with the straightforwardness which invari-

<sup>4</sup> It was upon this occasion that Stanley, in a note to Graham, used the famous expression, "Johnny has upset the coach."—Russell's "Recollections and Suggestions," p. 120.



ably distinguished his utterances, frankly answered that the Cabinet were not agreed on the point. After some further remarks from various members, rather upon the subject of Appropriation, and the Cabinet differences, than upon the Tithe Bill, the second reading of that measure was finally carried by a majority of 248 to 52.<sup>5</sup>

A crisis in the affairs of the Cabinet (whose differences were now the subject of public discussion and controversy) was forced by a resolution, proposed on the 27th of May by Mr. Ward, and seconded by Mr. Grote, pledging Parliament to appropriate the surplus revenues of the Church to State purposes. This resolution, Lord Althorp met by moving the adjournment of the House until Monday, the 2nd of June, in order that the Cabinet might have an opportunity of more fully considering the question. At the meeting of the House, on the 2nd of June, Lord Althorp declared the inability of the Government to consent to Ward's proposal, but announced their determination to appoint a Commission to inquire into the state of the Church revenues, and to consider the whole position of the Establishment in Ireland. The compromise plan thus suggested, Ward objected to, and Stanley condemned. Finally, Ward pressed his resolution to a division; and Stanley, accompanied by Sir James Graham (First Lord of the Admiralty), the Duke of Richmond (Post-

<sup>5</sup> List of the minority:—

England—Aglionby, Attwood, Blamire, Buckingham, Davies, Fielden, Kennedy, Palmer, Pease.

Ireland—Baldwin, Barron, Barry, Bellew, Blackney, Blake, Butler, Callaghan, Chapman, Dobbin, Evans, Finn, Fitzgerald, Fitzgibbon, Fitzsimon, C., Fitzsimon, N., Hayes, Lambert, Lynch, Martin, Nagle, O'Brien, O'Callaghan, Daniel O'Connell, Morgan O'Connell, Maurice O'Connell, Charles O'Connell, O'Conor Don, O'Dwyer, O'Ferrall, O'Reilly, D. Roche, W. Roche, E. S. Ruthven, E. Ruthven, Sheil, Sullivan, J. H. Talbot, Jas. Talbot, Vigors, Walker, Wallace.

Scotland—Oswald.

Paired off—Grattan.

Tellers—Lalor, Ronayne.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxiii. p. 678.

master-General), and the Earl of Ripon (Lord Privy Seal), left the ministry. The division on Ward's resolution ended in its defeat by a majority of 396 to 120;<sup>6</sup> and the places of the seceding Ministers were filled up by the promotion of Mr. Spring Rice, Lord Auckland, the Marquis of Conyngham, and Lord Carlisle.<sup>7</sup>

So the first breach in the first reformed ministry occurred; the second was soon to follow, and was to be more serious. On the 1st of August the Coercion Act was to expire. It, therefore, now became necessary to consider the question of its renewal or discontinuance. Littleton, though in many respects a foolish and an indiscreet Minister, seems to have had the sagacity to perceive that the best way of upholding British authority in Ireland was to get O'Connell on the side of the Government; but, while the Coercion Act remained in force, there appeared to be no chance of winning over the great Agitator to the cause of "law and order." The Chief Secretary, accordingly, applied himself to the task of bringing about the discontinuance of the hateful measure, or, at least, of securing its renewal

<sup>6</sup> List of the minority:—Adams, Aglionby, Attwood, Barnard, Barry, Beauclerc, Bellew, Bewes, Bish, Blake, Blamire, Brotherton, Browne, Buckingham, H. L. Bulwer, E. L. Bulwer, Butler, Callaghan, Chapman, Clay, Cobbett, Collier, Crompton, Curteis, Capt., Curteis, H. B., Dashwood, Davies, Dawson, Divett, Dobbin, Dykes, Ellis, Evans, Ewart, Faithful, Fielden, Finn, Fitzgerald, Fitzgibbon, Fitzsimon, C., Fitzsimon, N., Fryer, Gaskall, Gillon, Gisborne, Grote, Gully, Hall, Handley, Hawkins, Hayes, Hill, Howard, Humphrey, Hutt, Jacob, Kemp, Kennedy, Lalor, Lambert, Lambton, Langtor, Leach, Lister, Lloyd, Lynch, Macnamara, Martin, J., Martin, T., Molesworth, Morrison, Nagle, O'Brien, O'Connell, Maurice O'Connell, J. O'Connell, Morgan O'Connell, O'Callaghan, O'Connor, Oliphant, Oswald, J., Oswald, R. A., Palmer, Parnell, Pease, Philips, Potter, Poulter, Richards, Rippon, D. Roche, W. Roche, Roebuck, J. Romilly, E. Romilly, E. Ruthven, E. S. Ruthven, Scholefield, Sharpe, Sheil, Stawell, Strutt, Sullivan, Talbot, Tennyson, Tooke, Trelawney, Vigors, Walker, R. Wallace, T. Wallace, Walter, Warburton, Wason, Watkins, Wemyss, Wigney, Williams, Col., Williams, W. A., Wilmot, Wood. Tellers—Hume, Ward. Paired off—Bowes, James, Maxwell, Rotch.—Hansard, vol. xxiv. pp. 86, 87.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Third Series, vol. xxiv. p. 10.



in a mitigated, and, from an Irish point of view, more palatable form. In his efforts in this direction, Littleton was aided by Brougham, and the Marquess of Wellesley, and encouraged, though cautioned to be prudent and circumspect, by Lord Althorp. Earl Grey was kept in the dark in the matter.

On the 23rd of June,<sup>8</sup> on the eve of the Wexford election—when the candidates in the field were a Repealer, backed by O'Connell, and a Whig, supported by the Government—the Irish Secretary opened negotiations with the Irish leader. He sent for O'Connell (who was sitting at the time as Chairman of the Committee on the Inns of Court) to attend him at the Irish Office, Whitehall Place. O'Connell came. Littleton began the conversation by referring to the Wexford election, and alluding to a letter which O'Connell had written to the constituency calling upon them to vote for the Repeal candidate. He then told O'Connell that the Irish Government were opposed to the renewal of the Coercion Act, and that he deemed it his duty to communicate the fact to the “one only person”<sup>9</sup> [among the Irish popular members] on whom reliance could be placed. A short bill for the suppression of agrarian disturbances would, Littleton said, be introduced instead of the Coercion Act, and he wound up the conversation by adding, “If the Coercion Act be brought into the House, it will not be brought in by me.” O'Connell went away much pleased with Littleton's communication, and determined to regulate his conduct in accordance with its tenor and spirit.

He immediately withdrew the Repeal candidate for Wexford, and refused to countenance the candidature of another popular candidate, put up in spite of him to fight the Whig; he stopped the publication of an

<sup>8</sup> The date fixed by Littleton.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxiv. p. 110.

<sup>9</sup> O'Connell's statement, made in the House of Commons, and not denied by Littleton.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxiv. p. 1106.

address, which he had written to the Reformers of England, advocating Repeal, and denouncing the Whigs, and which was actually in type; finally, he assured Littleton that the Government would have his support, and the support of his colleagues, in their efforts to suppress agrarian outrages in Ireland.

(\ On the 23rd of June, Earl Grey received a letter from the Marquess of Wellesley, saying that he was prepared to govern Ireland without the martial law clauses, and the prohibition-of-public-meetings clauses of the Coercion Act. On the 29th of June, the Cabinet met to consider the question of coercion, and, notwithstanding Wellesley's letter, decided to renew the measure in all its rigour.<sup>1</sup> On the 30th of June, Littleton, in a state of anxiety and distress, communicated the decision of the Cabinet to O'Connell. "You must resign," said O'Connell, on hearing the Chief Secretary's statement, "for, after the manner in which you have acted, you will otherwise be guilty of a deception on me." Littleton replied, "Say nothing of that to-day, wait until to-morrow."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Hatherton's Memoirs, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> O'Connell having made this statement in the House, Littleton rose and said, "I declare, upon my honour as a gentleman, I said no such thing."

O'CONNELL,—“On my honour as a gentleman, you did.”

LITTLETON,—“I declare solemnly before the House, and upon my honour as a gentleman, that I never did.”

O'CONNELL,—“Does the right honourable gentleman mean to deny that he spoke of resigning?”

LITTLETON,—“The honourable and learned gentleman is mistaken, I never said any such thing. I deny solemnly, on the honour of a gentleman, that I made any statement of the kind.”

O'CONNELL,—“Then why did I not make my motion for the printing of [Sir Henry Parnell's] Report [on Irish Disturbances] made in 1832 [as I threatened]?—I want to know that.” [The Report of the Select Committee of 1832 on the state of Ireland (of which Sir H. Parnell was Chairman), was against coercion, and O'Connell threatened to “move” for it on learning the decision of the Cabinet.]

LITTLETON,—“I cannot answer that; I do not know anything about it. . . . To the best of my knowledge my answer [when O'Connell said ‘You must resign’] was as nearly as possible in the words: ‘I



O'Connell waited. On the 1st of July, Lord Grey introduced the Coercion-Act-Renewal Bill in the Lords. On the 3rd, O'Connell, feeling that he had been "tricked" by Littleton and the Government, told the whole story of Littleton's negotiations with him to the House of Commons. On the 4th of July, Littleton resigned, and the Coercion Bill was read a second time in the Lords. On the 7th, the Lords went into committee on the bill, and Althorp (who—especially after Wellesley's letter—was averse to the renewal of the act in its integrity) tendered his resignation to Lord Grey. On the 8th, Grey, much perplexed at Althorp's resignation, moved the postponement of the Coercion Bill for four-and-twenty hours. On the 9th, Grey (feeling that he could not carry on the Government without Althorp, and pained to find that negotiations with O'Connell had been carried on over his head,) resigned.<sup>3</sup> The second breach in the first Reform ministry was complete.

trust that, whatever your feelings or opinions on the subject may be, you will not divulge them to-night, but wait until to-morrow, when you can ascertain the particular nature of the bill, by Lord Grey's speech.' "

"O'CONNELL,—That was not what was said by the right honourable gentleman, nor anything like it."—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxiv. p. 1111.

<sup>3</sup> Brougham was practically the prime mover in the negotiations with O'Connell. The Marquess of Wellesley had written to Grey, early in June, expressing a desire that the Coercion Act should be renewed in its integrity, whereupon Brougham wrote to Wellesley, asking him if he would not undertake to govern Ireland without the martial law clauses, and the prohibition-of-public-meetings clauses of the Act. Wellesley replied in the affirmative, and, at the instigation of Brougham, wrote to Grey to that effect. On the 23rd of June, Grey read this second letter of Wellesley's, to the Cabinet. Russell, on hearing its contents, observed, with characteristic shrewdness, that the letter seemed to be an answer to a question, rather than a voluntary communication, and asked if any one had written to the Viceroy on the subject. Thus cornered, Brougham admitted that he had. Grey felt much hurt at this, but would probably have carried on the Government, and doubtless got rid of the Chancellor, had Althorp not resigned. See Torrens' "Life of Melbourne," vol. ii. p. 3; Walpole, "History of England," vol. iii. p. 256; Lord Hatherton's Memoirs, vol. iii. p. 392; also Lord Grey's Speech, Hansard, Third Series,

The king, having accepted Grey's resignation, sent for Lord Melbourne, who, after some difficulty, formed, on the 16th of July, 1834, an Administration of which the chief members were:—

Lord Melbourne	. . .	Prime Minister.
Marquess of Lansdowne	. . .	Lord President.
Earl Mulgrave	. . .	Privy Seal.
Lord Althorp	. . .	Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Lord Brougham	. . .	Lord Chancellor.
Viscount Duncannon	. . .	Home Secretary.
Lord Palmerston	. . .	Foreign Secretary.
Lord John Russell	. . .	Paymaster of the Forces.
Mr. Spring Rice	. . .	Colonial Secretary.
Lord Auckland	. . .	Admiralty.
Mr. Charles Grant	. . .	Board of Control.
Mr. J. P. Thomson	. . .	Board of Trade.
Mr. Littleton	. . .	Chief Secretary for Ireland.

A bill for the renewal, until the 1st of August, 1835, of Grey's Coercion Act in a mitigated form—the martial law clauses, and the prohibition-of-public-meetings clauses being omitted—was then introduced and passed, with a protest on the part of the Tories against its moderation, and a protest and struggle on the part of the Repealers against its severity. In the Lords, Wellington endeavoured to have the omitted clauses restored, but an amendment, proposed by him, to that effect, was negatived without a division. In the Commons, Poulet Scrope moved, as an amendment to the second reading, that Parliament should “at the earliest opportunity” enact measures to “assure” the Irish peasantry “the means of supporting life by peaceful and honest industry;” and Ronayne met the third reading with an amendment for the postponement of the bill for six months. Scrope's amendment was negatived by a majority of 89 to 34;<sup>4</sup> Ronayne's by a majority of 82 to 22.<sup>5</sup>

vol. xxiv. p. 305 *et seq.*, and O'Connell's and Littleton's Statement, *ibid.* 1099 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> List of minority on Scrope's amendment: Attwood, Blake, Brocklehurst, O'Connell, M. O'Connell, J. O'Connell, O'Conor Don, Dillwyn, Fielden, Gronaw, Hodges, Hughes, Irton, Kennedy,



The difficulties thrown in the way of the Government by the Appropriation question and the Coercion Bill having been disposed of, Lord Althorp, on the 29th of July, asked the House to go into committee on the Tithe Bill, which had, since its introduction in June, undergone some alterations, with a view of making it more acceptable to the landlords.<sup>6</sup> O'Connell opposed the motion, affirming, that, the bill in its present shape was worthless, and urging, that, as it could not, in any event, come into complete operation for five years, no harm would be done by postponing its further progress until the Church Commission had reported, when the whole question of the Irish Establishment might be comprehensively and exhaustively dealt with. But the House supported Althorp, negating an amendment which O'Connell proposed to give effect to his views, by the overwhelmingly decisive majority of 154 to 16 votes.<sup>7</sup>

This, one of the severest defeats, perhaps, ever sustained by O'Connell in the House, was, on the next

Lynch, Mills, Newark, Nagle, O'Dwyer, Richards, Roe, Roche, Ronayne, E. S. Ruthven, E. Ruthven, Sinclair, Scholefield, Stewart, Sullivan, Vigors, Young, Walker. Tellers—Feargus O'Connor, Poulet Scrope.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxv. pp. 297, 298.

<sup>5</sup> List of the minority on the motion for the third reading: Blake, Buckingham, Callaghan, Grattan, Kennedy, Lynch, Nagle, O'Connell, Morgan O'Connell, J. O'Connell, Maurice O'Connell, O'Dwyer, O'Reilly, Perrin, Roche, E. S. Ruthven, E. Ruthven, Sheil, Sullivan, Vigors, Waddy, Walker.—Ibid. p. 553.

<sup>6</sup> “Under the amended plan the landowner who consented to convert the tithe into a voluntary rent-charge was entitled to a premium. The rent-charge was to be a sum equal to the interest at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the amount of land-tax, multiplied by four-fifths of the number of years' purchase which the land was worth. . . . The loss to the Church was to be made good by the application of the Perpetual Purchase Fund.” “It is doubtful,” adds Mr. Spencer Walpole, whose words I am quoting, “whether Littleton himself understood this complicated scheme.”—Walpole, “History of England,” vol. iii. p. 264.

<sup>7</sup> The minority consisted of Attwood, Blake, Gillon, Grattan, Lynch, O'Connell, Maurice O'Connell, Morgan O'Connell, John O'Connell, O'Dwyer, Roche, E. S. Ruthven, E. Ruthven, Sheil, Vigors, Waddy.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxv. p. 747.

night, followed by a great Irish victory. It was proposed, as we have seen, by the Ministers that the bill should not come into operation for five years, in order that ample time might be afforded the Government for collecting the arrears due on the advance made by Parliament to the clergy. Touching this proposal, O'Connell determined to strike a swashing blow at the Government—hoping at the same time to improve and strengthen the bill. Why, he asked, should not the Ministers give up the arrears altogether? By so doing the bill could immediately come into operation, and the tithes could at once be converted into a rent-charge, two-fifths of the whole amount due being abandoned. By the adoption of this course the Government would no longer be subjected to the odium of collecting tithes; the collisions which had so frequently taken place, during the past three years, between the military, the police, and the peasants, would cease; and the country would be pacified. Assuredly, this experiment (of foregoing the arrears, in the expectation of allaying Irish discontent,) was worth trying? O'Connell's suggestion "took" the House, and an amendment embodying it was carried against Ministers by a majority of 82 to 33.<sup>8</sup> The bill, with O'Connell's amendment, was then quickly pushed through the remaining stages, and read a third time on the 5th of August.

The question now was, what would the Lords do? Some persons thought that their lordships would pass the bill, *minus* O'Connell's amendment; others (who knew their lordships better) said that they would throw it out altogether. They did throw it out alto-

<sup>8</sup> The majority consisted of 49 English (Whigs and Radicals), 28 Irish (Repealers and Whigs), and 5 Scotch (Whigs) members; the minority of 22 English (Whigs and Tories), 5 Scotch (Tories), and 6 Irish (Tories) members. The members of the ministry who voted in the minority were Althorp, Hobhouse, Littleton, Spring Rice, and Poulet Thomson. Palmerston and Russell did not vote at all. No members of the Government supported O'Connell.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxv. p. 771.



gether on the 11th of August, by a majority of 189 to 122 votes.<sup>9</sup>

Four days afterwards, Parliament was prorogued.

<sup>9</sup> The peers present connected with Ireland (propriatorially or otherwise) who voted for the second reading were: (Present) Leinster, Devonshire, Lansdowne, Conyngham, Clanricarde, Leitrim, Gosford, Charlemount, Cork, Duncannon; (Proxies) Wellesley, Alranley, Chaworth, Cloncurry, Plunket, Stanley. Those who voted against were: (Present) Wellington, Abercorn, Thomond, Westmeath, Mount Cashel, Wicklow, Rosse, Glengall, Gort, Beresford, Ormonde, Clanhassel, Maryborough, Clanwilliam, Archbishop of Cashel, Bishop of Meath; (Proxies) Talbot, Digby, Mount Edgcumbe, Longford, Mayo, Enniskillen, Belmore, O'Neil, Limerick, Clancarty, Charleville, Tyrone. —Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxv. pp. 1205, 1207.

## CHAPTER VII.

## RATHCORMAC.

THE news of the rejection of the Tithe Bill by the Lords was joyfully received by the Ascendancy party in Ireland. "The Lords," said the *Evening Packet*, expressing the universal Ascendancy feeling, "have done their duty in a lordly way." Meetings were convened, dinners were given, speeches on the text, "No surrender" were made, and the "memory of the glorious, pious, and immortal William III." was drunk and re-drunk, as if, indeed, a most perfect community of thought, feeling, and action existed between the spirit, (so to say,) of one of the most enlightened and liberal of men, and the conduct of the most ignorant, and prejudiced of factions.

But the Ascendancy did not like to rejoice all by themselves, and, accordingly, they sent to England to invite one, whom doubtless, they regarded as the most perfect living representative of the principles of William III., to participate in their joys, and make merry with them over their triumphs. The individual so invited to visit the Irish shores in the interest of religion, truth, and justice, was no less a personage than the Earl of Winchelsea. Assuredly, had Don Quixote and Bombastes Furioso lived in those times, and had they but loathed Irish Papists, they too would have been invited by the Orange faction to drink the "memory of the glorious, pious, and immortal," to shout at the top of their



voices "No surrender!" and to help in the noble work of keeping the temple of Christianity in Ireland—of which Lord Roden was the chief pillar—on its legs.

The Earl of Winchelsea came gladly, exultingly. He was at once installed a member of the Orange Society, and entertained on the 20th of August at a magnificent banquet in Dublin, presided over by Lord Roden. Lord Roden sounded the keynote of the speeches for the night. "The only bond," said the Orange leader, "which unites England to Ireland is Protestantism." To this note all the speeches that followed were pitched. "The ministers of Christ" were to be supported. The "gentry and clergy," were to stand together. The country was to be "saved from Popery." "I, yesterday," said the distinguished guest of the evening, in responding to the toast of his "health," "joined the Orange Society [tremendous applause], and I call upon God to witness that as long as I can draw one leg after another, I will come to this country to share any dangers that await you." This announcement was received with enthusiastic and long continued cheers. When the cheering had subsided, his lordship then begged the meeting to allow him to introduce into the country a genuine Protestant and English mode of expressing approval, pleasure, and delight at public assemblies; and, complete silence having been obtained, the great Orange recruit initiated his hearers in the effects and charms of that species of applause (so popular among Irish Ascendancy men, even to the present day) known by the name of "Kentish fire."

The meeting listening with rapt attention, his Lordship first clapped his hands together four or five times in the "Kentish fire" style. Then he called on Lord Roden and the guests immediately around him to join in; by degrees the "fire" spread to the other guests, and at last the whole assemblage was involved in the glorious—in fact, in the "glorious, pious, and immortal"—conflagration. The Ascendancy press of the

day tell us that the effect of the "fire" was tremendous, as increasing in volume, and growing in intensity, it burst forth from the banqueting-chamber, filling with astonishment and dismay the perplexed imaginations of the Papist *canaille* who crowded in the streets outside. Not, apparently, since the day when the cannon of William roared across the waters of the Boyne had so cheering a sound fallen on Irish Orange ears as that of Winchelsea's "Kentish fire."

"Very fine fooling, this," wrote O'Connell from his retreat at Darrynane, on reading the accounts of the Winchelsea dinner,— "Kentish fire" and all. "The Orange faction have not got fools enough amongst themselves in their Rodens and Downshires, but they must, forsooth, send to England for a 'leading buffoon'— Lord Winchelsea!" "I once tried," continued the Agitator, "to conciliate the Orangemen,<sup>1</sup> but I will never try again. I once hoped to induce them to fight side by side with the Catholics for the good of their common country, but I hope so no more. The Orange party have thrown down the gauntlet at the Winchelsea dinner, and the Catholics must take it up. The struggle against Ascendency must be persevered in to the end; the popular watchwords still, as heretofore, must be 'No tithes,' and 'Repeal.' "

This letter of O'Connell did not, however, shake the growing belief of the Ascendency that a fatal blow had been struck at the agitation by the rejection of the Tithe Bill. The peasants, they seem to have thought, would no longer continue the struggle against tithes; the agitators even might be expected to desist from the combat. "We do not expect," said the *Packet*, in September, "that the clergy will find any difficulty in collecting the tithes due after the 1st of November. The poor peasants

<sup>1</sup> He had on one occasion, during his efforts to conciliate the Orangemen in 1833, appeared at a public meeting in Cork, with an orange lily in his coat. "You see, boys," he said, "I'm a bit of an Orangeman myself," at which the meeting cheered.



really do not care, and will not allow themselves to be led away any more by designing agitators." At a meeting of the Protestant Conservative Club, during the same month, Lord Roden had also a sympathetic word for the "poor peasants." Their best friends, he said, were the gentry; and they knew it, and would reciprocate the kindly feeling of the gentry towards them, but for the intrigues and tamperings of the "designing agitators." "The temporal interests of the Protestant clergy and the lower Papists," the Rev. M. Boylan urged, "were bound up together." Nevertheless, Mr. Boylan did not disguise his conviction that the mainstay of the Ascendency was England, and to Englishmen, "whose blood runs in our veins, whose fathers were our fathers, who kneel before the same altar, and worship the same God," he appealed for sympathy and succour. In October, another great Ascendency meeting was held in Bandon—the centre of southern Orangedom—where more "glorious, pious, immortal, no-surrender" speeches were made, calling upon Protestants to defend "the faith delivered to the saints," and to stand by, and if necessary to die for, the "cause of religion, truth, and God." At this meeting, the Rev. Mortimer O'Sullivan—a man of real capacity—instead of indulging in the Ascendency cackle of the day, struck out an original course, which, at least, had the merit of being an ingenious, if not an honest effort, to create a diversion in favour of the Church. O'Connell, he said, had not really the interests of the peasantry at heart. If he had, why did he not take up the Land Question or the Poor Law? He knew—"all men knew—that the remission of tithes would induce a corresponding increase of rent," and that the burdens of the peasantry would not be relieved by their abolition. If, he asseverated, O'Connell had the interests of the peasantry really at heart, he would address himself to the subject of rent, not tithes.

But, all the great Ascendency meetings of the day were thrown in the shade by the vast gathering which

met, under the presidency of the Earl of Hillsborough, at Hillsborough, in November. On this memorable occasion, 60,000 Orange yeomen, marching in military style, decked in the colours of their party, and presenting a truly imposing appearance, supported the noble President, who was, besides, surrounded by almost all the shining lights of Orangedom in Ireland—including the Marquis of Downshire, Lord Londonderry, Sir R. Bateson, Sir Arthur Hill, Lord Clanwilliam, Lord Castlereagh, and the eternal Roden. But, the ranks of the Orangemen at Hillsborough were still further strengthened by the advent of a redoubtable recruit—a man, far superior in intellectual power to all present, but fully their equal in bigotry and intolerance—Dr. Cooke, Moderator of the Synod of Ulster. The speeches delivered were of the good old Orange hue; and may be compressed into the four words “No surrender,” “No Popery.” Dr. Cooke, coming forward as the “representative of the religion of the country and the Bible,” declared that all Protestants should unite against the common enemy. Sir Richard Bateson said it was “vain and fruitless” to attempt to conciliate the Catholics,” and all agreed that the Papists were irreconcilable rebels; that they had no just cause of complaint; and ought, in fact, to feel very contented and happy, instead of crying out against a “Protestant Ascendency” which really did not exist at all.<sup>2</sup>

The Hillsborough meeting, which surpassed in numbers, and excelled in “tallness” of talk, all the other Ascendency assemblages, produced a great impression in England. It seemed as if the tide of Roman invasion was all of a sudden to be turned back by the yeomen of Ulster, under the command of Lord Hillsborough, and his colleagues, and friends. “Before the

<sup>2</sup> “They [the Catholics],” said Sir R. Bateson, “cannot say that there is any Protestant Ascendency.”—*Kilkenny Moderator*, Nov. 5th, 1834.



75,000<sup>3</sup> men assembled at Hillsborough, and the rest of the Orangemen of Ulster," said the *Standard*, "O'Connell and his followers will not stand a week." "The Protestants of Ulster," said the *Times*, "constitute a tremendous military force—a yeomanry of the right stamp—and will be able to defend themselves."

Meanwhile, the landlords continued to rally manfully to the side of the Church, and to pay the tithes willingly and steadily. "The landlords," said the *Evening Mail*, "are coming forward nobly and generously in aid of the Church, and in support of their religion." "The landlords," wrote O'Connell (who was not so unmindful of the rent-question as Mortimer O'Sullivan thought, or affected to think, and who foresaw what tithe-paying by the landlords would ultimately come to), "are determined to add a tithe-proctoring campaign to the other glories with which the wretched state of their tenantry has adorned them." "The landlords," said the *Times*—writing under the inspiration of one of those momentary flashes of intelligence that occasionally light up the darkness through which the oracles of Printing-House Square generally look at Irish questions—"the landlords, terrified by the violence of the peasants in resisting tithes, and fearing fatal consequences for the Church, have [in many instances] paid the tithes. . . . But the payment cannot last. Legislation is necessary in the interests of society, and to take people out of the hands of the agitators."

On the 14th of November, the king, who regarded the Government with disfavour since the appointment of the Church Commission and the retirement of Grey, availed himself of the pretext afforded by the succession of Lord Althorp to the House of Lords as Viscount Spencer, and the difficulty of getting a Whig leader in the Commons, to dismiss the Melbourne ministry. On the 15th the seals of office were trans-

<sup>3</sup> Probably an exaggeration.

ferred to the Duke of Wellington, and on the 9th of December, on the return of Sir Robert Peel from the Continent, a Tory administration, with Peel as Prime Minister, was formed. The Earl of Haddington was sent to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant, and Sir Henry Hardinge as Chief Secretary. In November the work of tithe-collecting recommenced; and in December the prophecy of the *Packet*, that "the clergy would find no difficulty in collecting the tithes," was shockingly falsified; the assertion that the "poor peasants really did not care," most terribly refuted.

On the 18th of December, 1834, a force of horse (4th Royal Irish Dragoons), foot (29th Regiment), and police, under the command of Major Waller (29th Regiment), Lieutenant Tait (Dragoons), Captain Pepper (Police), Captain Colles, J.P., and Captain Bagley, R.M., proceeded to collect the tithes of Archdeacon Ryder, J.P., in the parish of Gortroe, County Cork. The dragoons, who marched from Cork City, fell in with a small body of peasants, at a place called Barthelmy's Cross, near the village of Gortroe. The peasants were armed with their usual weapons, sticks and slanes, and some of them were mounted. Archdeacon Ryder, who accompanied the cavalcade in the double capacity of parson and magistrate, suggested to Captain Bagley, on seeing the peasants, that it might be prudent for the dragoons to draw their swords, and get ready for action; and, at the request of Captain Bagley, Lieutenant Tait ordered his men so to do. The peasants, however, made no effort to obstruct the advance of the dragoons, but retreated steadily before them, through the village of Gortroe, falling back on the farmstead of one of the tithe-defaulters—the widow Ryan by name—whose indebtedness to Archdeacon Ryder amounted to the sum of 40s. The widow Ryan lived near the hamlet of Rathcormac. Her house (one of a cluster of houses outside the little village) stood at some distance from the high road, with which it was con-



ned by the usual boreen entrance. In front of the house was a large yard, and in front of the yard, and on the same side of the boreen, a haggart—both yard and haggart being separated from the boreen by a mud wall, about four feet high. To the rear of yard, and haggart, was a well-planted shrubbery. The peasants, who, in their struggle against tithes, generally selected with deliberation and care the points at which from time to time they determined to “give battle” to the authorities, had resolved on the present occasion to confront the force of Parson Ryder at the house of the widow Ryan. With this object they “fortified” the haggart and yard. The gate opening from the yard into the boreen they removed, and in its place wedged a cart (with the shafts resting in the yard) tightly between the piers—so tightly, in fact, that it became an immovable fixture, and could neither be pulled into the yard nor dragged back into the boreen. At the entrance from the main road to the boreen a barricade was thrown up, and behind this barricade a number of men were placed, to await the arrival of the troops, the yard and haggart being occupied by the main body of peasants, armed with sticks, slanes, spades, pitchforks, and reaping-hooks.

While the dragoons, under Tait and Bagley, were marching on the widow Ryan’s from Barthelmy’s Cross, pushing the peasants’ “outpost” before them, the 29th and the police, under Waller and Pepper and Colles, were coming up from another direction to the same point. At the entrance to the boreen the peasant “outpost” halted, and the 29th, and the police joined the dragoons. Bagley addressed the men behind the barricade, requesting them to permit the troops to enter the boreen. The men answered, “No tithes! no parson! You have no right to come in.” Bagley replied, “We shall force an entrance if you do not give way.” The peasants again shouted, “No tithes! no parson! no Church!”

After some further discussion between the magis-

trates and the peasants, and a good deal of cheering and noise on the part of the latter, Bagley at last said, "My good people, be silent, I am going to read the Riot Act." "We want none of your bye-laws here," shouted back the leader of the peasants, and then, turning to his own followers, called out, as Bagley began to read the Act, "To the haggart, boys! to the haggart! we'll defend it, or lose our lives!" and for the haggart, with a rush, and cries of "No tithes! no tithes!" the peasants made. Bagley, having read the Riot Act, ordered the police to throw down the barricade; this they quickly did, whereupon the troops entered the boreen, the dragoons leading the way. On approaching the haggart the dragoons halted, and the 29th marched forward. On reaching the haggart wall, the 29th halted, and Major Waller sent to Captain Bagley for further instructions.

Bagley said, "You must dislodge the peasants from the haggart and the yard. If they do not go quietly, you must try the bayonet. If that is not sufficient, you must fire; but do not fire except in the last resort." Major Waller then directed Lieutenant Alves to attack the haggart with a portion of the men of the 29th, and Lieutenant Shepherd to attack the yard with another. The dragoons and police were stationed in the boreen between the haggart and the main road, to prevent any advance of the peasants from that quarter. Hostilities were commenced by Archdeacon Ryder, who, acting upon his own responsibility, succeeded, all by himself, in clambering over the wall and entering the haggart. He was seized by the peasants neck and crop, and literally flung back into the boreen. Alves then mounted the wall, and waving his sword, called on his men to "follow." Seeing Alves on the wall, the leader of the peasants shouted to his comrades, "Don't let him in! don't let him in! don't strike him; but don't let him in!" A number of peasants quickly rushed forward, and brandished their sticks close up in front of Alves.



Alves parried the sticks with his sword, while his men climbed on to the wall. Many of the soldiers having got on the top of the wall, were about to pull up some of their comrades, and to descend on the inside, when the peasant leader roared to his companions, "Now, boys, at them!" and the peasants (sticks, slanes, and pitchforks in hand,) made for the soldiers. A fierce fight ensued, the peasants striking furiously at the soldiers with their formidable weapons, and the soldiers vigorously thrusting back with their bayonets. Again and again the soldiers climbed to the top of the wall, and again and again they were driven back, maimed and bruised, with their bayonets bent, and their firelocks smashed, many of the peasants having been placed *hors de combat* by bayonet-wounds. After this struggle had continued for some time, Lieutenant Alves called out to Major Waller, "We cannot, major, take this place by the bayonet," whereupon Arch-deacon Ryder rushed up to Captain Bagley, crying out, "What are we to do? we are so resisted!"

Simultaneously with the struggle at the haggart, Lieutenant Shepherd was endeavouring to force his way into the yard. He had succeeded in jumping into the cart, followed by two of his men, while the rest climbed up the wall at either side, when the peasants rushed forward, and seizing the shafts and lifting them high up in the air, rolled Shepherd and his companions clean back into the boreen. However, he soon returned to the attack, and a fight, even more desperate than that being waged at the haggart, followed. The soldiers charged with the bayonet again, but to little purpose. Enter the yard they could not, either over the wall, or by mounting the cart. Then, finding it was hopeless to take either the haggart or yard by the bayonet, Major Waller gave directions to his lieutenants to fire. Alves' men fired first. After they had done so, Major Waller, who from his position in the boreen could command a

better view of what was going on in the yard than in the haggart, tells us that he looked in the direction of the yard to see what effect Alves' fire had produced there. "It produced no effect," he says; "the fight went on as violently as ever." Shepherd, on hearing Alves' fire, called to Waller, saying, "Major, must I fire?" and Waller answered, "Yes."

Shepherd, turning to the peasants, then said, "Now if you do not give way, I must fire." The leader of the peasants replied, "We are not afraid to die: lives must be lost on either side before ye come in." There was no alternative now left Shepherd but to give the word "fire;" this he promptly did. "I then," says Major Waller, "looked in the direction of the cart to see the effect. The crowd dispersed after the fire, but quickly closed up, and rushed back to the cart as thick as ever."<sup>4</sup> Such truly had been the case. The peasants, thrown but for a moment into confusion, quickly rallied; and as their leader called out, "Never flinch, my boys! close up, and at them again!"<sup>5</sup> flung themselves once more on the soldiers, who, under the cover of the fire, had jumped into the cart, and clambered over the wall, driving them back with eminent success. But sticks, slanes, and pitchforks, though weapons, which, in the hands of a martial peasantry, could be effectively used against bayonets, were poor instruments of defence against powder and ball. After a struggle—to the gallantry of which Lieutenant Shepherd bore testimony, asserting that he "had never seen such determined bravery as was shown by the people on that day"—the peasantry gave way under the sustained fire of the troops, retreating steadily on the shrubbery.

Major Waller then occupied the haggart and the yard. The peasants had not, however, it seems, been completely disposed of. "They are mustering in the shrubbery," said Captain Colles to Waller, "you

<sup>4</sup> Waller, Evidence at the Coroner's inquest.

<sup>5</sup> Shepherd, *ibid.*



must disperse them." "No," replied Waller, who doubtless had had quite enough of work which in all probability he did not consider particularly clean; "I'll surround the farmyard and keep what I have got, for if I leave it, the peasants will come back, and I shall have my work all over again." At this juncture Archdeacon Ryder came up and said, "All right, major, I have got my tithes." It seems that the Archdeacon—who had performed various strategical movements on his own account during the day (including the escapade in the haggart) had succeeded in taking the widow's house in the rear, while the battle was raging in front, with the result, that he saw the widow, and obtained the tithes from her. It was this cheerful fact that he now announced to Waller. The parson being satisfied, all were satisfied, and Major Waller and Lieutenant Tait marched their men back to Cork. The soldiers gone, the peasants emerged from the shrubbery to take up their comrades who had fallen in the fray, and to find that the casualties had been considerable; twelve peasants were killed, and forty-two wounded."

None of the soldiers had been killed; but many were wounded. An inquest, at which twenty-three jurors were empanelled, was, a few days later, held on the bodies of the peasants who had fallen. The inquiry lasted for thirteen days, and resulted in a mixed verdict; thirteen jurors being for a verdict of "wilful murder," two for "manslaughter," and eight for "justifiable homicide."

The effect produced by the affray, not on "agitators," but on "peaceful" citizens, may be gathered by the following letter, addressed to Sir Robert Peel by a Dublin gentleman:—

SIR,—It is with feelings of great pain I lay before you a third edition of the *Dublin Observer*, giving an account of the

\* *Kilkenny Moderator*, December 24th, 1834; Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxvi. p. 523. Seven had been mortally wounded, and thirty-five more or less seriously.

effort to recover *forty shillings tithe* in the parish of Gortroe, County Cork; to effect which twelve men were shot dead, eight were badly wounded, and twenty less dangerously.<sup>7</sup>

Great God! is our country to pass from poverty, starvation, and pestilence, through the dire calamities of civil war, bloodshed, and slaughter? or is a Church to be supported at the shrine of avarice by human sacrifices on the altar of Moloch?

I appeal to you, sir, for justice to my countrymen. I appeal to you as premier of England, as a statesman and a Christian, for the immediate interposition of your authority.

MICHAEL MCKENNA.

To this letter, Peel replied that "his Majesty's Government had already received an account of the very lamentable event, and had given such directions as appeared to them requisite." The effect produced on O'Connell by the Rathcormac affair, may be gathered from the powerful speech (delivered soon after the occurrence) in which, taking "Rathcormac" for his text, he denounced "the iniquitous system which has stained the land with blood." Commenting on this speech, the *Times* attacked O'Connell—"staunch bloodhound that he is"<sup>8</sup>—for using the sanguinary incident as a lever to raise the country yet more furiously against the Church, and censuring him for encouraging the system of exclusive dealing. O'Connell answered the *Times*, and all his assailants, by declaring his determination to carry on the war to the bitter end, and announcing the methods of attack he proposed to employ. "I will," he said at New Ross in December, 1834, "enforce exclusive dealing in every part of Ireland where I deem it necessary." The Irish leader approved of the system of boycotting, but he was opposed to acts of violence and outrage. "No violence," he urged, addressing the peasants of Kerry in January, 1835, "for over their tea and tracts the Orange faction would delight to shed your blood."

<sup>7</sup> It was subsequently ascertained that thirty-five were less dangerously wounded.

<sup>8</sup> *Times*, quoted in *Kilkenny Moderator*, January 7th, 1835.



## CHAPTER VIII.

PEEL "PLAYS," AND RUSSELL "TRUMPS THE TRICK."

IN December and January, 1834-35, a general election took place; the results in the three kingdoms were as follows:—

ENGLAND.					
Tories returned	.	.	.	.	212
Whigs	"	.	.	.	99
Radicals	"	.	.	.	189
					<hr/>
					500

SCOTLAND.					
Tories returned	.	.	.	.	13
Whigs	"	.	.	.	10
Radicals	"	.	.	.	30
					<hr/>
					53

IRELAND.					
Tories returned	.	.	.	.	39
Whigs (acting mainly with O'Connell)	.	.	.	.	22
Repealers (acting directly with O'Connell)	.	.	.	.	44
					<hr/>
					105 <sup>1</sup>

The first struggle between the two great English parties occurred on the question of the election of the Speaker. Manners Sutton (the former Speaker) was put forward by the Tories; Mr. Abercrombie (member for Edinburgh) was proposed by the Whigs. O'Connell threw his weight into the scale in favour of the

<sup>1</sup> See *Times*, February 10th, 1835, and *Kilkenny Moderator*, January 31st, 1835, also Division Lists in Hansard.

Whig candidate, and for three reasons: (1) because he was anxious to drive Peel from power as the leader of the English allies of the Irish Ascendency; (2) because Abercrombie had shown himself well affected towards the Irish party in the previous Parliament; (3) because he believed that if the Whigs returned to office, they would introduce a more sweeping measure of Church reform, and generally administer the affairs of Ireland more in accordance with Irish ideas than the Tories. The election of Speaker came off on the 19th of February, and terminated thus:—

FOR ABERCROMBIE.		FOR SUTTON.	
English votes	224	English votes	247
Scotch „	31	Scotch „	18
Irish (O'Connellites)	61	Irish (Ascendency chiefly)	41
<hr/> 316		<hr/> 306	

Thus, it will be seen that as between English and Scotch members Sutton had a majority of 10; as between English, Scotch, and Irish Ascendency men, a majority of 51; O'Connell turned the scales in favour of Abercrombie and secured the triumph of the Whigs.

The next struggle was on the 27th of February, on an amendment, moved by Lord Althorp, to the address, when the Whigs, with the aid of O'Connell, once more defeated the Government—this time by a majority of seven.

Peel, still clinging to office despite his defeats on the Address and the Speakership, Lord John Russell, pressed forward by O'Connell, resolved to give him battle once for all on the question of the Irish Church.<sup>2</sup> Peel did

<sup>2</sup> Lord John Russell, writing of his struggle with Peel at this time, says: "As leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons, I had no smooth path before me. To turn the majority into a minority by a direct vote of want of confidence, would have been easy. But my object was to keep the majority together; and in the whole twenty years during which I led the Liberal party in the House of Commons, I never had so difficult a task. The plain and obvious plan of voting the supplies for three months being given up, the question naturally occurred—in what manner could Sir Robert Peel



not wait to be attacked. Anticipating the advance of the united forces of Whigs, Radicals, and Repealers under Russell, he moved forward, with the design of out-generalling his skilful opponent. On the 20th of March, Sir Henry Hardinge introduced, by way of resolution, a measure of Church reform substantially identical with the measure introduced in the previous session by Littleton, and which had been thrown out by the House of Lords. Indeed, the only material difference between the Tory measure of 1835 and the Whig measure of 1834 was, that the terms of the former were less favourable to the clergy, and more favourable to the landlords, than the terms of the latter had been. The main proposition of both measures was the conversion of the tithe into a rent-charge; but, while Littleton had proposed to fix the rent-charge at 80*l.* per cent. of the tithe, Hardinge now proposed to fix it at 75*l.*, thus increasing by fully five per cent. the bribe offered by the Whigs to the landlords to acquiesce in the change. The ground upon which both measures were rested was necessity. "On what do I rest my hope that the measure will be adopted by Parliament?" asked Sir H. Hardinge, in introducing his bill. "My answer is, that the urgency and magnitude of evil, which has arrived at the maturity of misfortune, render it absolutely necessary that Parliament should attempt to rescue society in Ireland from the disorganized state into which it is at present thrown by

obtain that fair trial which his own partisans, and many independent Whigs, called for in his behalf? There appeared no question so well fitted for an *experimentum crucis* as the question of the Irish Church. A proposal for a commission, made by Lord Grey's Government, had been considered by four of the leading members of the Cabinet as a test principle, and the Liberal members of the first Reformed House of Commons had accepted the question of the integrity and perpetual endowment of the Irish Church as marking the frontier-line between Liberal and Tory principles. I, therefore, proposed to bring forward a resolution which on the one hand would be supported by Lord Howick, and was on the other the basis of an alliance with O'Connell and the Irish members."—"Recollections and Suggestions," p. 135.

the tithe question. That disorganization has proceeded to such a pitch—intimidation has been carried to such an extent in that country, as to render it utterly impossible to proceed with the collection of tithes. It is well known that in Ireland the turbulent man who disobeys the law is rewarded, whilst the peaceable subject is liable to suffer ill-treatment in his person, and to have his property destroyed, if he attempt to obey the law by paying tithe.”<sup>3</sup>

Well might Lord John Russell have asked, as he did ask, when Hardinge had explained the Government scheme: “What has been gained by the action of the House of Lords in rejecting the measure of last year?” Well might Hume have assailed, as he did assail, the inconsistency and dishonesty of the Tories in introducing, in 1835, a measure practically identical with that which, but a few months previously, they had denounced as an “act of spoliation.” Well might Sir Henry Barron (Whig-Repeal member for Waterford) declare, as he did declare, that “the Government had abandoned every principle they had ever professed,” and that “there was only one possible way of accounting for their conduct,” namely, “their base desire of holding office.”

O’Connell met the Tory bill of 1835, as he had met the Whig bill of 1834. No measure of Church reform, he said, would satisfy the Irish people unless it contained a proposal for “Appropriation.” That “one word,” in his opinion, “was worth the whole bill.”

Lord John Russell was determined that this flank movement of Peel should be effectively encountered, and accordingly he put up Spring Rice to move, as an amendment to Hardinge’s resolution, “That it is expedient to alter and amend the laws respecting tithes in Ireland.” But this counter-move of Russell was not successful. Spring Rice’s amendment was rejected by a majority of 213

<sup>3</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxvii. p. 14.



to 198. Thus, Peel had firmly held his ground, and improved his position. But Russell soon returned to the attack.

On the 30th of March he moved for "a committee of the whole House to consider the temporalities of the Irish Church," and proposed that the surplus revenues of the Establishment should be "applied in some way by which the moral and religious improvement of the people of Ireland might be advanced," so that the "funds which were raised nominally for their benefit" might be "used for their benefit in reality." The debate on this motion lasted for four days. On the 3rd of April, it was wound up by O'Connell, Peel, and Russell. The Established Church in Ireland, O'Connell said, was a hopeless failure. It had made no advances towards Protestantizing the country, and it had been an active agent in intensifying the hatred of the people against England. Peel condemned the tactics of the Opposition as unreasonable and unfair. It was absurd, he said, to bring forward a motion for appropriating the surplus revenues of the Church before the existence of a surplus revenue had been proved. The proper course to take would be to wait until the Church Commission had reported, and until the House had been placed in the possession of full and accurate information respecting the revenues of the Establishment. Russell replied that if, when the Commission reported, it was found that no surplus existed, his motion would, of course, be inoperative, and no harm could be done. But he held strong views on the question of Appropriation, and would, therefore, press his motion to a division. It was, he urged, "absolutely and imperatively necessary"<sup>4</sup> to know whether the "principle of Appropriation would be sanctioned" before they came to any decision upon Hardinge's resolution. For his own part, he was not disposed to vote for any tithe bill in which the principle of Appropriation was not recognized, nor to sup-

<sup>4</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxvii. pp. 361—777.

port any Government which, in the absence of an act embodying that principle, should continue to use military force in the collection of tithe in Ireland. Referring to the arguments which had been used as to the "sacredness of Church property," he reminded the House, that, by the Government scheme, it was proposed to take ten per cent. of its property from the Church. "Here," he continued, "is from 150,000*l.* to 180,000*l.*, taken from the Church, and to whom is it to be given? Into the secular hands of the landlords. And yet [pointing to the Ministerial benches] those are the gentlemen who hold Church property to be so sacred that they will not permit any part of it whatever to be devoted to the religious and moral education of the people. But still they have—perhaps for the sake of securing the remainder of the property—no scruple to take 180,000*l.* from the Church to put it finally into the hands of the landlords of Ireland."<sup>5</sup>

On the termination of Russell's speech, early in the morning of Friday, April 3rd, the House divided on Russell's motion with the following result:—

For the motion . . . . .	322
Against . . . . .	289

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Majority against Ministers . . . . . 33<sup>6</sup>

Despite this defeat, Peel still remained in office. But Russell quickly attacked him again. On the afternoon of the 3rd of April, the leader of the opposition followed up the advantage which he had gained in the morning, and, the House having resolved itself into committee in accordance with his motion, moved, "That it is the opinion of this committee that any surplus which may remain after fully providing for the spiritual instruction of the Established Church in Ireland, ought to be locally applied to the general education of all classes of Christians." This motion

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxvii. p. 764.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pp. 361—777.



was carried against the Government by a majority of 178 to 140. Nevertheless, Peel held his ground. Finally, on the 7th of April, Russell once more returned to the charge, moving, "That it is the opinion of this House that no measure upon the subject of tithes in Ireland can lead to a satisfactory and final adjustment, which does not embody the principle of appropriation." This motion was carried by a majority of 285 to 258, and Peel at length resigned. A Liberal administration under the premiership of Lord Melbourne, and consisting of the following principal members, was then formed:—

ENGLAND.

Viscount Melbourne . . .	First Lord of the Treasury.
Marquess of Lansdowne . . .	President of the Council.
Viscount Duncannon . . .	Privy Seal.
T. Spring Rice . . .	Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Lord John Russell . . .	Home Secretary.
Viscount Palmerston . . .	Foreign Secretary.
Lord Glenelg . . .	Colonial Secretary.
Lord Holland . . .	Duchy of Lancaster.
Sir J. C. Hobhouse . . .	President of the India Board.
Earl of Auckland . . .	First Lord of the Admiralty.
C. Poulett Thomson . . .	President of the Board of Trade.
Viscount Howick . . .	Secretary at War.

*Not in the Cabinet.*

Marquess of Conyngham . . .	Lord Chamberlain.
Lord C. Fitzroy . . .	Vice-Chamberlain.
Duke of Argyll . . .	Lord Steward.
Earl of Lichfield . . .	Postmaster-General.
Earl of Albemarle . . .	Master of the Horse.
Mr. Labouchere . . .	Master of the Mint.
Hon. G. S. Byng . . .	Comptroller of the Household.
E. T. Stanley { . . .	Secretaries of the Treasury.
Francis Baring { . . .	
Sir John Campbell . . .	Attorney-General.
Sir C. Rolfe . . .	Solicitor-General.
Earl of Errol . . .	Master of the Buckhounds.
Sir H. Vivian . . .	Master-General of Ordnance.
Sir H. Parnell . . .	Treasurer of the Navy.
Charles Wood . . .	Secretary to the Admiralty.

LORDS OF THE TREASURY.

Lord Seymour  
Mr. Ord

Mr. R. More O'Ferrall.  
Mr. R. Stuart.

## IRELAND.

Earl of Mulgrave . . .	Lord-Lieutenant.
Lord Plunket . . .	Lord Chancellor.
Viscount Morpeth . . .	Chief Secretary.
Mr. Perrin . . .	Attorney-General.
Mr. O'Loghlen . . .	Solicitor-General.
Mr. Drummond . . .	Under-Secretary.



## CHAPTER IX.

## MELBOURNE "LEADS."

WITH the new Ministry O'Connell formed a close alliance, on, practically, the following terms: he was to suspend the demand for Repeal, to give a general support to the Government, and to aid the Irish Executive in maintaining English authority in Ireland; they were to introduce remedial measures (particularly a tithe abolition bill with the Appropriation clause,<sup>1</sup> and a bill to reform the corporations), and to appoint to official positions in Ireland men of popular leanings and sympathies. In fact, as O'Connell put it, a "real union" between the two countries, "involving equal rights, privileges, and franchises," was to be established, and practical effect was to be given to the Catholic Relief Act of 1829 by "taking the Government of Ireland out of the hands of the Ascendancy faction, and identifying it with the nation at large."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As to the importance attached to the Appropriation clause, see O'Connell's letter to the people of Ireland, dated Merriion Square, April 9th, 1835, and Lord Melbourne's statement in the Lords, May 2nd, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> O'Connell, Letter to Cloncurry, *Kilkenny Moderator*, October 21st, 1835. Terms or stipulations in the strict sense of the words there were none between O'Connell and the Ministry; but that an understanding of the above nature existed, is abundantly proved by the conduct both of O'Connell and the Government. Earl Russell, in his "Recollections and Suggestions," says: "Compact there was none, but an alliance on honourable terms of mutual co-operation undoubtedly existed. The Whigs remained as before, the firm defenders of the Union; O'Connell remained as before, the ardent advocate of Repeal; but upon intermediate measures on which the two parties could agree consistently

Ministers proceeded promptly to fulfil their part of the arrangement. A Lord-Lieutenant, a Chief Secretary, a Solicitor-General, an Attorney-General, and an Under-Secretary—all of O'Connell's choice or approval, and all of Irish popular sympathies—were appointed to office in Ireland.<sup>3</sup>

O'Connell was equally prompt in fulfilling his part of the arrangement. He hastened to Ireland in April, and announced his determination of suspending the demand for Repeal, and supporting the Ministry. His arrival in Dublin was announced by the *Evening Mail* thus: "His Excellency Daniel O'Connell, Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of that part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland called Ireland, arrived in this good city of Dublin yesterday [Sunday] just too late for last mass, and immediately proceeded to the work of clearing from Toryism the seat of his Highness's Government—the Castle. Sir William Gossett has got the turn-out, and is to be

with their principles there was no want of cordiality" (p. 135). See also O'Connell's letter to the "People of Ireland," dated April 9th, 1835. (Irish press of the time.) The *Evening Mail's* account of the alliance was that, "in order that the Whigs may attain place, the price of O'Connell's support in lieu of his taking office is that this unfortunate country is to be abandoned to his management." The London correspondent of the *Mail* stated the "terms" to be that "every measure with respect to Ireland is to have O'Connell's sanction and approval"—terms which the Government "have acceded to the fullest extent, . . . in fact, O'Connell is to be virtually the Governor of Ireland." (Ibid.) Of the alliance, the *Times* said, "Listen, Englishmen, to the proposals of this enemy of your name and nation. He insists that the law-officers of the crown in Ireland shall be nominated by him. He insists that he shall have a veto on the Lord-Lieutenant." The *Times* added, "The agitator does not ask to be appointed himself to office." The *Morning Post* declared that the "new administration is to be the slave of O'Connell." "O'Connell," said the *Courier*, "is acting in the most disinterested manner," [simply expressing his wish] "to support whatever Government will do justice to Ireland."—See also *Kilkenny Moderator*, April 18th, 1835.

<sup>3</sup> The Irish Government was called by the Ascendency press "The O'Mulgrave" administration, and the Lord-Lieutenant used constantly to be referred to as "O'Mulgrave." See Ascendency press of the time.



replaced by Lieutenant Thomas Drummond, a dandified coxcomb, who is known as the person who marked out the celebrated boundaries in the Reform Bill. How many of our Irish institutions, including the Church, this sapper-general will consign to Schedule A. time alone can develop. It is said, however, that he is likely to make short work of them.”<sup>4</sup>

In a manifesto issued from his residence in Merrion Square on the 9th of April, O’Connell wrote as follows: “A new day begins to shine upon us—a new era opens for Ireland—an administration is formed, pledged, as well by its political principles as by its political interests, to do—it is all we require—justice to the people of Ireland. . . . I now come before the people of Ireland to avow myself the devoted supporter of that administration. To the king’s Ministers I have tendered my unbought, unpurchasable, unconditional support. I have neither made terms nor stipulations with them. It suffices for me that their political interests, as well as their political principles, are all identified with the cause of good government, and of justice to Ireland.”<sup>5</sup> While thus declaring his determination to support the Government, O’Connell took pains to warn Ministers that he

<sup>4</sup> As to the “dandified coxcomb,” see “Sketch of the political career of Thomas Drummond,” in the author’s brochure “Coercion or Redress—a Chapter from the Melbourne Administration.” Drummond was appointed to the office of Under-Secretary through the instrumentality (practically) of Perrin and Lord Althorp. Perrin very strongly expressed his opinion in favour of the appointment of a new Under-Secretary. Being asked on what grounds he urged the change, he “said in a low, earnest tone [to Lord Mulgrave], ‘My Lord, he will be your right eye, and if we have to spend our time plucking old beams out of it, your Government will not go straight.’” This settled the question, and Lord Althorp fortunately having had sufficient knowledge of Thomas Drummond to believe in his capacity and fitness for the post, he was soon afterwards appointed, Sir William Gossett being given the easier and more lucrative place of Sergeant-at-arms.—Torrens, Melbourne, vol. ii. p. 127.

<sup>5</sup> *Kilkenny Moderator*, May 2nd, 1835.

would help them only as long as they helped Ireland. "If I see the Ministry," he said, "persevering for one year in their determination to do justice to Ireland, I shall give them another trial; but let them take notice that I must see them at work. . . . If the Ministry deceive us, it will demonstrate that Repeal is our only resource."<sup>6</sup>

O'Connell, having given the signal for a cessation of hostilities, and for the adoption of a "watch and wait policy," returned immediately to London to see that the Ministers were "at work." The Ministers went to work on the 26th of June, when Lord Morpeth introduced the third bill which since 1834 had been brought forward for the purpose of commuting tithes into a rent-charge. Morpeth's bill was, with reference to the subject of commutation, based upon the same lines as Littleton's and Hardinge's. But as Hardinge's bill had been less favourable to the clergy than Littleton's, so Morpeth's was less favourable to them than Hardinge's. Littleton had fixed the tithe rent-charge at 80*l.* per cent. of the tithe;<sup>7</sup> Hardinge had fixed it at 75*l.* per cent.; Morpeth now fixed it at 68*l.* 5*s.* per cent.<sup>8</sup> In addition to this reduction in the amount of the tithe rent-charge, the bill contained a clause for appropriating the surplus revenues of the Church, in accordance with the terms of Russell's motion already referred to. It was proposed to suspend the presentation to any benefice which did not contain fifty [Episcopalian] Protestants, the spiritual wants of the Churchmen in

<sup>6</sup> Speech at the Anti-Tory Association. See *Kilkenny Moderator*, May 6th, 1835.

<sup>7</sup> Such was the percentage proposed by the bill as originally framed; but it was reduced to 60*l.* before leaving committee.—Walpole's "England," vol. iii. p. 309.

<sup>8</sup> The existing incumbents were, however, to be compensated for the reduction thus proposed in their incomes, by receiving 5*l.* per cent. from the perpetuity purchase fund.



such benefice—whether they amounted to one or forty-nine—either to be attended to by the clergyman of the neighbouring parish—who should receive an additional stipend of from 10*l.* to 50*l.* a year (according to the extent of the extra duties)—or by a curate who should receive a salary of 75*l.* a year. It was shown by Morpeth that out of 2405 parishes in Ireland there were no less than 157 in which there were no Episcopalian Protestants; 194 in which there were less than 10; 198 in which there were less than 20; 133 in which there were less than 30; 107 in which there were less than 40; and 77 in which there were less than 50; and it was estimated that the surplus revenues of these parishes would amount to the sum of 58,000*l.* a year. The Government now proposed that this sum should be devoted “to the promotion of religious and moral education in Ireland,” instead of being employed, as it had hitherto been employed,—to use the words of Lord Morpeth—“for the maintenance of sinecurists and absentees.” The bill also proposed, that in every parish where the endowment was over 300*l.* a year, and the number of Protestants over 50, the Lord-Lieutenant should be empowered to make such deduction from the value of the cure as he deemed proper, provided always that the income should not be less than 300*l.* a year.<sup>9</sup>

This bill was read a first and second time (on the 7th and 13th of July, respectively,) without opposition, but on going into committee (on the 21st of July), Peel moved the omission of the Appropriation clause.<sup>1</sup> The motion, however, was rejected, after three nights’

<sup>9</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxviii. pp. 1319, 1344. See also Walpole’s “History of England,” vol. iii. p. 316.

<sup>1</sup> This was the practical effect of Peel’s motion, but technically he moved an instruction to the committee to divide the bill into two parts, in order that the appropriation clause might be rejected without endangering the commutation clauses, of which in the main he approved.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxi. pp. 287, 790.

debate, by a majority of 319 to 282.<sup>2</sup> In the Lords the same tactics were observed by the Tories as had been observed by them in the Commons. The bill was read a first and second time without a division; but in committee, (on the 24th of August,) the rejection of the Appropriation clause was moved by Lord Haddington, and carried by a majority of 138 to 41.<sup>3</sup> The result of this division was the abandonment of the bill by the Government. The Lords had again “done their duty in a lordly manner.” They had once more saved the Church; once more thrown their sheltering shield over the Orange faction in Ireland. On the 10th of September Parliament was prorogued. The session had been a barren one so far as Ireland was concerned. Three important Irish measures—the Tithe Bill, the Municipal Reform Bill, and a bill for reorganizing the police force (then an inefficient body under Orange control)—had been passed through the Commons. All were defeated owing to the hostility of the Lords.

<sup>2</sup> Analysis of Division :—

FOR PEEL'S MOTION.					
English	.	.	.	.	232
Scotch	.	.	.	.	16
Irish	.	.	.	.	34
					<hr/>
					282
AGAINST.					
English	.	.	.	.	224
Scotch	.	.	.	.	32
Irish	.	.	.	.	63
					<hr/>
					319

Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxix. p. 1072.

<sup>3</sup> The Irish peers who voted for the appropriation clause: Charlemount, Foley, Dunally, Hill, Conyngham, Clanricarde, Plunket, Leitrim, Templemore, Cloncurry, Duncannon. The Irish peers who voted against: Westmeath, Downshire, Wicklow, Belmore, Bandon, Limerick, Glengall, Londonderry, Beresford, Clare, Carbery, Roden, Maryborough, Strangford, Clanwilliam, Fitzgerald, Archbishop of Tuam, Bishops of Limerick and Elphin.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxx. p. 936.



## CHAPTER X.

THOMAS DRUMMOND OBJECTS TO THE OLD "RULES OF THE GAME," AND MAKES A NEW DEPARTURE.

WITH the rejection of the Tithe Bill by the Lords the tithe war entered on its third campaign.

On the 7th of October, 1835, some cattle, which had been seized for tithes by Parson Croker of Limerick, were put up for sale. Early in the morning the walls of the city were placarded with notices to the following effect:—

"TITHES,

*"Stained with the Blood of Irishmen !*

"Parson Croker has distrained for tithes the cows and sheep of Mr. O'Flaherty of Croom,

*"Which are this day to be sold by public auction in Henry Street. Will any one purchase, and thereby uphold this iniquitous impost ?*

"THE BLOOD SHED AT RATHCORMAC ANSWERS THAT  
NO MAN WILL !"

No man did purchase. There was no riot, no disturbance, no breach of the peace. The services of the military, and police, who had been stationed in force in the vicinity of the place of sale (the Lord-Lieutenant having refused to allow them to be present at the sale, or to interfere at all save in the case of actual breach of the peace), were not needed to preserve order ; but there was no sale. The auctioneer,

having over and over again called in vain for bidders, ultimately "knocked down the lot," at a nominal price, to Parson Croker, who presented them as a gift to the House of Industry.

From October, 1835, to January, 1836, the war languished, the clergy desisting for a time from pressing claims which they found the people determined to resist, and the Executive unwilling to enforce.<sup>1</sup>

However, in January, 1836, the clergy once more took the field, reinforced by a powerful Lay Association, under the leadership of the notorious Orange chiefs—Lord Roden, Lord Enniskillen, and Lord Bandon. In the previous December, proceedings had been taken, under the auspices of this Association, in the Court of Exchequer, for the recovery of tithes, and more than 600 Exchequer bills for sums varying from 10*l.* to 1*s.* 9*d.* had been filed, process being served on the peasants by placarding the original bills in places specified by the court, and sending copies through the post.<sup>2</sup> But the peasants disregarded the bills, and treated the orders of the Court with contempt. Then, the Lay Association hit upon the expedient of re-

<sup>1</sup> The Executive refused on several occasions to allow the military or police to aid in the work of tithe-gathering. Sometimes when Drummond was satisfied that there might be a breach of the peace, police were ordered to attend at tithe sales, &c., but as a rule the Executive manifested a very decided unwillingness to have either police or soldiers (and especially soldiers) employed as tithe-proctors, &c., &c. (See Irish Press of the time.) Drummond often conferred with O'Connell on the subject of the Irish Government; and in those days the Irish leader was a frequent visitor at the Castle—a circumstance which much "exercised" the Ascendency press. "There can no longer be a doubt," said the *Times*, referring to the intimacy between O'Connell and the Castle, "that Lord Mulgrave, the king's representative in Ireland, has invited, and entertained to dinner the rancorous-mouthed ruffian, Daniel O'Connell." The *Kilkenny Moderator*, in quoting the above words of the *Times*, observed that "our contemporary and the rest of our English brethren must be apprised that Mr. O'Connell spends two or three hours daily in close conference with Mr. Drummond."—*Kilkenny Moderator*, October 17th, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> "Annual Register," 1836; "History," p. 296.



sorting to the obsolete practice of obtaining Writs of Rebellion against the contumacious tithe-defaulters.

“Baffled,” says the *Edinburgh Review*, referring to the subject, “by the steadiness of the Government in its purpose not to injure the public strength, and impair the usefulness of the constabulary by their employment in an odious duty, the Tories flew for assistance to the Court of Exchequer. The learned Barons, true to their calling, found a little old law for the occasion. They revived an obsolete process by which the police force was [to be] taken altogether out of the hands of the Government, and placed at the disposal of the Commissioners of Rebellion. To these men the Court entrusted the command of the constabulary, with extraordinary plenitude of powers. . . . In the short space of eighteen months writs of rebellion were issued against 2000 persons.”

The effect of these writs—which the Court had power to grant on the production of a sworn affidavit stating that process had been served and disregarded—was, that, the sheriff, the police, and military were bound, at the instance of the “Commissioner of Rebellion,” to arrest and detain in prison the tithe-defaulter until he paid. Thus, as by obtaining substituted service, the Lay Association had succeeded in bringing the peasants within the jurisdiction of the Courts, without endangering the lives of the process-servers, they now hoped, by means of the Writs of Rebellion, to compel the Executive to lend the clergy the aid of the military and police as of old to enforce their “rights.” But the new Orange organization imperfectly understood the character of the man at Dublin Castle with whom they had now to deal. Thomas Drummond, in whose fine nature the qualities of the soldier and statesman were blended, had determined that so far as he could prevent it, British honour should no longer be tarnished, and British statesmanship no longer disgraced, by the employment of British arms in the inglorious and abortive work of maintaining the Irish tithe

system ; and what Drummond resolved to do he generally did. Therefore, despite the Writs of Rebellion, he evinced a decided unwillingness to depart from his original resolution of not permitting either soldiers or police to take part in tithe-gathering, unless in cases of actual breach of the peace. Accordingly, when the "Commissioner of Rebellion" (usually a disreputable Orangeman<sup>3</sup>) proceeded with his Writ in his pocket to Tipperary, or Kilkenny, to seize some wretched tithe-defaulter, the police refused to act under his instructions, as no orders had arrived from the Castle, whereupon the Commissioner was compelled to return to Dublin as empty-handed as he came. Of course, this conduct on the part of Drummond literally made the Ascendency faction wild with rage. The Under-Secretary had with a courage which they never anticipated, stepped in between them and the peasants, and in the moment of their victory, as it were, had baffled their designs. However, they were resolved not to give up the struggle. They determined to force Drummond to act by "bringing the Courts down upon" the Executive. They summoned before the Barons of the Exchequer several head constables and sub-inspectors of police who had refused to obey the directions of the Commissioners of Rebellion, and these officers were committed or reprimanded by the judges for declining to assist in the service of the Writs. From the decisions of the Barons of the Exchequer some of the inculpatated officials appealed to the House of Lords. But while these appeals were pending, Sheil (against whom a writ of rebellion had been issued) brought the whole subject before the House of Commons, in February, contending—and being supported in his contention by the Irish law-officers—that the process was ob-

<sup>3</sup> A Sub-inspector of police thus described some of these commissioners : "Four more disreputable, drunken, or unfit individuals to be employed in so onerous and responsible a duty could not be found."—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxiii., p. 210.



solete,<sup>4</sup> and tyrannous, and that the decisions of the Exchequer, in holding the police liable for not obeying the mandates of the Commissioners, was unsound in law. In the course of the debate thus raised by Sheil, the Irish Solicitor-General (O'Loghlen) read with much effect an opinion given by the Chief Baron of the Exchequer (Joy), when Attorney-General in 1824, to the purport that the Irish police were never bound to act save under the directions of a magistrate, or in cases of actual breach of the peace, thus justifying the position taken up by Drummond, and citing Joy as an authority against himself. Serjeant Jackson defended the Barons of the Exchequer, and O'Connell with all his native vigour denounced them, "arraigning their judgments as a political decision," and, amid cheers, laughter, and interruptions, informing the House that Baron Smith, who had, since November, 1835, been too ill to attend the ordinary business of the Court, had, on the 26th of January, 1836, "hurried down" to throw his weight into the scale in upholding the illegal and inequitable jurisdiction assumed by the court.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The Irish Solicitor-General stated the process was described as obsolete in 1770.

<sup>5</sup> A writ of rebellion was served on O'Connell himself. The circumstances of his case he stated as follows in a letter to the "People of Great Britain:" "I have a residence in Ireland—it is in the parish of Kilcrebane in the County Kerry. . . . The present population is 10,154. Of these there are 9990 Catholics, 164 Protestants [of whom 87 are coastguards and police]. The rector is the Rev. Mr. Longfield. He has been rector for the last ten or twelve years. I believe he has not been so many days in the parish. I never saw him, and the only *service* he ever performed for me was leaving his usual residence at Bath, or Cheltenham, and coming to an election in Kerry to vote against me—that is all. His composition for tithes is 500*l.* a year or thereabouts, and he has also three or four glebes. . . . This is my statement of fact. . . . Here we are in round numbers 10,000 Catholics, called upon by our religious principles to pay our own clergymen—called upon by law to support the clergyman of say 200 Protestants, which clergyman goes off from them altogether, leaving them to a curate at 70*l.* a year, badly paid." (*Kilkenny Moderator*, July 2nd, 1836.) Mr. Longfield denied that he was ever in Bath or Cheltenham in his life

But this debate led to no practical results.

Meanwhile, the Lay Association pushed on vigorously with the work of issuing the Writs; the peasantry continued inflexible in their determination to disobey the decrees of the Court; and Drummond steadily adhering to his resolution not to permit the police to interfere save in cases of breach of the peace. The result of Drummond's non-intervention policy, and the policy of resistance adopted by the peasantry, was, that the Writs of Rebellion were in the main inoperative. As a rule, whenever the Commissioner, accompanied by his agents, appeared to enforce them, he was speedily put to flight; and even on one occasion when Drummond, apprehending a breach of the peace, and fearing bloodshed, ordered the police to attend in the mountains of Tipperary, while an attempt was made to seize an "outlaw," named Kennedy, the efforts of the Orangemen were unsuccessful. In fact, the Commissioners had no sooner arrived at Kennedy's house, than the peasants, "as if," (to use the language of an eye-witness,) "springing out of the ground," hastened on the scene, and quickly compelled the Commissioner and his party to perform a strategic movement to the rear. Upon this occasion the police and peasants did not come into collision; and, though the latter made a strenuous effort to "get at" the Commissioner, they carefully avoided inflicting any injury on the former.<sup>6</sup>

This was the condition of affairs in Ireland when, on the 25th of April, Lord Morpeth, for the second time, introduced his Tithe Bill. On the 1st of June, the

(his residence being in Cork), and stated that the amount of his tithe-composition was 280*l.*, not 500*l.* But he did not dispute the other statements in O'Connell's letter.

<sup>6</sup> On the subject of the writs of rebellion, &c., see "Annual Register," 1836; Hist. p. 295 *et seq.*; Chr. pp. 8—11; Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxi. p. 565 *et seq.*; Irish Press, Jan. to July, 1836. In some cases, the writs were effective. Sheil and Otway, the members for Tipperary, paid the tithes due by them, under the pressure of the writs.



second reading was carried, after three days' debate,<sup>7</sup> against an amendment of Stanley, by a majority of 300 to 261 votes.<sup>8</sup> On the 1st of July, the House went into committee, and Sharman Crawford moved that tithes should be totally abolished (compensation being made for existing interests), and that the Establishment should in future be maintained by the imposition of a tax on profit rents. Crawford's amendment was opposed by the Government, and by O'Connell (on the ground of its inexpediency), and lost by a majority of 61 to 18 votes.<sup>9</sup> On the 4th of July the Appropriation clause came under consideration. It was again opposed by the Tories, but again carried, this time by a ma-

<sup>7</sup> Lord Stanley moved as an amendment for leave to bring in a Bill "for the conversion of tithe-composition into rent-charges, and for the redemption thereof, and for the better distribution of ecclesiastical revenues in Ireland."—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxiii. p. 1274.

<sup>8</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxiv. p. 118.

In the course of the debate Fowell Buxton made a generous speech, which so impressed O'Connell, that he referred to it in the following terms: ". . . I have spoken with unaffected disgust of much which I have heard in this debate. But I have been consoled. I have heard that speech in which my hon. and revered friend [Buxton] asserted his own conscientious convictions, and asserted them without offence. . . . That speech I do trust will meet the public eye. I hope he will not leave it to any reporter, but I do conjure him in the name of our common Christianity to give to the public the benefit of the sentiments he has uttered, that they may go with the weight of his name before the world. And is not that name, I ask, connected with agitation—that name, which is to be found in the first and brightest page of the history of humanity? Agitation! Why, if he had not agitated, where would the negro be now? And yet you taunt, you ridicule agitation. Eight hundred thousand human beings pour blessings on his name for his agitation. Eight hundred thousand human beings will be his advocates when he stands, as he certainly will, before the throne of God, eight hundred thousand human beings will raise their voices and claim mercy for him. They will say for him: 'We were naked, and you clothed us; we were hungry, and you fed us; we were in prison, and you visited us.'"—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxiv. pp. 70, 71.

<sup>9</sup> O'Connell, and Smith O'Brien, some of the English Radicals and Irish Ascendancy members, voted with the Government; Dillon, Browne, Henry Grattan, and some of the Irish Whigs, voted with Crawford.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxiv. p. 1149.

jority of 290 to 264 votes.<sup>1</sup> In the Lords the bill was treated as it had been treated in the previous session. The first and second readings were unopposed, but in committee the Appropriation clause was, on the 25th of July, rejected by a majority of 138 votes to 47.<sup>2</sup> On the 2nd of August the bill, *minus* the Appropriation clause, was sent back to the Commons, when Lord John Russell at once moved the rejection of the Lords' amendments. Peel opposed the motion, but it was carried by a majority of 260 to 231.<sup>3</sup> Russell, however, was unwilling to force a collision with the Lords, and accordingly he dropped the bill. On the 20th of August Parliament was prorogued.

Another session had expired without any remedial measures for Ireland having been passed. The Government had received a second year's trial, and had failed in their efforts to do justice to the Irish people.

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxiv. p. 1259 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. vol. xxxv. pp. 515, 516.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. vol. xxxv. pp. 855, 860.



## CHAPTER XI.

### O'CONNELL "PLAYS HIS LAST CARD," AND THE LORDS "WIN BY HONOURS."

O'CONNELL's position was now one of some difficulty. In forming the alliance with the Melbourne Ministry he had lowered the Repeal flag, substituting the cry of "Legislative connexion" for that of "Legislative independence."<sup>1</sup> He had abandoned the old position assumed by Grattan and the Volunteers, namely, that the "Kings, Lords, and Commons of Ireland" should alone make laws for Ireland, and taken up the new one of a "real Union" with England. He had said, in effect, to the people: Have confidence in the British Government, and the British Parliament, and your wrongs will be remedied. Give the Union another trial, and "if a full measure of justice be not dealt out to Ireland, I am ready to say

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to the Duke of Wellington, dated Sept. 8th, 1835, he said he would be satisfied with "legislative connexion," if justice were done Ireland; if not he would fall back on Repeal.—*Kilkenny Moderator*, Sept. 16th, 1835. In a letter to Barrett of the *Evening Post* in November, 1835, he said: "I am on principle a Repealer. . . . I have considered Repeal as a *means* to an *end*, that end I am now looking for by other means."—*Kilkenny Moderator*, Nov. 25th, 1835.

In the House of Commons, in 1836, he said: "I, with the Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer [Spring Rice] will 'blot out the channel, and proclaim myself a West Briton.'" (Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxiv. p. 70. At a public meeting at Rochester in the same year, he said: "I want to unite together in one indissoluble bond, based upon the principles of equal rights and privileges, the people of England, Ireland, and Scotland." (*Kilkenny Moderator*, July 27th, 1836.

again 'hurrah for Repeal.' " <sup>2</sup> The people had obeyed him in all things. Agitation had been suspended. Implicit confidence had been placed in the Government. The Union had been tacitly accepted, and what was the result? The Government had so far failed signally in their efforts to remedy the wrongs of the people.

Would he still adhere to the Whig alliance or abandon it and unfurl the "old flag"? people began to think and ask. O'Connell left no one long in doubt as to his tactics. Immediately after the prorogation, he started on a short tour through England, and delivered a number of speeches in support of the Government. The ground he took was simply this: Lord Melbourne and his colleagues had done their best. They had failed through no fault of theirs, but because the House of Lords was too strong for them. The remedy was to be found, not in the destruction of the Ministry, but in the reform of the Lords. "My anxious wish," he said, addressing the Radicals of Rochester, "is that the Radicals throughout the country should support the Whigs. (A voice: 'They don't go far enough.') Why, they do not go so far as I could wish, but would the cure for that be to stop them. (Laughter.) . . . No, the cure is to shove them gently on." <sup>3</sup>

In August, O'Connell returned to Ireland, and quickly announced his determination to stand by the Government still. Their legislative efforts, he said, had unquestionably been unsuccessful, but the conduct

<sup>2</sup> Speech at Limerick in October, 1835, *Clare Journal*, Oct. 22nd 1835. At a meeting in Dublin presided over by Lord Melbourne in January, 1836, he said: "I own, my lord, that one of the fondest dreams of my earliest youth was the nationality of Ireland. I never gave up the fondling of that hope for a moment; but at the same time I have determined that there shall be a full experiment of a general and central government, and that, before we seek to be governed by ourselves, it shall be proved to demonstration, that the [English Government and Parliament] cannot confer all the advantages to which we are entitled."—*Kilkenny Moderator*, Jan. 30th, 1836.

<sup>3</sup> *Kilkenny Moderator*, July 27th, 1836.



of the Irish Executive left nothing to be desired. He threw all the blame on the House of Lords, and urged the necessity of reforming that institution in the interests of the people of the three kingdoms. He approved of the establishment of a new society, to be called the General Committee, for the purpose of advancing the tithe and municipal reform questions, and counselled moderation in speech and action. In fact, he adopted tactics the very reverse of those employed during the struggle for Catholic Emancipation. Then his aim was to frighten the English people into concession. Now he sought to win them over by gentleness.

While O'Connell was thus endeavouring to bring about a reconciliation between the peoples of England and Ireland; to wipe out all memories of the past; and to make the two countries one nation, the English press assailed him with persistent malignancy. During the years 1835 and 1836 the attacks of the *Times* on the Irish leader were constant and ferocious.

On the 26th of November, 1835, the following lines on the obnoxious agitator appeared in that journal:—

“Scum condensed of Irish bog!  
Ruffian—coward—demagogue!  
Boundless liar—base detractor!  
Nurse of murders, treason's factor!  
Spout thy filth—diffuse thy slime,  
Slander is in thee no crime.  
Safe from challenge—safe from law,  
What can curb thy callous jaw?  
Who would sue a convict liar?  
On a poltroon who would fire?”

Lord Mulgrave—O'Connell's ally in the work of reconciliation—was described by the great organ of English public opinion in 1836, as “the stage-struck king of shreds and patches, the frivolous novelist, the servile revolutionist, the self-degraded messmate of Daniel O'Connell.”

For a time, O'Connell remained silent under these

attacks. But at length the *Times* surpassed itself in truculent ferocity, and he replied in a famous letter.

The circumstances under which this letter was written were these:—O'Connell had attacked Lyndhurst (whom he regarded as the great obstructive in the Lords, and the bitterest enemy of Ireland anywhere), throwing out some hints which were taken as a threat that he meant to assail the private character of the Tory chief. The *Times* came to the rescue of Lyndhurst, and handled O'Connell thus:—

What an unredeemed and unredeemable scoundrel is this O'Connell to make such a threat, and at such a time, too! If he has not lied more foully than it could have entered into the imagination of the devil himself to lie, he makes the threat with his own wife dying under his very eyes! Oh! how long shall such a wretch as this be tolerated among civilized men! But let him mark us well—as surely as he dare to invade the privacy of the life of Lord Lyndhurst, or of any other man, woman, or child that may happen by themselves or their relations to be opposed to him in politics, so surely will we carry the war into his own domiciles at Darrynane and Dublin, and show up the whole brood of O'Connells, young and old.

O'Connell replied as follows:—

TO BARNES AND BACON, EDITORS OF THE TIMES' NEWSPAPER.

Darrynane Abbey, Sept. 15, 1836.

The [above paragraph] appears in several newspapers, as copied from the journal of which you are the principal writers. It is an exquisite specimen of the favourite style of that party to whose base passions you are the mercenary panderers.

Of course, it is not my purpose to bandy words with creatures so naturally contemptible as you—Barnes and Bacon—are. Your rascality is purely venal, and has no more of individual malignity in it, than inevitably belongs to beings, who sell their souls to literary assassination; and who, from their nature, would be actual assassins, if they lived at the period of history when the wages of villains of that description bore a reasonable proportion to the hire you receive for a different, only because a bloodless, atrocity.

My object is simply to announce to you three things:—

First—That in my own name, and in the names of those who inhabit the domiciles of Darrynane and Dublin, and also of the whole brood of O'Connells, young and old, I hurl at



you—foul miscreants as you are!—the most contemptuous and emphatic defiance. As far as I am personally concerned, you shall lie with the most perfect impunity. I will not resort to any means, legal or otherwise, to prevent or punish you as regards myself; neither will I condescend to contradict a single falsehood you publish. As to my family, you are equally defied to state one single fact derogatory to their private honour and personal integrity. You have the truth of their private lives flung indignantly down your foul throats. . . . Defiance, loud and indignant, is hurled at you, vile instruments!—and at your more vile employers.

Secondly—I am at present under no promise or pledge to enter upon the private life of Lord Lyndhurst—not the least; but I will pledge myself to this—that if there be not a disclaimer of any connexion between him and the above paragraph, I will inquire into his private life. The fury of your partisanship—the rabid rage with which you assail me on his behalf, would naturally excite a suspicion that there was “something rotten” in the present leader of the Tory faction. If it be so in fact and truth, and that such rottenness be of a nature to render him unfit to take a prominent part in politics, it will be my duty—and I pledge myself to perform it—to carry his own threat, through you, into retaliatory effect, and to do that duty firmly and fully which you pretend to anticipate.

Thirdly—I will not have my retaliation incomplete; Barnes and Bacon, insignificant as you naturally are, I will give your own histories. I will also meet your employers foot to foot. I can easily make a way, at an inconsiderable expense, to discover, by the aid of a bill in equity, all the proprietors of your paper, all those who live on the wages of your literary prostitution. I will feel justified, not in beginning the attack, which I have not done, but in retaliating fully on you and all your employers. “The Last Rose of Summer”<sup>4</sup> shall not be left “blooming alone;” you shall cause his “unlovely companions” to be dragged, as soon as you please, through the mud and mire of your own flinging.

I do not condescend one remark on the turpitude of the party to which the *Times* is now attached, and whose patronage it earns by a political and personal meanness hitherto unknown in the history of British literature. You have made literary vileness a byeword. It is really discreditable to Britain that it should be known that so much atrocity—so depraved, so unprincipled a vileness as the *Times* has exhibited—should

<sup>4</sup> Walter.

have found any countenance or support. As to me, the only sentiments I entertain are those of contempt and utter defiance.

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

But, O'Connell's powers were not used solely in meeting the attacks of his enemies. His energies were often taxed in dealing with what he considered the unwise tactics of his friends. Among those friends whose action at the time gave him some trouble was Sharman Crawford—a Protestant landlord of strong Liberal sentiments and genuinely patriotic views. Crawford, who was dissatisfied with the incompleteness of the Government measure, proposed a series of resolutions at a meeting of the General Committee, in Dublin, in October, in favour of the total abolition of tithes. O'Connell, opposed these resolutions, believing that their effect would be to endanger the Government bill, by enabling the Tories to raise the old cry, that “nothing would satisfy the Irish.” However, he was undesirous that there should be anything like the appearance of a difference of opinion in the popular ranks, and, therefore, instead of publicly condemning Crawford's resolutions, he caused them to be referred to a private committee, where they were amended in accordance with his own views of what was expedient and politic. As amended, the resolutions expressed the opinion of the General Committee in favour of the total abolition of tithes, but pledged the meeting “to support and sustain in office, without any violation of principle, the first and only true and unequivocally honest Government that has ever been known in Ireland.” In this form they were proposed by one of O'Connell's lieutenants, seconded by Sharman Crawford, and unanimously carried. But the matter was not allowed to rest here. In December, the subject of demanding the total abolition of tithes, as the only satisfactory mode of settling the tithe question, was revived in the Committee by the Rev. Father T. O'Malley, and Sharman Crawford. Upon this occasion, however, Sheil interposed, and adroitly



succeeded in having the discussion postponed until "Parliament met."

Parliament met on the 31st of January, 1837. On the 1st of May, Lord Morpeth introduced, "the fifth bill, which, within the period of five years, had been submitted to Parliament for the settlement of Irish tithes." This bill, like the one of the previous session, fixed the amount of the tithe rent-charge at 68*l.* 5*s.* per cent. of the tithe; but unlike it, contained no Appropriation clause. In lieu of such clause, however, the Government proposed to impose a tax of 10 per cent. on the clergy for educational purposes. The bill, so amended, was accepted by O'Connell "as an instalment of justice"—as the best measure which, in the state of public opinion in England, could be obtained; but it was opposed by Sharman Crawford as a mean surrender to the Lords, and a worthless compromise. On the motion for the second reading, on the 9th of June, Crawford proposed the rejection of the bill, declaring that the Irish people "would not be content with any measure unless it completely released them from all assessment for the maintenance of the Established Church." Morpeth replied that Crawford's demands could not be conceded without the virtual Disestablishment of the Church—a step which the Government were not prepared or willing to take. The Chief Secretary further explained, that the Government had been induced to take the "middle course" indicated by the bill, in the hope of speedily settling the question, and restoring peace to Ireland. Stanley, who charged the Government with "hedging," now fell upon the Ministers with great effect. He congratulated the House on the altered tone of the Government, who declared themselves resolved to defend the essential principle of an Established Church—a declaration equally satisfactory and unexpected. He particularly congratulated his noble friend, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who formerly spoke of the "rottenness" of that Establish-

ment, and the noble Lord, the Secretary for the Home Department, who spoke of the friends of the Church as a "miserable, monopolizing minority," on their conversion. He, that evening, had heard his noble friend (Russell) speak of the "respectable minority," and his other noble friend (Morpeth), instead of alluding to the "rottenness," declared his fixed intention to support the Church; and to establish her interests on a sure footing. He would vote for the second reading of the bill, but would move in committee that the rent-charge should be increased, and the tax on the clergy for educational purposes, omitted. Russell, having replied to Stanley in an ineffective speech, the House divided on the question of the second reading, with the following result:—

Ayes	229	Noes	14 <sup>5</sup>
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But the bill was not advanced another stage that year. On the 20th of June the king died; and on the 17th of July, Parliament was dissolved. Another session had elapsed; another year of the Whig alliance had gone by, and no remedial measures for Ireland had been passed.

How would O'Connell meet the Irish people now; and how would they meet him? He had said to them: support the Melbourne Ministry, and the tithe question will be settled. They had supported the Melbourne Ministry, and the tithe question had not been settled. He had asserted that the Appropriation clause was of vital importance to the efficacy of the Government bill, and the Appropriation clause had been abandoned. In the face of these facts could O'Connell again call on the people to support the Ministry, and if he did so call, would the people obey him? These were questions which occurred to many

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxviii. pp. 1370, 1381. The minority were composed of the following members: Blake, Bodkin, Conolly, Deek, Dewdeswell, Fielden, Finn, Hindley, Martin, Polhill, Power, Ruthven, Trevor, Williams. Tellers—Crawford, Browne.—Ibid. p. 1381.



minds in Ireland on the eve of the general election of 1837. O'Connell promptly answered them. On the 28th of June he issued a manifesto from London, calling upon the people to rally again around the "first ministry which during six centuries had shown a desire to serve the people of Ireland honestly and faithfully."

"For the first time," he said, "may Ireland raise the head of hope. This is the very [turning] point of the great experiment we are making to ascertain whether or not Ireland can be well and justly governed by an Imperial Legislature, or whether we shall be driven to look for a restoration of our native Parliament. This is the most happy period to work out the experiment. Ireland is now ready to amalgamate with the entire empire. We are prepared for full and perpetual conciliation. Let Cork County and Yorkshire be put on an equal footing. Let Ireland and England be identified. But for this purpose equality—perfect equality of rights, laws, and liberties—is essentially necessary. We desire no more; we shall not take less. A real effectual union, or no union—that is the alternative. Mark our present advantages. To make the union real and effectual, we have the benevolent wishes of a pure-minded sovereign; we have the full assistance of the ministry; we have the voice of all that is liberal and enlightened in England and Scotland; we have the great strength of the Irish nation. Is it possible to suppose that Lyndhurst and Peel, as the leaders of the peculating, selfish, and bigoted Tory party, will be able to arrest the progress of amelioration and liberality."<sup>6</sup>

In July, O'Connell arrived in Ireland, and at once commenced a vigorous electioneering campaign, which resulted in the return of seventy-two popular representatives,<sup>7</sup> pledged to support the Government. The great agitator was all-powerful with his countrymen still.<sup>8</sup> Wherever he bade them go, they went. It mattered not whether the cry was "Give the Union a trial," or "Hurrah for Repeal," they followed him undoubtingly,

<sup>6</sup> *Kilkenny Moderator*, July 5th, 1837.

<sup>7</sup> Of the 72 Irish popular members, 29 were Catholic, and 43 Protestant.—Torrens, "Melbourne," vol. ii. p. 239.

<sup>8</sup> *Kilkenny Moderator*, Aug. 19th, 1837.

joyfully. In fact, as one of the Ascendency organs of the time put it, he could "twist the people around his fingers."

In England, the Government were not so successful in their electioneering campaign as was O'Connell in Ireland. The English boroughs returned 190 Whigs and Radicals, as against 151 Tories, but the counties returned 109 Tories, as against 50 Whigs and Radicals, thus making a total majority of 20 against Ministers in England. In Scotland, however, the Government were more fortunate, the Scotch boroughs returning 22 Whigs and Radicals as against 1 Tory, though the counties returned 18 Tories to 12 Whigs and Radicals, making altogether a total majority of 15 for ministers in Scotland.

In Ireland the total majority for Ministers was 39,<sup>9</sup> i.e. 72 O'Connellites as against 33 Tories. To sum up the total result of the general election in the three kingdoms and the Welsh principality: there were returned—

Whigs, Radicals and O'Connellites	346
Tories	312
	<hr/>
Majority for Ministers	34

<sup>9</sup> It may be doubted if O'Connell's efforts in behalf of the Government would have been so successful, had not Drummond made the Government popular by his skilful and sympathetic administration of affairs. Of Drummond's Government the *Edinburgh Review*, of Oct. 1837, wrote thus: ". . . Much good effect has been produced by the open removal of partisans [from official positions]. The late Constabulary Act [1836] requires each man, upon his appointment, to declare that he is not connected with any secret society [Ribbon or Orange]. The first symptom of returning confidence on the part of the people followed the discharge of a constable who was seen coming out of an Orange lodge. There has not been one law for the rich and one for the poor; but the magistrate and the constable have alike been reduced to the alternative of serving the public with impartiality or not at all. The natural effect of this has been to restore that proper confidence which was wanting in the south—to destroy that improper confidence which prevailed in the north—which encouraged the people to risk the commission of party offences with the expectation of almost certain impunity.



The general election over, Sharman Crawford, (who had not been returned to the new Parliament,) wrote a series of letters to O'Connell, urging him to break with the Whigs, who were to be trusted no more than the Tories. Indeed, the only difference which this Ulster gentleman saw between the two great English parties was that "the Tories would take away the liberties of the people by violence, the Whigs by deception." It was not, he said, by alliances with English parties that Catholic Emancipation had been carried, or any measures of justice obtained for Ireland, but by the reliance of the Irish people upon themselves. The House of Lords was the great obstacle to remedial legislation. But how was that obstacle to be removed?

"The change in the service, too, upon which the constabulary are employed, contributed much to bring about the desirable result. It had been the unconstitutional practice under Tory Governments to employ the constabulary in making *distresses* and serving civil processes. Following the precedents of arbitrary times, the clergy, and even landlords, had learned to use the soldiers and constables as tithe-proctors and bailiffs. The ordinary powers of the law were laid aside, whilst indolence or the love of violence displayed itself in the baneful practice. The army, as well as the constabulary, were thus mixed up with the poverty and distresses of the peasantry, rather than opposed to their crimes and offences; and were in this way associated with the tyranny of the "drover" and the exorbitance of the "proctor," more than with the public vindication of the law. A natural feeling of chivalry amongst the Irish often saved the soldiers; but the hatred fell with unmitigated severity on the policeman, who, in the very same proportion, became inefficient in his proper sphere. The present Government, accordingly, determined to change this practice. Against this wise determination all the batteries of the Orange party were for a time opened. No pretence was left untried to entice the interference of the Executive again; and the Castle was besieged with applications for the assistance of the military and constabulary. The Church was, as usual, the foremost and loudest in its calls. The blood was scarcely dry on the field of Rathcormac, when again and again the Executive was pressed to revive the practice which had led to such fatal consequences. But in each case the reply was that the police or military force could not be called out except in case of actual riot or breach of the peace. Ribaldry and abuse vented themselves in vain; and the Government, to the joy of all good men, remained entrenched in its safe position."—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. lxvi. pp. 239, 240.

O'Connell himself had declared that the House of Lords "were recovering from the fright" which they got in 1832, and if O'Connell wished to succeed, he should frighten them again. "Terrify the Lords," said Mr. Crawford, "by raising the voice of the nation,"<sup>1</sup> To Crawford's letters, which were numerous and lengthy, O'Connell replied in a short note full of *badinage*. Crawford had hinted that the popular Tribune, in forming an alliance with the Whigs, had stipulated for the control of the Irish "patronage."<sup>2</sup> O'Connell simply laughed at the suggestion, and concluded his chaffy letter thus:—"And now—

"Farewell,

And if for ever,

Oh, then, for ever fare thee well."

"May you live for a thousand years."<sup>3</sup>

Pierce Butler, like Sharman Crawford, distrusted the Whigs, and was averse to a settlement of the tithe

<sup>1</sup> Crawford's letters were published in (among other papers) the *Kilkenny Moderator* of the following dates, September 2nd, 6th, 13th, 23rd, 27th, and November 29th, 1837.

<sup>2</sup> Upon the subject of O'Connell's control of the Irish patronage the following words of Lord Mulgrave may not inaptly be quoted: "It has been stated, by persons who must know better, that Mr. O'Connell has all the patronage of the Government of Ireland. I utterly and indignantly deny the truth of that statement. Mr. O'Connell, like any other member of Parliament requiring information from the Government, has, I admit, had occasional communications with it, but I can confidently state that his applications have been fewer than those of any other member of Parliament. The count against me is that I have treated Mr. O'Connell in the same way that I would have treated any other member of Parliament. So I have, my lords, and so I will always continue to do. But I fearlessly and utterly deny that the Government has been controlled by Mr. O'Connell, or has consulted with him as to any of the appointments that have been made; and as to the charge of his having uniformly given his support to the Government, I honestly confess that is a circumstance, considering how much he carries with him the hearts and affections of the Irish people, that I can only regard as a great advantage, and as one that ought not to be made a matter of reproach."—Lord Mulgrave, Speech quoted in *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1838, p. 760.

<sup>3</sup> *Kilkenny Moderator*, November 29th, 1837.



question by a mere commutation of tithes into a rent-charge. A settlement of this kind, he said, in a letter written to the landed proprietors of Kilkenny, would be bad for the landlords, bad for the tenants, and bad for the country. Its only effect would be to concentrate upon the landlords, (by converting them into tithe-proctors,) the unpopularity and odium which now were in so large a degree the lot of the clergy. Nothing less than the total extinction of tithes would, he urged, lead to a satisfactory and final solution of the question.<sup>4</sup>

But the views and reasonings of Crawford and Butler made little impression on O'Connell. He was, like them, in favour of a total extinction of tithes, but considered the proposal, at the moment, unpractical.

After the election of 1837, Crawford was in favour of vigorous action. But O'Connell deemed it expedient to put an end to agitation altogether for the time, and with this view he took the extreme step of dissolving the General Committee. He was determined, he said, to work out to the end the experiment of giving the Union a trial. He would confidently entrust the fortunes of the Irish people to the British Parliament and the British Government, and calmly await the results; and if those results demonstrated the incapacity of the British Parliament and Government to do full and complete justice to Ireland, then he would unfurl the flag of Repeal, and call upon the country once more to rally around it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Pierce Butler, "Letter to the Landlords of Kilkenny," *Kilkenny Moderator*, April 29th, 1837.

<sup>5</sup> Commenting upon O'Connell's speech in dissolving the General Committee, the *Times* said, "Never did an unprincipled demagogue act a more treacherous part towards his wretched dupes than O'Connell is acting towards the people of Ireland, whom he sells, as he slavers them with the slime of panegyric fulsome [strong] enough to turn the stomach of a Chinese sycophant; never was a baser or meaner wretch gibbeted in the annals of political profligacy."—*Times*, September, 1837. See also *Kilkenny Moderator*, September 16th, 1837.

With the dissolution of the General Committee political agitation ceased completely<sup>6</sup> in Ireland, except among the Ascendancy party, who raised the cry of "No surrender," "No Popery," as loud as ever.

Parliament met on the 13th of November, 1837, but the state of public business did not admit of the introduction of a bill on the subject of tithes, previous to the Christmas recess. On the 21st of February, 1838, Parliament reassembled. On the 27th of March, Russell, in reply to a question of Peel, said that it was the intention of the Government to introduce a bill for the conversion of tithes into a rent-charge, the rent-charge to be fixed at 68*l.* 5*s.*<sup>7</sup> per cent. of the tithe, and the income so secured to be guaranteed to existing incumbents by the State; the State was also to be authorized to purchase, on the termination of existing interests, each 68*l.* 5*s.* of rent-charge for

<sup>6</sup> Besides extinguishing political agitation, O'Connell took great pains during the whole period of Lord Mulgrave's administration to put down secret societies. Under the joint auspices of himself and Lord Mulgrave a peasant society was formed in Tipperary "for the suppression of outrage and the maintenance of peace." The duties of its members were defined to be—"to discourage bad characters; to refuse to employ or keep such persons in their houses; to report to some one of the committee the appearance of any bad character, or any person accused or suspected of crime, in their neighbourhood; to communicate to a magistrate or to any one of the committee any facts likely to lead to the prevention of outrage; and to use every exertion to prevent fighting between factions at fairs." The reasons given for the formation of the society were thus explained: "They have associated thus, at this time, because they are convinced that a spirit and temper have fast grown up among the people inclining them to aid the efforts of a vigorous and enlightened government in extending to all parts of this island the protection of equal law; and in order to answer the reasonable expectation of such a government that the exertion thus made for the people's benefit shall be seconded by the people's co-operation." See *Edinburgh Review*, vol. lxvi. p. 272. The operations of this society proved useful. See *Tipperary Free Press*, 11th May, 1836.

<sup>7</sup> Nominally the amount was 70 per cent.; but there were certain deductions for collection, which made it really 68*l.* 5*s.* See Walpole, "England," vol. iii. p. 309.



1600*l.*, the rent-charge so purchased to be devoted to educational and police purposes in Ireland.<sup>8</sup>

On the 14th of May, Russell moved for a committee of the whole House to consider the resolutions on which the new bill was based. This motion was met by an amendment of Sir J. Ackland, member for Devonshire, proposing the recession of the resolutions of 1835, which had pledged the Government to the Appropriation Clause. Ministers having strongly opposed the amendment, an animated debate, which lasted two nights, ensued, and in the course of which O'Connell delivered one of his most effective speeches.

The "real question" before the House, he said, was not whether the resolutions of 1835 should be rescinded or not, but whether the House was prepared to maintain, as just and politic, the system which had so long prevailed of governing Ireland according to the dictates of a faction.

Then, turning to the terms of the resolutions, he continued,—

What do these obnoxious resolutions propose? It is declared that the surplus revenues [of the Church] "shall be applied to the moral and religious education of all classes of the people, without distinction of religious persuasion." Now, there is the resolution that is so terrific. . . . You tell the world we want education, and you show the world that you do not believe what you say. You prove to the world that you do not rely upon the Bible, but upon the strength of your party. You prove to the world that the only riches of the Church that you value are those which you can bring with you in Judas' scrip. If we are to be benefited with education—if we are to be made Protestants by education—then why not allow us to be educated? If you believe that Protestantism is the religion that will be preferred by educated men, then why have you such a horror of the surplus fund of the Church being devoted to that education which you say is the best method for making men Protestants."

In conclusion, alluding to the subject of the Union, which had been referred to in the debate, he said,—

I am ready to consent that that Union may continue.

<sup>8</sup> Hansard, vol. xli. p. 1317 ; and vol. xlii. p. 1173.

("Oh! oh!") You may sneer at that declaration, and show you do not value my consent; but then you sneered at America, and you got your answer. Let the hon. baronet [Peel] tell the people of Ireland he does not value their consent; but I tell him that, if the Conservative faction, or the Conservative party, trample without hope of redress upon the people of Ireland, he may find that, though victory may not be inscribed upon the banners of the Irish, they will never consent to lie down degraded and willing slaves. The Union should be one in which there ought to be no distinction between Yorkshire and Carlow—between Waterford and Cumberland; there ought to be an identity of laws, an identity of institutions, and an identity of liberties. . . . We want equality with you, and you will not permit us to have it. You gave us a Reform Bill—it was a stingy and despicable Reform Bill. Why? Because you would not trust us. Your political Protestantism again met us. We ought to have had the same franchises which you enjoy. We were entitled to them by the Union. Why not give us an equality of civil rights? Political Protestantism would not permit us to have them. England has Municipal Reform; Scotland has Municipal Reform; but Ireland has not obtained Municipal Reform yet. Why? Your political Protestantism again. How wisely do you preach Protestantism in Ireland! You make it the pretext for depriving us of every species of equality with yourselves, and then, having rendered it odious, you send forth your missionaries to preach it amongst the people whom you have made its victims. It is despotism aided by hypocrisy, and yet you proclaim a Union, a Legislative Union, between subjects of the same realm. You may do so, but you will be laughed at and scorned. I am making an experiment amongst you, and frankly and fairly I tell you, I am convinced you will not do us justice. What prospect is there of it, when I find that, owing to the enormous bribery practised by you amongst the freemen, you have got such numbers into the Commons, that the Lords think nothing of a majority of this House. It is of no avail to her Majesty's ministers to bring in useful measures. We hear them taunted with the little they have done. Why, you won't let them do what they would. First, you taunt them with not doing more, and then, when they purpose to proceed, you place yourselves in opposition to them, and tell them that there is another place. We know that there is another place. And we know that it needs only to be said that it is intended to extend political advantages to the people of Ireland, to insure a veto being pronounced against the proposition. This is your



triumph; yours is the power to insult; yours is the authority to oppress; you glorify yourselves in your haughty station; and while you pretend you wish us justice, you exert all the powers you possess to prevent the identification of our rights and liberties with yours. . . . As a representative of the Irish people I call on you to remember that your Union is one of parchment, and it may be one of adamant; but the latter it will not be unless you do justice to Ireland.

This speech produced a considerable effect on the House, and was feebly answered by Peel, whose whole argument amounted, practically, to the statement, that, if the Union were to be maintained, it became essential to preserve the Irish Establishment, whose preservation was stipulated for by the articles of the Union.

On the 15th of May, the House divided on Ackland's amendment, and it was rejected by the narrow majority of 317 to 298 votes. After this division, Lord John Russell deemed it necessary to yield further to the Tories, and, on the 18th of May, in reply to a question of Sir Francis Burdett, he said that the Government had resolved to content themselves with the introduction of a bill for the mere conversion of tithes into a rent-charge at the percentage already fixed. This statement satisfied Peel (though he reserved to himself the right of proposing an increase in the amount of the rent-charge), and was accepted by O'Connell. But Ward protested against it, and, on the 2nd of July, when Russell moved for a committee of the whole House, to consider the single resolution on which the altered bill was now based, proposed, as an amendment, the reinsertion of the Appropriation clause. The House divided on Ward's amendment with the following result:—

Against the amendment . . .	270
For . . . . .	46
	<hr/>
Majority for Ministers . . .	224 <sup>*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> The minority consisted of the following members: Bewes, Blake, Blunt, Bodkin, Brotherton, Dillon Browne, Bryan, Butler, Chalmers,

Ward's amendment having been defeated, Styles moved the rejection of the bill altogether, but the motion was negatived without a division, and the House then went into committee. In committee Shaw moved the increase of the rent-charge from 68*l.* 5*s.* to 75 per cent.; but the motion was lost by a majority of 188 to 167.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the Government, to propitiate the Lords, did finally consent to the amount of the rent-charge being raised in accordance with the terms of Shaw's motion.<sup>2</sup> Ministers had now fallen back all along the line. On the 10th of July, O'Connell proposed that the arrears of tithes then due should be remitted, and ministers consenting, Russell, on the 16th of July, explained the Government plan for so doing. One million had been voted as a loan for the clergy; and out of that sum, 640,000*l.* had been actually advanced. Russell now proposed that the 640,000*l.* should be considered as a gift to the clergy, and that 260,000*l.* of the original loan voted should be applied to the remission of the outstanding arrears. This plan was agreeable to all parties.

On the 26th of July, the third reading of the Tithe Bill was carried (against an amendment of Dillon Browne for its rejection,) by a majority of 148 to 30.<sup>3</sup>

The struggle was now practically over. On the 3rd of August the bill was introduced in the Lords, Collier, Corry, Elwall, Evans, Fielden, Finch, Gillon, Grote, Hashe, Horsman, Hume, Hull, Hutton, Jervis, Langton, Lushington, Maher, Marshall, Marsland, Martin, Lord Melgund, Muskett, O'Callaghan, O'Connor Don, Pattison, Pease, Philips, Protheroe, Salwey, Sir W. Somerville, Strutt, Style, Vigors, Villiers, Warburton, Lord Worsley. Tellers—Ward and Hawes.—Hansard, New Series, vol. xliii. p. 1202, 1203.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 1209.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, vol. xliv. p. 1110.

<sup>3</sup> The minority consisted of the following members: Aglionby, Chalmers, Collier, D'Eyncourt, Duke, Finch, Grote, Hall, Harvey, Hawes, Hector, Hull, Langton, Leader, Dr. Lushington, C. Lushington, Marshall, Martin, Morris, Muskett, Salwey, Style, Thornley, Turner, Vigors, Villiers, Warburton, Ward, Lord Worsley. Tellers—Dillon Browne and Hume.—Hansard, New Series, vol. xliv. p. 694.



and on the 9th read a third time. Only two voices were raised against the measure in the Upper House: Lord Clancarty protested against the bill because, "to conciliate refractory tithe-payers," the Church had been abandoned; and Brougham protested against it because 640,000*l.* had been presented to the clergy, and because the Appropriation clause had been omitted. He had not, he said, looked to see the day "when appropriation should be given to the winds as if the thing had never been talked of; as if it had not been the means of seating one Ministry, and unseating another."

Before the end of the month, the bill received the royal assent—the "Tithe Commutation Act" became law.

So ended the Tithe War. A measure, identical in principle and detail with that introduced by Peel in 1835, and defeated by Russell and O'Connell, was, in 1838, introduced by the Whig chief, and accepted by the Irish leader, and carried into law. Thus, so far as the settlement of the tithe question was concerned, the alliance between O'Connell and the Whigs had not resulted in the realization of the popular hopes.

"Great Britain," said the *Times*, after the general election of 1837, "will prove too strong for Mr. O'Connell's majority of 34." The *Times* was right.

Returning to Ireland in defeat, and almost in humiliation, O'Connell was received by his fellow-countrymen as they ever received him—with greetings of welcome and affection. In defeat, as in victory, he, and he only, was the popular idol. He did not attempt to conceal his disappointment at the failure of the Government to carry the Tithe Bill as introduced by Lord Morpeth in 1835. The new Act, he said, could not be accepted as a final settlement of the question, though undoubtedly it possessed some advantages. The amount of tithes payable was reduced, and the burden of payment was shifted from the tenants to the

landlords. But these concessions were meagre and inadequate. It was essential, for the peace of the country, and in the interest of justice, that tithes should be completely abolished; and for a complete abolition of tithes he was ready to agitate afresh. He did not regret the alliance which he had formed with the Government. He was glad of it. It showed he was prepared to make peace between England and Ireland, and he could not be blamed if peace was not established. He was bound to say that the Government had done their best, but the anti-Irish feeling in England was too strong for them. He would not abandon the alliance yet. He would still try the experiment of giving the Union a trial; and if that experiment proved, as he was beginning to think it would prove, the inability of an English Parliament to do complete justice to Ireland, then he would raise the cry of "Repeal" in a way it had never been raised before, and would arouse the nation to redoubled efforts for legislative independence—"from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear, from Connemara to the Hill of Howth."<sup>4</sup> The *Pilot* (O'Connell's organ) criticized the conduct of the Government more severely than the popular Tribune had done himself. The Irish people, it said, had loyally and staunchly supported Lord Melbourne's Administration. To smooth the way for ministers the drag had been placed on the wheel of agitation. Everything had been done "to create forbearance and excite hope;" and what had the Ministers effected for the Irish people? The Tithe Bill of 1835 had been abandoned, and a "lame and impotent measure" introduced in its place. It was idle to say that the Peers were to blame. It was the duty of the Government to overbear the opposition of the Peers by creating new ones, or resigning.<sup>5</sup> The *London Spectator*

<sup>4</sup> See O'Connell's Public Addresses and Letters from August to December, 1838, in the Irish press of the time.

<sup>5</sup> *Pilot*, September, 1838.



wrote much in the same vein as the *Pilot*. "The Ministers ought to have resigned," the *Spectator* said, "when they found themselves unable to carry the Appropriation clause." However, instead of resigning, "they held office, and actually introduced and carried the Tithe Bill of their opponents." "If," continued this journal, "the modern Whig practice is to be made the general rule for a Ministry, all reliance on public men is at an end." The *Times* crowed over the failure of the Government and of O'Connell, denouncing the latter as "an obsolete agitator," who was "discarded by his late employers, the incendiary and rebellious priests."

Sharman Crawford now occupied a triumphant position, and from his vantage-ground he attacked the Government and O'Connell in forcible, but moderate language. The new Act, he said, was worthless from a popular point of view, though beneficial to the Church. The establishment would in future be more effectually secured in its revenue, which "is still drawn from the whole people [just as before the change in the law], because the landlords are only the proctors, not the actual payers," of tithe. The burdens of the tenants would not, in the slightest degree, be lightened by the Ministerial measure, for the landlords would henceforth consider themselves justified in raising the rents as the tenants had no longer to pay tithes. The Act would really have the effect of more firmly establishing the Church, because it would take from the people the power of offering that "passive resistance" which had proved so powerful an engine in combating the unjust claims of the clergy during the struggle against tithes as carried on between 1830 and 1835. All the tithe-owner need do now was to place an agent in receipt of the landlord's rent until the tithes were paid, as they would be over the heads of the people. The peasantry would not again be brought into direct conflict with the clergy;

and the result would be that, protected from the popular fury, the intolerable anomaly of a Protestant Episcopalian Church consisting of 800,000 members, and being supported mainly by 7,000,000 Catholics, and 600,000 Presbyterians, would still continue to exist and flourish. The abandonment of the Appropriation clause, Crawford declared, was most discreditable to the Government and to O'Connell, and he urged the people to commence another agitation for its enactment.<sup>6</sup>

Nor was O'Connell himself any longer averse to a renewal of agitation. The hopes which he had entertained in 1835 of securing the redress of grievances by an alliance with the Whigs, were gradually expiring; and though resolved to stand by the Government of Lord Melbourne to the last, it is tolerably clear that he now began to look forward to a great struggle, at no distant date, for the repeal of the Union. In the autumn of 1838 he formed the Precursor's Society, with the object, as he took pains to explain, of not yet agitating for Repeal, but of making a final effort to obtain "justice for Ireland" from a British Parliament. Among the Irish questions which in his opinion needed the immediate attention of the Legislature, was the subject of Municipal Reform; and to obtain a liberal measure of this nature, he bade the "Precursors" to organize and agitate.

With the subject of Municipal Reform I shall deal in Book V. of the present volume. But, meanwhile, it will be necessary to consider the concession of the Poor-Law, to which topic I now pass.

<sup>6</sup> *Kilkenny Moderator*, October 13th and 17th, 1838.



## BOOK IV.

### THE POOR-LAW, 1838.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE IRISH PEASANT FROM 1720 TO 1800.

“THE history of the poor is the history of Ireland.” So wrote Gustave de Beaumont in 1837, and ample are the authorities to attest the accuracy of the statement. For nearly two centuries the poverty of the Irish has been proverbial, national.

In 1720 Swift wrote :—

Whoever travels this country and observes the face of nature, or the faces and habits and dwellings of the natives, will hardly think himself in a land where law, religion, or common humanity is progressed.<sup>1</sup>

Seven years later the Dean of St. Patrick's again wrote :—

The miserable dress and diet and dwellings of the people; the general desolation in most parts of the kingdom; the old seats of the nobility and gentry all in ruins, and no new ones in their stead; the families of farmers, who pay great rents, living in filth and nastiness upon butter-milk and potatoes, without a shoe or stocking to their feet, or a house so convenient as an English hog-sty to receive them; these, indeed, may be comfortable sights to an English spectator who comes for a short time to learn the language, and returns back to his

<sup>1</sup> Swift's Works, ed. Scott (“A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture”), vol. vi. pp. 281, 282.

own country, whither he finds all his wealth transmitted.  
*Nostra miseria magna est.*<sup>2</sup>

“The years 1725, 1726, 1727, and 1728,” says a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, “presented scenes of wretchedness unparalleled in the annals of any civilized nation.”<sup>3</sup>

In 1729, Prior, in his “List of the Absentees of Ireland,” wrote:—

There is no country in Europe which produces and exports so great a quantity of beef, butter, tallow, hides, and wool, as Ireland does; and yet our common people are very poorly clothed, go bare-legged half the year, and very rarely taste of that flesh-meat with which we so much abound.<sup>4</sup>

In 1735, Berkeley, the eminent Protestant Bishop of Cloyne, wrote in the *Querist*:—

112. Suppose the bulk of our inhabitants had had shoes to their feet, clothes to their backs, and beef in their bellies. Might not such a state be eligible for the public, even though the squires were condemned to drink ale and cider?

132. Whether there be upon earth any Christian or civilized people so beggarly wretched and destitute as the common *Irish*?

And, in “A Word to the Wise,” the same authority adds:—

The house of an Irish peasant is the cave of poverty. . . . It may be affirmed with truth that the very savages of America are better clad and better lodged than the Irish cottagers throughout the fertile Counties of Limerick and Tipperary.”<sup>5</sup>

In 1739, 1740, and 1741, the distress and misery of the people culminated in that very Irish institution—a famine.

“In 1739,” says Sir C. E. Trevelyan in his able pamphlet on the ‘Irish Crisis,’ “an early and severe frost destroyed the potatoes in the ground, and the helplessness and despair of the people having led to a great falling-off of tillage in 1740,

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (“A Short View of the State of Ireland”), vol. iii. pp. 118, 119.

<sup>3</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. i. p. 166.

<sup>4</sup> Prior, “Observations on the List of Absentees of Ireland,” p. 258.

<sup>5</sup> Berkeley, “A Word to the Wise,” pp. 208, 209.



the calamity was prolonged to the ensuing year, 1741, which was long known as the *bleed on an*, or the year of slaughter. The ordinary burial-grounds were not large enough to contain those who died by the roadside, or who were taken from the desolate cabins. The 'bloody flux,' and 'malignant fever,' having been amongst the poor, spread to the rich, and numerous individuals, occupying prominent positions in society . . . fell victims."<sup>6</sup>

In 1741, a gentleman in the south of Ireland, writing to a member of the Irish House of Commons, said:—

I have been absent from this country for some years, and on my return to it, last summer, found it the most miserable scene of universal distress that I have ever read of in history: want and misery in every face; the roads spread with dead and dying bodies; mankind of the colour of the docks and nettles they fed on; two or three, sometimes more, going on a car to the grave for want of bearers to carry them, and many buried only in the fields and ditches where they perished: whole villages were left waste by want, and sickness, and death in various shapes.<sup>7</sup>

The years 1757, 1765, 1770, and 1771, were seasons of great and continuous distress.

"Notwithstanding," says Hutchinson, "the success of the [linen] manufacture, the bulk of our people have always continued poor, and in a great many seasons have wanted food. Can the history of any other fruitful country on the globe, enjoying peace for fourscore years, and not visited by plague or pestilence, produce so many recorded instances of the poverty and wretchedness, and of the reiterated want and misery, of the lower orders of the people."<sup>8</sup>

In 1775 Dr. Campbell visited Ireland, and in 1776-78 Arthur Young made his celebrated tour in that country. From both those distinguished observers we have a faithful and pitiful picture of what they saw.

<sup>6</sup> Trevelyan, "The Irish Crisis," p. 9. Sir C. E. Trevelyan seems to have had access to the contemporary authorities collected by Mr. McCulloch on this subject.

<sup>7</sup> "The Groans of Ireland, in a Letter to an M.P., 1741," quoted in the Rev. John O'Rourke's work on the "Great Irish Famine of 1847," p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Hutchinson, "Commercial Restraints," p. 78.

“The manner,” says Campbell, “in which the poor of this country live I cannot help calling beastly. For, upon the same floor, and frequently without any partition, are lodged the husband and wife, and the multitudinous brood of children, all huddled together upon straw or rushes, with the cow, the calf, the pig, and the horse, if they are rich enough to have one. . . . The house is full of smoke, (at least in the upper region, where it floats in thick clouds, the lower part being pretty clear of it,) to avoid the acrimony of which you are obliged to stoop down, and the poor man of the house immediately offers you a low stool, that you may be what he calls out of the smoke. And this is probably the only stool in the house, for the children nestle round the fire, almost naked, with their toes in the ashes. Even the women, though not so naked, sit upon their hams in the same way. But, in spite of the general adhesion to the ground, the old people are, for the most part, bleared eyed, with pale and sooty faces. . . . The peasant never tastes the flesh of the cattle which he feeds, but subsists upon potatoes, generally without butter, and sometimes without milk.”<sup>9</sup>

Arthur Young corroborates to the fullest extent the statements of Campbell respecting the miserable condition of the peasants.

“Shoes or stockings,” he says, “are scarcely ever found on the feet of children of either sex, and a great number of men and women are without them. . . . The cottages of the Irish, which are called cabins, are the most miserable-looking hovels that can well be conceived; they generally consist of only one room; mud kneaded with straw is the common material of the walls; these are rarely above seven feet high, and not always above five or six; they are about two feet thick, and have only a door which lets in light instead of a window, and should let the smoke out instead of a chimney, but they had rather kept it in [because] it warms them, but [it] is certainly injurious to their eyes, as it is to the complexion of the women, which in

<sup>9</sup> Campbell, “Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland,” p. 138.

The misery of the Irish Campbell entirely ascribes to the absence of any incentive to industry, and to the vile misgovernment (which he literally denounces) of England and the English party in Ireland. “We are all,” he says, “by nature abhorrent of labour, for labour gives pain; sloth must prevail till the incentives to diligence overpower the propensity to idleness. . . . We keep the Irish dark and ignorant, and then we wonder how they can be so enthralled by superstition; we make them poor and unhappy, and then we wonder that they are so prone to tumult and disorder.—Ibid. 253.



general in the cabins of Ireland are a near resemblance to that of smoked ham. The number of the blind poor I think greater there than in England, which is probably owing to this cause. . . . The furniture of the cabins is as bad as the architecture, in very many consisting of a pot for boiling potatoes, a bit of a table, and one or two broken stools; beds are not found universally, the family lying on straw, equally partook of by cows, calves, and pigs.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus were the southern Irish peasants described by Arthur Young, in 1777. How were they described by Lord Clare, ten years afterwards?

“I agree with the right hon. gentleman [Grattan],” said Clare when Irish Attorney-General, “that the lower order of the people in Munster are in a state of oppression, abject poverty, sloth, dirt, and misery, not to be equalled in any other part of the world. . . . I am very well acquainted with the province of Munster, and I know that it is impossible for human wretchedness to exceed that of the miserable peasantry in that province. I know that the unhappy tenantry are ground to powder by relentless landlords. I know that far from being able to give the clergy their just dues, they have not food or raiment for themselves—the landlord grasps the whole.”<sup>2</sup>

As the Irish peasants were in 1787 so they continued to be in 1790, and from 1790 to the Union.

We shall now see how they fared after the passing of that measure, which, in the estimation of many, was destined—

“To scatter plenty o’er a smiling land.”

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<sup>1</sup> Young, “Tour in Ireland,” part ii. p. 25, 26.

<sup>2</sup> Irish Debates, vol. vii. p. 343.

## CHAPTER II.

THE IRISH PEASANT FROM THE UNION TO CATHOLIC  
EMANCIPATION.

SEVEN years after the Union, James Newenham, an English gentleman, visited Ireland. The following is a statement of what he saw and thought :—

The habitations of the Irish peasantry, it must be admitted, are, for the most part, little better than the huts of savages. The accommodations of the former, in few respects only, surpass those of the latter. The Irish peasant and the savage are almost equally capable of enduring hunger, fatigue, and inclemency of weather. And, perhaps, it may be added, that, owing to the past misgovernment of Ireland, the Irish peasant does not much excel the savage in just notions of liberty, or in due respect for the laws and civil institutions of man. But here the resemblance positively ceases. In all other particulars, the Irish peasant will be found at least as far above the level of the savage man, as the well-housed, well-clad, and well-accommodated peasant of England. . . . Fierce, vindictive, and cruel, the Irish peasant confessedly is, when goaded, oppressed, and tyrannically treated, as he has often been. But when otherwise, he certainly eclipses the peasant of England in all the minor virtues of civilized man, superadded to the hospitality, and occasionally to the fidelity of the savage. Affable, compassionate, generous, flexible, ready to serve, anxious to please, generally submissive, respectful, when respect is known to be due, addicted rather to flattery than rudeness, the Irish peasant, when treated in an unaffected, conciliatory manner, with that kindness he deserves, with that generosity he is ever disposed to exercise, with that frankness which allays his habitual suspicions, and with that restrictedly polite familiarity which gratifies the native pride—will seldom fail to endear himself to his patron, or his benefactor, and to exhibit a character



which, upon the whole, may be considered as not unworthy of a very high degree of philosophic approbation.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Newenham. Two years later another Englishman, Edward Wakefield, visited Ireland. He travelled throughout the country, north, south, east, and west, and here is what he says.

Referring to the northern Counties of Antrim, Londonderry, Armagh, and Down, his statement is as follows:—

Those who wish to become acquainted with the real state of the country will lament to see human nature degraded to the lowest state of misery. . . . The people whose condition appears to be the hardest are the Roman Catholics who reside in the mountainous districts. These are descended from the original inhabitants who retired for shelter to remote places, when the fertile parts fell into the hands of their powerful invaders. . . . The clothing of the people, if the rags which scarcely cover their nakedness can be so called, consists of woollen cloth, or frieze, manufactured at home, and almost every other article of their dress is made by themselves.

Of the peasants of Donegal, Wakefield writes:—

The condition of the people was miserable in the extreme; they were dirty, superstitious, and it was evident that they existed on scanty and bad food. Their habitations presented, if possible, a still more disgusting sight. A description of them could not be attempted without offending the ears of those who have not seen any but the cottage of the English peasant. Their habits are such as might be expected among human beings in the lowest state of civilization.

Passing to Connaught, Wakefield continues:—

The poor throughout the province of Connaught live in a state of great wretchedness. . . . Their clothes are filthy rags; and although the roads are rugged and hard, none of them have shoes or stockings. Notwithstanding the abundance of linen in Ireland, the use of this article is a luxury with which they are unacquainted; indeed the poorer classes throughout the south and west of Ireland in general are without sheets.

The following painful anecdote relates, not to the country of the Hottentots, but to Ireland after three centuries of English rule:—

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Newenham, “A View of Ireland, &c.” (London, 1809.) Preface, pp. xvii, xviii.

In my way [says Wakefield] from the north of Roscommon to Woodlawn, in the month of September, 1809, I was obliged to shelter in a cabin during a heavy storm of rain. On entering, I found a young man, dressed in a long trusty, sitting on a low stool by the fire. He addressed me with the usual salutation, saying I was welcome; invited me to come to the fire, and called out to a female whom I did not see, to bring me a seat. Looking around, I observed a young girl, apparently about eighteen, jump up perfectly naked from a sort of dirty bed in a dark corner of the hut; she immediately huddled on some clothes, and handed me a stool. I observed to the man that he was a lucky fellow to have so fine a girl for his wife. "She is not my wife," said he, "plaze your honour, she's my *shister*."<sup>2</sup>

When at Nymphsfield [continues this conscientious and careful observer] I was told by Major O'Hara, that in searching for arms in the County of Tipperary, during the time of the rebellion, the military, to prevent them from being carried away, always broke into the cabins in the night-time, and that the people were invariably found naked in their beds. In the course of a ride in the Queen's County with Mr. Greene, in June, 1809, I learned that the people always slept naked in bed. . . . Sheets were never used; blankets even were uncommon; and I am convinced that many sleep on straw in the clothes which they wear in the day-time.<sup>3</sup>

In 1813 and 1814, another Englishman, who visited Ireland, wrote of the country thus:—

The general condition of the labouring poor in this [Tipperary] and the neighbouring counties is certainly very wretched, seldom treated by their employers with that humanity and attention their useful labours so justly merit. . . . But poverty is not all these poor people have to bear. They have to encounter insults much harder than poverty. It has been the policy of their imperious masters to keep them totally ignorant of the blessings of our glorious constitution, the beauty of

<sup>2</sup> "From the promiscuous way these people lie together a suspicion naturally arises in a stranger's mind that incest is unavoidable amongst them. Yet upon the strictest inquiry I find the fact to be otherwise. . . . They are bred up in such an abhorrence of the turpitude of this crime. . . . One of these poor souls is no more inflamed by the nude bosom of a sister, than in a more affluent state he would be on seeing it covered with gauze."—Campbell, "Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland," p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> Wakefield, "An Account of Ireland," vol. ii, pp. 727, 730, 731, 735, 751, 757, 758, 759, 763, 765, 773, 774.



which is carefully hid from their eyes. They have no idea of an impartial administration of justice, and should they have a dispute with any of their equals (for to contend with their superiors never enters their heads), they would not think of any dependence on the justice of their cause, but on the interest that, through the means of their master, or any other gentleman, could be made with the justice of the peace. If a man on horseback, riding in dirty weather, should meet a poor man on foot, who did not immediately get out of his way to let him pass easily on, he would give him a pretty good chastisement with his horse-whip, and the peasant would not offer to resent, but, with hat in hand, ask his pardon. Of this I have been myself an eye-witness.<sup>4</sup>

In 1822, Mr. John Wiggins, agent to the Irish estate of the Marquis of Headfort, described the Irish peasantry as "poor and miserable," adding that their "poverty and misery have, in many instances, goaded them to become bad Christians, bad subjects, and bad tenants." . . . "Their dwellings," he says, "are well known to be wretched in the extreme;" and "*the parents, children, servants, lodgers, cattle, pigs, and poultry have but one and the same miserable room for shelter and repose.*"<sup>5</sup>

The year 1822 was one of the ever-recurring famine periods:—

The whole provinces of Connaught and Munster were, [we learn,] in a state of actual starvation. The peasantry, leaving their cabins and little allotments of potato ground, which were their usual source of lazy subsistence, crowded into the villages in the vain hope of finding employment where there was no demand for their labour, or of being relieved by the charity of those who were not far removed from a state of suffering equal to their own. There was scarcely a town in the south of Ireland, the streets of which were not filled with able-bodied men, wandering in quest of food, or of any means of obtaining wherewith to purchase it. The distress reached far beyond the lowest class. . . . In the month of June there were in the County Clare alone (the whole population of which is little more

<sup>4</sup> "A Tour in Ireland in 1813 and 1814, by an Englishman," (Mr. John Gough), pp. 250, 251. See also Townsend, "Statistical Survey of the County Cork."

<sup>5</sup> The italics are Mr. Wiggins'. See Wiggins' "Hints to Irish Landlords," pp. 6—11.

than 200,000) 99,639 persons subsisting on charity from hour to hour; in Cork there were 122,000 individuals in the same situation; and in the City of Limerick, out of a population of 67,000, there were 20,000 who had not a morsel to eat save what pity gave.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, considerably more than one half of the population of the distressed districts (which included the Counties of Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Clare, Tipperary (part), and the Cities of Cork, Limerick, and Galway; and which contained 2,907,000 souls, and 5,544,000 acres of land) “depended upon charitable assistance for support.”<sup>7</sup> Of the cause of this famine, the Committee of the London Tavern—a committee of English gentlemen formed to relieve the distress, and whose agents visited the afflicted districts—said, in their able and sympathetic report:—

The distress which has almost universally prevailed, has not been occasioned so much by an excessive population as by a culpable remissness on the part of persons possessing property, and neglecting to take advantage of those great resources, and of those ample means of providing for an increasing population, which nature has so liberally bestowed on this country.<sup>8</sup>

The population of Ireland in 1822 was about 7,000,000.<sup>9</sup>

In 1823 and 1829 Select Committees were appointed to inquire into the condition of the Irish poor,

<sup>6</sup> “Annual Register,” 1822, pp. 33, 34, 40, where many painful details are given of the distress and famine which prevailed. See also Nicholls’ “Irish Poor Law,” pp. 91, 92.

<sup>7</sup> Report of Select Committee, House of Commons [1823] on Employment of Poor in Ireland. Parliamentary Papers, vol. vi. for 1823, pp. 3, 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Impartial Review*. Molekin, Dublin, 1822.

<sup>9</sup> The first complete census of Ireland was taken in 1821, when the population was found to be 6,801,827 (see Thom’s “Dublin Directory”). In Haydn’s “Dictionary of Dates,” it is stated that the population of Ireland in 1821 was 8,175,124, and, according to the same authority, the population in 1841 amounted to precisely the same number of souls (see Haydn, 14th Edition. By Benjamin Vincent. Page 531).



and the evidence of the misery and wretchedness of the Irish peasantry was still further perpetuated.

The condition of the peasantry of those districts of Ireland to which the evidence refers, appears, says the Report of the Committee of 1823, to be wretched and calamitous to the greatest degree. . . . Their cabins scarcely contain an article that can be called furniture; in some families there are no such things as bed clothes, and the greater part [of the peasantry] drink nothing but water.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence I have cited of the misery of the Irish peasants from the Union to Catholic Emancipation might be multiplied, but, as I shall be compelled to return to this painful subject, in dealing with the Land Question in the next volume, I shall now pass to the consideration of their condition between 1830 and 1838.

<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Papers, vol. vi. for 1823, pp. 5, 6.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE IRISH PEASANT FROM 1830 TO 1838.

I SHALL produce the following witnesses to testify to the condition of the Irish peasants between the years 1830 and 1838: (1) the Poor Law Commissioners, whose inquiries were carried on between 1833 and 1836; (2) Sir George Cornwall Lewis, who wrote on the subject in 1836; (3) Thomas Drummond, who presented his inquiries between 1835 and 1838; and (4) Gustave De Beaumont, who visited Ireland about the same period.

First—the Poor Law Commissioners, in their Report of 1836, state:—

“Their [the Irish peasants'] habitations are wretched hovels; several of a family sleep together upon straw, or upon the bare ground, sometimes with a blanket, sometimes without even so much to cover them; their food commonly consists of dry potatoes, and with these they are at times so scantily supplied as to be obliged to stint themselves to one spare meal in the day. There are even instances of persons being driven by hunger to seek subsistence on wild herbs.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly—Sir George Cornwall Lewis, in his admirable work on “Irish Disturbances,” says:—

Arthur Young describes the physical state of the Irish peasant in 1776-78 in terms which might with scarcely an alteration be applied to them at the present time. The engraving of an Irish cabin, contained in his work, is an exact representation of the hovels in which the Irish peasants still live.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Third Report of Poor-Law Commissioners, quoted in Nicholls' “Irish Poor-Law,” p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, “Irish Disturbances,” notes, p. 440.



Thirdly—we come to the testimony of Drummond. In the Final Report of the Irish Railway Commission, published in 1838, this distinguished English official, and exact Scotchman, whose knowledge of Ireland was vast and varied, writes:—

In the southern districts [of Ireland] we find a population whose condition is, in every respect, inferior to that of the northern; their habitations are worse; their food inferior, consisting at best of potatoes and milk, without meal; the wages of labour are found reduced from one shilling to eightpence per day; yet the peasantry are a robust, active, and athletic race, capable of great exertion; often exposed to great privations; ignorant, but eager for instruction; and readily trained, under judicious management, to habits of order and steady industry.

The population of the midland districts does not differ materially in condition from those of the south; but the inhabitants of the western districts are decidedly inferior to both in condition and appearance; their food consists of the potato alone, without meal, and in most cases without milk; their cabins are wretched hovels; their beds straw; the wages of labour are reduced to the lowest point, upon an average not more than sixpence a day. Poverty and misery have deprived them of energy, labour brings no adequate return, and every motive to exertion is destroyed. . . .

But [adds Drummond] the spirit of the Irish peasant is by no means so sunk by the adverse circumstances of his lot, as to be insensible to the stimulus which a due measure of encouragement to laborious industry supplies. Where employment is to be obtained with difficulty, and at a fair rate of compensation, his character and habits rise, in an incredibly short space of time, with the alteration of his circumstances. In a state of destitution no race of people are more patient and resigned. . . . Yet the same race, who endure the last extremes of want without a murmur, are no sooner placed in a condition of supporting themselves by independent industry, than they cast aside the torpor which distinguishes them in a depressed state, and become active, diligent, and laborious.<sup>3</sup>

Lastly—I shall quote the language of Gustave De Beaumont:—

To see Ireland happy you must carefully select your point of view, look for some narrow, isolated spot, and shut your eyes

<sup>3</sup> McLennan, "Memoirs of Thomas Drummond," pp. 356 and 370.

to all the objects that surround it; but wretched Ireland, on the contrary, bursts upon your view everywhere.

Misery, naked and famishing, that misery which is vagrant, idle, and mendicant, covers the entire country; it shows itself everywhere, and at every hour of the day; it is the first thing you see when you land on the Irish coast, and from that moment it ceases not to be present to your view—sometimes under the aspect of diseased displays of sores, sometimes under the form of the pauper scarcely covered by his rags; it follows you everywhere, and besieges you incessantly; you hear its groans and cries in the distance, and if the voice does not excite pity, it importunes and terrifies you. This misery seems inherent to the soil, and one of its natural products; like some of those endemic scourges that pollute the atmosphere, it blights everything which approaches it, smites the rich man himself, who cannot, in the midst of his joys, separate himself from the miseries of the poor, and who makes vain efforts to rid himself of the vermin which he has produced, and which cling to him. . . .

The number of ruins we discovered in travelling through Ireland is perfectly astounding. I speak not of the picturesque ruins produced by the lapse of ages, whose hoary antiquity adorns a country, . . . but I mean the premature ruins produced by misfortune—the wretched cabins abandoned by the miserable tenants, witnessing only to obscure misery, and generally exciting little interest or attention.

But I do not know which is more sad to see—the abandoned dwelling, or that actually inhabited by the poor Irishman. Imagine four walls of dried mud, (which the rain, as it falls, easily restores to its primitive condition,) having for its roof a little straw or some sods, for its chimney a hole cut in the roof, or very frequently the door through which alone the smoke finds an issue. One single apartment contains father, mother, children, and sometimes a grandfather or a grandmother; there is no furniture in this wretched hovel; a single bed of hay or straw serves for the entire family. Five or six half-naked children may be seen crouched near a miserable fire, the ashes of which cover a few potatoes, the sole nourishment of the family. In the midst of all lies a dirty pig, the only thriving inhabitant of the place, for he lives in filth. The presence of the pig in an Irish hovel may at first seem an indication of misery; on the contrary, it is a sign of comparative comfort. Indigence is still more extreme in the hovel where no pig is to be found.

Not far from the cottage extends a little field of an acre or half an acre; it is planted with potatoes; stones, heaped on



each other, with rushes growing through the interstices, serve it for a fence.

This dwelling is very miserable, still it is not that of the pauper properly so called; I have just described the dwelling of the Irish farmer or agricultural labourer.

I have already said that there are no small proprietors under the great, and that below the opulent there are none but the poor; but these are wretched in various degrees, and with shades of difference which I shall endeavour to indicate.

All being poor the only food they use is the cheapest in the country—potatoes; but all do not consume the same quantity; some, and they are the privileged class, eat potatoes three times a day; others, less fortunate, twice; those in a state of indigence, only once; there are some, still more destitute, who remain one or even two days, without receiving the slightest nourishment.

This life of fasting is cruel, but, nevertheless, it must be endured under the penalty of still greater evils. He who eats too much, or fasts once too little, is sure to have no clothes; and moreover, this prudence and resignation to suffering are often unavailing.

Whatever may be the courage of the poor peasant to endure hunger in order to meet other demands, he is in general naked, or covered with rags handed down in the family from generation to generation.

In many poor hovels there is often only one complete suit between two individuals; and hence the priest of the parish is almost always compelled to say several masses on a Sunday. When one of the family has heard an early mass, he returns home, strips off his clothes, and gives them to the other, who goes then to hear the second mass.

I have seen the Indian in his forests, and the negro in his chains, and thought, as I contemplated their miserable condition, that I saw the very extreme of human wretchedness; but I did not then know the condition of unfortunate Ireland.<sup>4</sup>

So much for the history of Irish misery. We shall now see what was done to relieve that misery.

<sup>4</sup> De Beaumont, "Ireland, Social, Political, and Religious." Editor, Taylor, LL.D., Dublin University, vol. ii. pp. 264, 265, 266, 267, 268. See also account of Mr. Ingles, quoted by Smith O'Brien in the House of Commons on the 19th of March, 1835.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxvi. p. 1207.

## CHAPTER IV.

WHAT THE ANGLO-IRISH COLONIAL, AND UN-REFORMED IMPERIAL PARLIAMENTS DID TO AMELIORATE THE CONDITION OF THE "LABOURING POOR" IN IRELAND BETWEEN 1700 AND 1830.

It is but just to the Anglo-Irish Colonial Parliament to say, that, upon the whole, they managed their own affairs with considerable success—with, perhaps, as much success as was attainable in the face of English interference and obstruction. But, the Anglo-Irish Colonial Parliament troubled themselves little about the well-being of the native Irish population. Had that population been disposed to embrace the religion of the colonists, then their interests would probably have been safeguarded by the Colonial Parliament. But, they were not so disposed, and were accordingly abandoned to neglect, and subjected to persecution. Protestantism or starvation was the grim alternative presented by the colonists to the aboriginal inhabitants of the island.

Some measures of poor relief, which it will be necessary to notice, were, however, passed by the Anglo-Irish Parliament. But, these measures were rendered obnoxious or nugatory by the taint of proselytism which ran through them all. The first measure of poor relief was passed in 1703, and was entitled "An Act for erecting a workhouse in the City of Dublin for employing and maintaining the poor thereof." The "guardians of the poor" appointed under this Act



were, the Lord-Lieutenant, the Lord Chancellor, the Archbishop of Dublin, the High Sheriff, the Justices of the Peace, and the Dublin Corporation.

These "guardians" were empowered to "apprehend" and "keep at work" within the workhouse all the adult "vagabonds, vagrants, and beggars" of the metropolis "for any time not exceeding seven years," while juvenile paupers above the age of five years were to be detained in the "service" of the institution until they reached the age of sixteen, and then to be apprenticed to "any honest persons, being of the Protestant religion," until they reached the age of twenty-one if girls, and twenty-four if boys. A rate of 3*d.* in the pound was levied off all householders for the support of this establishment.<sup>1</sup>

In 1707, another measure dealing with Irish pauperism was passed. It was entitled, "An Act for the more effectual suppression of Tories and Rapparees," and provided that "all loose, idle vagrants, and such as pretended to be Irish gentlemen, and will not work, nor betake themselves to any honest trade or livelihood, but wander about demanding victuals, . . . and also loose persons of infamous lives and characters, shall, on the presentment of a grand jury, be committed to the county gaol till transported for seven years, unless they give security for their good behaviour."<sup>2</sup>

In 1715, another Poor-Law Act was passed, the most important provision of which empowered ministers and churchwardens, with the consent of a justice of the peace, to bind out any child they found begging within their parish, or any other poor child, with the consent of the parents, to "any honest and substantial Protestant housekeeper or tradesman," until the age of twenty-one if girls, and twenty-four if boys.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Anne, cap. 19, amended by 1 Geo. II. cap. 27, which extended the powers of the institution.

<sup>2</sup> 6 Anne, cap. 11.

<sup>3</sup> 2 George I. cap. 17, sec. ii.

In 1735, an Act was passed for the establishment of a workhouse in Cork, similar to the one founded in Dublin in 1703.<sup>4</sup> In 1765, an Act was passed for the establishment of county infirmaries, to be supported by grand jury presentment.<sup>5</sup> In 1771, the Dublin workhouse became merged in what Mr. Froude has appreciatively described as that "beautiful institution," the "Foundling Hospital." In 1772, under the auspices of Dr. Woodward, the Protestant Bishop of Cloyne, provisions were made for the establishment throughout Ireland of "Houses of Industry,"—institutions conforming partly to the character of hospitals, and partly to the character of houses of correction,<sup>6</sup> and whose "governors" were empowered to grant "badges, or licences for begging," to approved paupers, and to punish unlicensed or unapproved paupers by imprisonment and flogging. They were also vested with the privilege of handing over the children of licensed paupers to the tender mercies of the directors of that other "beautiful institution," the Charter Schools. It may be added that the "Houses of Industry" were supported by grand jury presentments, as were also institutions of a more useful character, viz. the Fever Hospitals, established in 1781.<sup>7</sup>

Such, in the main, were the measures passed by the Anglo-Irish Colonial Parliament for the relief of the Irish poor between 1700 and 1800. What were the measures passed in the same interests by the Imperial Parliament between 1800 and 1830?

They are capable of brief and easy enumeration.

In 1805, an Act was passed for establishing dispensaries in connexion with the county infirmaries.<sup>8</sup> In 1806, increased powers of presentment were given to the grand juries for maintaining fever hospitals and

<sup>4</sup> 9 Geo. II. cap. 23.

<sup>5</sup> 5 Geo. III. cap. 20.

<sup>6</sup> 11 and 12 Geo. III. cap. 11; 11 and 12 Geo. III. cap. 30.

<sup>7</sup> 21 and 22 Geo. III. cap. 13.

<sup>8</sup> 45 Geo. III. cap. 111.



infirmaries.<sup>9</sup> In 1809, commissioners were appointed to consider the practicability of reclaiming the Irish bogs.<sup>1</sup> In 1814-18, further powers were given the grand juries of presenting for the support of fever hospitals.<sup>2</sup> In 1817, lunatic asylums were established.<sup>3</sup> In 1819, sanitary officers were appointed to attend to the "health and comforts of the inhabitants."<sup>4</sup> In 1822 Special Relief Acts were passed to meet the famine emergency which had arisen in that year,<sup>5</sup> and in 1825 a measure for facilitating the transmission of "distressed children" to the famous Foundling Hospital, became law.<sup>6</sup> This last Act completes the list of measures passed by the Anglo-Irish Colonial and Imperial Parliaments for the amelioration of the labouring poor in Ireland, from the signing of the Treaty of Limerick to the granting of Catholic Emancipation.

<sup>9</sup> 46 Geo. III. cap. 95.

<sup>1</sup> 49 Geo. III. cap. 101.

<sup>2</sup> 54 Geo. III. cap. 112, and 58 Geo. III. cap. 47.

<sup>3</sup> 57 Geo. III. cap. 106.

<sup>4</sup> 59 Geo. III. cap. 41.

<sup>5</sup> 3 Geo. IV. caps. 3 and 84.

<sup>6</sup> 6 Geo. IV. cap. 102.

## CHAPTER V.

## WHAT THE REFORMED PARLIAMENT DID.

BETWEEN 1830 and 1838 public attention was directed in a special manner to the condition of the Irish peasantry, and several schemes were proposed for the purpose of alleviating their miseries. Free emigration was suggested by some as an infallible panacea for Irish ills; Poor-Laws were proposed by others as a speedy palliative, if not an efficacious remedy; many urged the establishment of public works as a certain means of giving honourable employment; while more asserted that until a radical change was made in the law of landlord and tenant, securing to the latter the fruits of his industry, and thus stimulating him to exertion, all other efforts to promote the well-being of the people would fail. The landlords favoured the emigration scheme, though they did not quite see their way to contributing any funds for its furtherance.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of a system of Poor-Laws was specially advocated by four men of not un-Irish sympathies—William Smith O'Brien, Poulett Scrope, Sir Richard Musgrave, and George Cornwall Lewis. Thomas Drummond stood pre-eminent as the originator of a plan for opening up extensive lines of railway, under the control of the State, whereby em-

<sup>1</sup> "The absentee proprietor, spending his last farthing in London, was unwilling to contribute to the expense of their [the Irish peasantry] removal, and no machinery existed for raising adequate funds for the purpose."—Spencer Walpole, "History of England," vol. iii. p. 100.



ployment of a permanently serviceable character could be given to thousands of peasants, who were able and willing to work, but had no opportunity of so doing; and Sharman Crawford led the Land-Law reformers. From all, O'Connell, practically, stood apart. The emigration and Poor-Law schemes he scouted as remedies which would be worse than the disease, being of opinion that the cause of British authority in Ireland, and the cause of Irish prosperity generally, would not be served by driving the Irish peasantry into exile, or shutting them up in 'prisons.' With Drummond's and Crawford's plans he sympathized, but he did not take up either proposal with his wonted energy. In fact, the great Agitator seems to have believed, that, until the power of Protestant Ascendency in Ireland was utterly destroyed, all attempts to ameliorate the condition of the Irish peasantry would prove futile; and to the destruction of this power he almost wholly devoted himself. Laws, however good, would, he felt, remain inoperative if badly administered, and badly administered he was confident every law for the benefit of the Irish people would be by the Irish Ascendency. The surest way, in his opinion, of promoting the welfare of Ireland was to entrust to Irishmen, with Irish sympathies, the management of Irish affairs; and it was to this end that he sought, especially during Lord Melbourne's Government, for a reform of the corporations, the extension of the Parliamentary franchise, and the advancement of men of popular views and leanings to positions of influence and control in the country.

The Governments of Lord Grey and Lord Melbourne were not averse to the introduction of a system of Poor-Laws into Ireland. Something they were persuaded had to be done to alleviate the appalling distress of the Irish peasants; and no measure of relief seemed so feasible as a Poor-Law.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly,

<sup>2</sup> "The misery of the Irish produced consequences beyond the

in 1833, the Government of Lord Grey appointed a Commission consisting of the following persons to inquire into the subject—the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Whately; and the Catholic Bishop, Dr. Murray; the Rev. James Carlisle, ex-Moderator of the Synod of Ulster; the Right Hon. A. R. Blake, More O’Ferrall, Mr. Bicheno; the Rev. Charles Vignolles, James Napier, Fenton Hart, John Corrie, and W. B. Wrightson.

Pending the final report of this Commission, Smith O’Brien, on the 19th of March, 1835, moved a resolution declaring the expediency of making a provision for the “aged, infirm, and helpless poor” in Ireland, by “assessment upon property” in that country. The member for Limerick supported his resolution in an able and effective speech. “There could be no doubt,” he said, “that the aggregate mass of misery in Ireland was greater than ever, and that this had been caused in many instances through the cruel practice of turning poor persons out of their little holdings, for the purpose of consolidating larger farms; and by the abolition of the forty-shilling free-

limits of Ireland. The Irish poor crossed in crowds to England; the packet-boats gave them standing room on the decks for a few pence. They crowded every large town; they rambled over the country; and they offered to take work on any terms on which manufacturer or farmer would give it them. The English labourer was beaten in the labour-market by a stranger who slept in a ditch, who lived on potatoes, and whose tattered garments barely concealed the squalor of his body. When the harvest-work for which they came was over, the English guardians found themselves compelled to send these labourers back to Ireland. English rate-payers then found that Protestant bigotry imposed unnecessary expense upon them. The law, till 1835, did not recognize a marriage celebrated by a Roman Catholic priest. The Irish poor were universally married by their own pastors. Technically therefore, all their children born before 1835 were illegitimate; and the parish up to the date of the New Poor-Law, in 1834, was liable for the support of illegitimate children. The English guardian could send back to Ireland the superfluous Irish labourer, but he was bound to support out of the rates his brood of children.”—Spencer Walpole, “History of England,” vol. iii. pp. 446, 447; also Hansard, New Series, vol. ix. p. 996; *ibid.* Third Series, vol. xvii. p. 850.



holders, and the operation of the Sub-Letting Act." While the landlords were thus in great measure to blame for the miseries of the peasantry, Smith O'Brien pointed out that they "contributed what was, in amount, a most insignificant sum," to relieve the existing distress. "In Ireland," he said, "it was extremely well known that the poor supported the poor. The farmer, who was himself struggling, never refused food to the mendicant."<sup>3</sup> It was unfair, this patriotic and humane Irishman urged, that the burden of maintaining the poor should by force of circumstances be thus imposed upon the poor. The landlords ought to be compelled to contribute in just proportion "to relieve the distress which they disregarded, and increased by their absence from the country."

To remedy the existing condition of things he proposed that every parish in Ireland should be called upon to assess itself for the relief of the "helpless and impotent poor;" the maximum of assessment to be fixed at a shilling in the pound, two-thirds to be paid by the landlords, and one-third by the tenants. In addition, he suggested that an absentee-tax should be imposed on the landlords, and a committee annually appointed to administer the law. The resolution was supported by Sir Richard Musgrave and Poulett Scrope, the latter of whom asserted that "it was as notorious as that the sun shone in the heavens, that distress and starvation overwhelmed Ireland." It was opposed by O'Connell and the Government, the former declaring that the Poor-Law system had broken down in England, and would break down in Ireland too; the latter suggesting that no action should be taken in the matter until the Commission had reported. Ultimately, Smith O'Brien, satisfied with the discussion he had raised, withdrew the resolution.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> As to the charity of the poor to the poor in Ireland, see speech of Lord Stanley, *Hansard*, Third Series, vol. xxxvi. pp. 506, 507.

<sup>4</sup> *Hansard*, Third Series, vol. xxvi. pp. 1206, 1231.



No action having been taken by the Government between March and July, Sir Richard Musgrave, on the 8th of the latter month, moved the second reading of a bill for the employment of the able-bodied and the relief of the infirm poor of Ireland. He proposed that for the former purpose public works should be undertaken by the State, and for the latter that committees should be established in every city and parish in the country, "to make accurate lists of the aged and infirm poor," and to fix a rate for their relief; three-fourths of which should be borne by the landlords, and one-fourth by the occupying tenants. The bill was supported by Poulett Scrope, who made a violent attack on the landlords, saying that "four-fifths of the Irish population were the slaves of the landed proprietors, who turned them out of their miserable habitations to starve." O'Connell, though still distrustful of a Poor-Law as an effective measure of relief, declined, in the presence of the terrible distress existing in the country, to take upon himself the responsibility of opposing the second reading of the bill, which was carried without a division.<sup>5</sup> It was not, however, advanced another stage during that session.

The Government still remaining inactive, Sir Richard Musgrave, on the 9th of February, 1836, again brought forward his bill, which was supported by O'Connell, who said that he was satisfied the period had at length come when some system of Poor-Laws should be introduced into Ireland, care being taken that, in its "management, local prejudices and abuses should be checked." The bill was read a first time without opposition.<sup>6</sup> On the 13th of February, another Poor-Law Bill was introduced by Poulett Scrope, who proposed the establishment in Dublin of a Central Board to regulate the union of parishes, and of particular districts, the poor to be relieved by a rate on each union.

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxix. pp. 308, 342.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. vol. xxxi. pp. 226, 233.



Scrope also proposed that schemes of public works and emigration should be devised and carried out under the Central Board, for the benefit of the "able-bodied" poor. The bill was read a first time without opposition, as was also a bill to the same purport introduced by Smith O'Brien on the 3rd of March.<sup>7</sup>

The Government had remained passive all this time, awaiting the final report of the Commission; that report appeared in the spring of 1836 and was unfavourable to the application of a Poor-Law to Ireland. The Commissioners seem to have thought that however applicable a system of Poor-Laws might be to a country where pauperism was an incident of the social state, and where no rooted aversion to workhouses existed, it would be worse than useless in a country like Ireland where pauperism was a national characteristic, and the utmost repugnance to workhouses was entertained. A third of the population of Ireland, or 2,385,000 persons, they pointed out, stood at the moment in need of relief. The cost of erecting workhouses for such a number would, they estimated, amount to 4000*l.*; and the expenses of maintaining the whole 2,385,000, even at the rate of 2½*d.* in the pound, to 5,000,000*l.* a year. This revenue would have to be mainly raised from landed property, but the net income of the Irish landlords amounted to only 6,000,000*l.* a year. In such circumstances the commissioners appear to have felt that the result of a Poor-Law system in Ireland, would be to pauperize the landlords without affording adequate relief to the tenants. Moreover, they said that the majority of the Irish paupers were able-bodied peasants, "eager to work," but, "from no fault of theirs," left without employment. Those men, they declared, would endure any misery rather than enter a workhouse, and they urged that the proper mode of dealing with such paupers was to

<sup>7</sup> Hansard, vol. xxxi. pp. 429 and 1193.

afford them the means of earning an honourable livelihood. For the sick and impotent poor, relief, they said, ought to be afforded by voluntary associations, controlled by State Commissioners, and whose revenues might be strengthened by the imposition of a contributory parochial rate; but for the able-bodied the only remedies, in their opinion, were employment and emigration. To give effect to their views on the subject of employing the poor, the Commissioners recommended the establishment in Dublin of a "Board of Improvement," under whose direction public works might be undertaken, waste lands reclaimed, lands in occupation better cultivated, the habitations of the peasants improved, agricultural schools opened, and the general welfare of the country attended to. Fiscal Boards were to be established in all the counties, to make presentments for public works instead of the grand juries; and a rate was to be levied on the landlords for the improvements made with the sanction of this Board on their properties. For emigration purposes, depôts were to be established in various parts of the country, and all facilities afforded to such peasants as felt freely disposed to seek their fortunes in other lands.

This report was not received by the Government with satisfaction. Its recommendations seemed to Ministers unpractical; and its declaration against the application of a Poor-Law to Ireland was decidedly embarrassing, for on applying a Poor-Law to Ireland, Ministers had resolved. In these circumstances, Lord John Russell, completely ignoring the recommendation of the Commissioners, despatched to Ireland a young Scotchman, who was utterly unacquainted with Irish affairs, to inquire afresh into the subject. This gentleman—Mr. (afterwards Sir George) Nicholls—proceeded to Ireland in the autumn of 1836, scampered over the country in six weeks, rushed hastily back to London, and dashed off



a report, which Lord John Russell made the basis of the Government Poor-Law Bill.<sup>8</sup>

This bill, introduced by way of resolution on the 13th of February, 1837, proposed the erection in Ireland of 100 workhouses, where relief and employment should be afforded to the poor—infirm and able-bodied. The whole country was to be divided into unions, the landlords and tenants or occupiers of each union to be rated in equal shares for the support of the poor within the union. The system was to be administered by local boards of guardians, consisting of *ex officio* and elected members, the former not to exceed one-third of all the guardians chosen, and not to comprise clergymen of any denomination. There was to be no law of settlement,<sup>1</sup> and the local boards of guardians were to be placed under the control of a central authority in Dublin, to consist of commissioners chosen from the Poor-Law Commissioners of England.

O'Connell, and the Irish members much disliked the Government measure, but refrained from opposing the first or second reading. Smith O'Brien said that workhouses would be most unpopular in Ireland, and that "domiciliary relief would be more effective and grateful." He also insisted that the landlords should be made to pay three-fourths of the rates. Sharman Crawford objected to the omission from the bill of a law of settlement, and of provisions for outdoor relief. He also condemned the proposal of placing

<sup>8</sup> Peel said of Mr. Nicholls that he was disposed to attach great weight to the opinion of that gentleman; but at the same time he thought his experience of the working of the English Bill must be too brief to enable him to speak with any certainty as to what the probable operation of a similar system would be in Ireland. (Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxvi. p. 503.) See also O'Connell's reference to Mr. Nicholls' mission, Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxviii. p. 371 *et seq.*; and *ibid.* vol. xliii. pp. 17—36.

<sup>1</sup> In England the law of settlement rendered a residence of three years in the district necessary to entitle a person to relief.

the system under the control of English Commissioners, and urged the justice of making the landlords feel the full pressure of the rates. Finally, O'Connell ridiculed the notion of relieving Irish distress by "boxing up" an industrious peasantry in workhouses, while the resources of the country were left in a state of imperfect development; and strongly animadverted on the conduct of Ministers in making the report of a Scotchman, who knew nothing of Ireland, the basis of their bill, instead of attending to the recommendations of the Poor-Law Commissioners,<sup>2</sup> who were Irishmen, and who had spent three years over an inquiry which Mr. Nicholls had scamped in six weeks.

On the 11th of May, the bill was committed, but its further progress was ultimately arrested by the death of the king, which occurred on the 20th of June. On the 15th of July Parliament was dissolved. On the 15th of November it reassembled, and on the 1st of December Lord John Russell reintroduced the Poor-Law Bill. On the 5th of February, 1838, it was read a second time without opposition, but on the motion for the committal of the bill, on the 9th of February, O'Connell proposed its rejection. He had not, he said, the "moral courage" to oppose the first or second reading, but he had grown older and firmer since. His objections to the bill were on general and special grounds. On general grounds he considered that a Poor-Law was always calculated to diminish self-reliance, to paralyze industry, to decrease economy, and, above all, to damp and extinguish the kindly and generous feeling of nature towards parents, children, relations, and friends; and on special grounds he believed that the workhouse system was so hateful to the Irish people that its adoption would lead to acts of lawlessness and outrage.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxvi. p. 453 *et seq.*; and vol. xxxviii. p. 360 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Such had been the case in England. In a petition presented to



After a dull debate, in which Lord John Russell replied briefly to O'Connell, and Smith O'Brien expressed his determination to vote for the committal of the bill, the House divided on O'Connell's amendment with the following result:—

the House of Commons from the inhabitants of Bury, the petitioners stated that they would resist the enforcement of the New Poor-Law. (Hansard, May 2nd, 1837.) At Bradford, a mob, 5000 strong, attacked the house in which the guardians were assembled, and when charged by a regiment of hussars, resisted with great violence. "What," they cried, "are we to have the New Poor-Law forced on us at the point of the bayonet." (Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxix. p. 944, Dec. 11th, 1837.) Lord John Russell, when asked to give the names of the special constables who were employed in keeping the peace in Bradford, refused on the grounds that they might be assassinated. (Ibid.) At a great meeting at Manchester, held on the 5th of February, 1838, and attended by delegates from Bolton, Macclesfield, Salford, Liverpool, Wigan, Preston, Stockport, Warrington, Hyde, Huddersfield, a Rev. Mr. Stephens said, speaking against the New Poor-Law: "If this bill were established, it should be eye for eye, tooth for tooth, wife for wife, man for man, child for child, and blood for blood, so help me God!" At Stockport, on the 6th of February, 1838, Mr. Stephens said, "A man whom he had never seen before told him he had come from an agricultural district, and that rather than be separated from his wife he had prepared a knife for the parties who made the separation. He had come into this district to obtain work, and having done so, he had a knife ready for any guardian who should attempt to separate his wife from him. This was the universal feeling of the district, and although he did not coincide with it, it was sufficient to show that the law would not be submitted to." Mr. Oastler, at the same meeting, said, "He knew that hunger and insult would produce effects more oppressive and awful to certain individuals than even the commissioners' conduct had been to the people. He knew that the assassin's knife would be used." At Rochdale, Mr. Stephens said, "If it was right to confiscate the property of the people by abrogating the 43rd Elizabeth, it would be right to confiscate the property of Rochdale, and if the law of Elizabeth is to be destroyed, it is right for the people to take a dagger in one hand, and a torch in the other, and do the best for themselves." Mr. Oastler said, "I tell you, Churchmen and Dissenters, before I would submit to such an Act, I would set the whole kingdom in a blaze. I am no incendiary, but I have affection in my heart. I am willing to work, and should not blush to ask for my parish pay, but if I am told I should not receive it unless I consented to be separated from my wife, I would, if I was to be hanged for it, kill him on the spot."—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xl. p. 1096.

For the committal of the bill	277
Against	25

Majority for Ministers . . . 252<sup>4</sup>

In committee the Irish members proposed several amendments, of which the following were the principal ones :—

1. O'Connell.—That the Act should be administered by an Irish Poor-Law Board, not by the English Commissioners, as proposed in the bill. The amendment was rejected by 117 to 23 votes.<sup>5</sup>

2. O'Connell.—That unions should not be divided into electoral districts for the election of guardians unless with the consent of a majority of the guardians. The amendment was negatived by 84 to 47 votes.<sup>6</sup>

3. O'Connell.—That clergymen should be eligible to be elected as Poor-Law guardians. The amendment was negatived by 107 to 30 votes.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The minority consisted of the following members: Attwood, Bodkin, Brabazon, Bridgman, Chester, Duncombe, Evans, Fitzsimons, O. I. Gore, O. W. Gore, the Marquess of Granby, Sir R. Hayes, Viscount Ingestrie, Kemble, Lockhart, Major Macnamara, Maxwell, John O'Connell, Morgan O'Connell, O'Neil, Parker, Pryme, Scartlett, Verner, Westenra. Tellers—O'Connell and J. Gibson.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xl. p. 992.

<sup>5</sup> The minority consisted of the following members: Blake, Brabazon, Bridgman, Buller, Butler, Callaghan, Chester, Evans, Gibson, Grattan, Johnston, Leader, Nagle, Smith O'Brien, M. J. O'Connell, O'Connor Don, Power, Pryme, Redington, Roche, Somerville, Westenra, Yates. Tellers—O'Connell, Beamish.—(Hansard, Third Series, vol. xl. p. 1024.) Lord John Russell ultimately consented to the appointment of one Irish Commissioner, who was to take up his permanent residence in Dublin.—Hansard, vol. xli. Third Series, p. 1181.

<sup>6</sup> Minority: H. Aglionby, Major Aglionby, Archbold, Attwood, Beamish, Bellew, Bodkin, Brabazon, Bridgman, Brotherton, Buller, Chapman, Chester, Lord Clements, Corry, Curry, Darby, Easthope, Farnham, Fitzsimon, Grattan, Grimsditch, Hawkes, Hayes, Hindley, Holland, Hume, Jephson, Jones, Kemble, Logan, Master, Maxwell, Moneypenny, Nagle, O'Connor Don, Power, Redington, Rolleston, Scholefield, Somerville, Vigors, Vivian, Wakley, Westenra, Yates, Young. Tellers—O'Connell, Smith O'Brien.—Ibid. p. 1236.

<sup>7</sup> Minority: Archbold, Smith Barry, Bodkin, Brabazon, Bridgman,



4. O'Connell.—That there should be no *ex officio* guardians.<sup>8</sup> The amendment was defeated by 124 to 44 votes.<sup>9</sup>

5. Shaw.—That workhouses should only be built for the “lame, impotent, old, and blind.” The amendment was defeated by 134 to 75 votes.<sup>1</sup>

6. Lucas.—That a law of settlement should be established. Defeated by a majority of 103 to 33 votes.<sup>2</sup>

Dillon Browne, Buller, Chester, Erle, Ferguson, Fitzsimon, Gibson, Grattan, Hindley, Maher, Nagle, Smith O'Brien, O'Connor Don, Power, Roche, Somers, Somerville, Stewart, Style, Talbot, Vigors, Westenra, H. R., Westenra, J. C., Wood, Yates. Tellers—O'Connell, Bellew.—*Ibid*, 1241.

<sup>8</sup> The *ex officio* guardians were taken from the magistracy, that is to say, from the landlord class.

<sup>9</sup> Minority: H. A. Aglionby, Major Aglionby, Archbold, Smith Barry, Beamish, Bellew, M. J. Blake, Dillon Browne, Chester, Easthope, Evans, Finch, Fitzsimon, James Grattan, Henry Grattan, Hindley, Hodges, Hume, Hutton, Jervis, Johnson, Langdale, Marshall, Maule, Nagle, M. J. O'Connell, M. O'Connell, O'Connor Don, Power, Roche, Strutt, Style, Talbot, Thornley, Vigors, Wakley, Walker, Wallace, Hon. H. R. Westenra, Hon. J. C. Westenra, L. White, S. White, Williams, Yates. Tellers—O'Connell, Maher.—*Ibid*. p. 1246.

<sup>1</sup> Minority: Viscount Adare, Archbold, Bagge, Baring, Bateman, Blennerhasset, Brabazon, Broadwood, Sir J. Y. Buller, Viscount Castlereagh, Chapman, Chester, Hon. A. H. Cole, Viscount Cole, Compton, Coote, Corry, Curry, Dalrymple, De Horsey, Dick, Viscount Dungannon, Evans, Ferguson, Fitzsimon, Forbes, Forester, Glynne, H. Grattan, Greene, Grunston, Hayes. Lord Henniker, Herbert, Howard, Hutton, Serjeant Jackson, Jephson, Jones, Lefroy, Litton, Lockhart, Mackenzie, Maxwell, Meynell, Miles, Moneypenny, Nagle, O'Connell, M. J. O'Connell, M. O'Connell, Palke, Parker, J. Peel, Perceval, Polhill, Power, Pryme, Rushbrooke, Lord Sandon, Stewart, Thornhill, Vere, Verner, Villiers, Westenra, R. H., Westenra, J. C., White, L., White, S., Wood, Wrightson, Wynn, Young. Tellers—Shaw, Conolly.—*Ibid*, p. 1282.

<sup>2</sup> Minority: Bailey, Bateson, Bodkin, Bridgman, Callaghan, Hon. A. H. Cole, Lord Cole, De Horsey, Ferguson, Forbes, Hayes, Hodgson, Hughes, Irton, Jackson, Jones, Jones, Litton, Lord Maidstone, Meynell, O'Connell, O'Neil, Pringle, Pusey, Verner, Vigors, Vivian, Wakley, White, Williams, Wrightson. Tellers—Lucas, Somerset.—*Ibid*. Third Series, vol. xli. p. 73.

7. Smith O'Brien.—That out-door relief should be given. Defeated by 99 to 32 votes.<sup>3</sup>

8. O'Connell.—That poor-rate should be paid by the landlords alone. Defeated by 71 to 22 votes.<sup>4</sup>

9. Smith O'Brien.—That two-thirds of the rates should be paid by the landlords. Defeated by 46 to 31 votes.<sup>5</sup>

10. O'Connell.—That the voting at the election of Poor-Law guardians should be by ballot. Defeated by 54 to 27 votes.<sup>6</sup>

The bill passed through committee on the 23rd of March, and on the 30th of April the third reading was carried, in opposition to a motion of Sir William Brabazon for its postponement, by a majority of 234 to 61 votes.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Minority : Aglionby, Baring, Bateson, Bentinck, Bodkin, Bridgman, Briscoe, Brocklehurst, Brotherton, Callaghan, Darby, Fielden, Ferguson, Fleetwood, Hall, Halse, Hodgson, Horsman, Johnson, Mahony, Morris, M. J. O'Connell, M. O'Connell, Plumptre, Poulett Scrope, Sinclair, Style, Vigors, Villiers, Wakley, Williams, Yates. Tellers—O'Connell, Smith O'Brien.—Ibid. p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> Minority : Archbold, Bateson, Beamish, Blake, Bridgman, Bryan, Castlereagh, Ferguson, Fitzgibbon, Fitzsimon, Hindley, Jones, Lucas, Maher, Nagle, Cornelius O'Brien, Redington, E. B. Roche, W. Roche, Style, Wakley, White. Tellers—O'Connell, Conolly.—Ibid. p. 980.

<sup>5</sup> Minority : Archbold, Barron, Beamish, Blake, Bodkin, Bridgeman, Brotherton, Browne, Bruges, Bryan, Callaghan, Courtenay, Ferguson, Finch, Fitzgibbon, Fitzsimon, Howard, Kinnaird, Maher, C. O'Brien, M. J. O'Connell, Packe, Redington, W. Roche, D. Roche, H. Stuart, V. Stuart, Style, Vigors, H. R. Westenra, White. Tellers—O'Connell, Smith O'Brien.—Ibid. p. 983.

<sup>6</sup> Minority : Archbold, Beamish, Blake, Bodkin, Brabazon, Bridgman, Brotherton, Bryan, Craig, Finch, Howard, James, Jephson, Lynch, C. O'Brien, J. O'Connell, M. J. O'Connell, M. O'Connell, E. B. Roche, W. Roche, D. Roche, Sinclair, Somerville, Style, Vigors, Wallace, Wyse. Tellers O'Connell, Wakley.—Ibid. p. 1001.

<sup>7</sup> Minority : Viscount Acheson, Lord Adare, Archbold, Bailey, Brabazon, Dillon Browne, Buller, Sir J. Y., Chapman, Hon. A. H. Cole, Lord Cole, Conolly, Coote, Curry, De Horsey, Duffield, Dunbar, Duncombe, A. Evans, Ferguson, Sir R. Ferguson, Sir R. A. Finch, Fitzgibbon, Fitzsimon, French, Gore, the Marquess of Granby, H. Grattan, Grimston, Hayes, Heron, the Earl of Hillsborough, Hodgson, Hughes, Hutton, Jones, Kemble, Kirk, Lockhart, Lowther, Mackenzie, Macnamara, Meynell, Milton, Nagle, C. O'Brien, O'Connell, M. O'Con-



On the 1st of May, it was read a first time in the Lords, without opposition, and almost without debate; but, on the occasion of the second reading, on the 21st of May, the Marquess of Londonderry moved its rejection, and an animated discussion, in the course of which the bill was vigorously attacked by Lyndhurst and Brougham, ensued.

The Duke of Wellington expressed his determination to vote for the second reading, saying that he hoped to amend the bill in committee. Ireland, the Tory leader urged, needed some sort of Poor-Law, were it but to "induce the gentlemen connected with [that country], whether resident proprietors or not, to look after their properties, and to pay some little attention to the state of the population on their estates."<sup>8</sup>

Despite the attitude assumed by the Duke, the Marquess of Londonderry pressed his amendment to a division, with the following results:—

For the second reading	.	.	.	.	149
Against	.	.	.	.	20 <sup>9</sup>

In committee, the most important amendment was introduced by the Duke of Wellington. As the bill left the Commons, it contained a clause proposing that the whole country should be divided into unions, each union to be rated at large, for the support of the poor lodged in the workhouse thereof. The Duke now suggested that the unions should be subdivided into electoral districts, each district to be charged with the

nell, O'Neil, Col. Perceval, Hon. G. J. Perceval, Pryme, E. B. Roche, D. Roche, Scartlett, Tennent, J. E. Trench, Verner, Walsh, Hon. H. R. Westenra, White. Tellers—Viscount Castlereagh, M. J. O'Connell.—*Ibid.* p. 717.

<sup>8</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. liii. p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> The minority consisted of the following Peers: Beaufort, Westmeath, Clanricarde, Londonderry, Hardwicke, Glengall, Sheffield, Shadbroke, Caledon, Belmore, Teynham, Alranley, Charleville, Stanhope, Roden, Limerick, Clonbrock, Gorton, Boston, Brougham.—*Ibid.* pp. 70, 71.

maintenance of its own poor, in order, as he said, that every parish should bear its own burdens; and this suggestion was accepted. Speaking subsequently of the Duke's amendment, Lord John Russell said that its "principle was clearly to create a feeling of responsibility and of interest in all parties to attend to the general concerns of their respective districts, which might have a wholesome tendency."<sup>1</sup>

How far Lord John Russell's anticipations as to the probable tendency of the amendment were realized, will be very briefly considered in the next chapter. Suffice it now to say that the bill, having been seven days in committee, was read a third time on the 9th of July (in opposition to a motion of the Marquess of Londonderry for its rejection), by a majority of 93 to 62 votes.<sup>2</sup> On the 31st of July it received the royal assent.

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xlv. p. 577.

<sup>2</sup> The following Peers, residing or possessing property in Ireland, voted for the third reading: Leinster, Headfort, Lansdowne, Downshire, Leitrim, Cork, Lismore, Plunket, Glenelg, Foley, Bishop of Derry. The following voted against: Carberry, Charleville, Glengall, Gort, Londonderry, Limerick, Mount-Cashel, Ormonde, Roden, Strangford, Thomond. The following Peers signed a protest against the bill: Carberry, Mount-Cashel, Hawarden, Teynham, Glengall, Clonbrock.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xlv. pp. 28, 29.



## CHAPTER VI.

## THE OPERATION OF THE POOR-LAW.

THE introduction of the workhouse system in Ireland was not, upon the whole, attended by the scenes of violence which characterized its establishment in England.<sup>1</sup> The new law was most unpopular, the people shrank from the idea of workhouse relief, and some meetings were called to protest against the measure, but in the main the Commissioners met with no serious interference in the exercise of their functions.

<sup>1</sup> Not but there were some scenes of violence in Ireland. See Nicholls' "*Irish Poor-Law*," pp. 277 and 295. However, it seems to me, that the opposition in England was fiercer. The guardians, while assembled within the workhouse at Bedford, were threatened by an angry mob, carrying bludgeons and stones. When trying to expostulate with the mob, they were received with cries of "Blood and bread," "Break their heads, one and all." Stones were thrown into the room where the guardians were sitting, wounding some of them. The disturbances at last became so serious that the Riot Act was read, but the reading produced no effect. The mob kept the town in a state of terror for hours, rescuing such of their numbers as were arrested by the police, and defying the authorities generally. ("*Annual Register*," 1835, Chr. 110.) The guardians of the Steyning Union ordered two paupers with their wives to be removed to the Henley Union, retaining their children at Steyning. They refused to go without the children; and were backed up by all the paupers in the workhouse. The guardians and magistrates endeavoured to enforce their orders, but without success, the paupers literally putting them out of the building, and taking prisoner one of the magistrates, Captain Young, M.P. for Shoreham. Captain Young was detained by the paupers (who had got complete possession of the workhouse, and who received the sympathies of the people of the town) until the arrival of a troop of dragoons. — *Ibid.* 137.

In 1842, the new system was in fairly working order. In 1843, the Legislature, finding that whatever resistance was offered to the law came chiefly from occupiers rented at or under 4*l.*, passed an Amended Poor Relief Act, exempting (*inter alia*) such occupiers from the payment of poor-rates. This Act also contained a clause, of a quasi-settlement character, making it necessary for a pauper to have occupied some tenement in a given electoral division for twelve, out of eighteen calendar months, previous to his application for relief, in order that such electoral district might be rated for his support.<sup>2</sup> In 1847 another Amended Poor Relief Act was passed, authorizing the administration of out-door relief to “permanently”<sup>3</sup> infirm poor, and raising the number of *ex officio* guardians from one-third to one-half of the whole body of guardians of each union.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 6 and 7 Vict. cap. 92, secs. 1, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Sharman Crawford moved as an amendment the omission of the word “permanently,” but without success.

<sup>4</sup> John O’Connell moved the omission of this clause, but the motion was rejected by a majority of 124 to 26. The minority consisted of the following members: Dillon Browne (Mayo County), Callaghan (Cork City), Collet (Athlone), Sharman Crawford (Rochdale), Denistown (Malton), Escott (Winchester), Sir De Lacy Evans (Westminster), Ewart (Dumfries), Fielden (Oldham), Fitzgerald (Tipperary), Sir B. Hall (Marylebone), Hindley (Ashton-under-Lyne), Howard (Carlisle), Lawless (Clonmel), Major Layard (Carlow Borough), Major Macnamara (Clare County), McCarthy (Cork City), Sir C. Napier (Marylebone), Smith O’Brien (Limerick County), M. J. O’Connell (Kerry County), Pechell (Brighton), Rawdon (Armagh City), Poulet Scrope (Stroud), Villiers Stuart (Waterford County), Wawn (South Shields), Williams (Coventry). Tellers—Bellew (Louth), John O’Connell (Kilkenny Borough). (Hansard, Third Series, vol. xci. p. 404.) Having been defeated in his first effort, John O’Connell renewed his opposition to the clause when the question was put, “that the clause stand part of the bill,” and again divided the House with the following result:—

For the clause	.	.	133
Against	.	.	21

*Ibid.* p. 406. Mr. John Bright voted with the Irish members.



During the years 1847 and 1848, the strain of the famine proved too much for the new system, which would have inevitably succumbed under the terrible pressure put upon it, but for the extraneous aid afforded by the State and public. Finally, by 1851-52 it may be accounted to have got out of troubled waters, and in fact to have been pretty well before the wind. Its history since that date will, I think, admit of brief treatment.

The system, it may be noted, has always been unpopular in Ireland. The people never regarded it as a concession. Quite the reverse. They looked upon it as a harsh measure of English law, forced upon the country by the English Government, and in the main administered by English officials, in the interests, not of the Irish poor, but of the Irish landlords. Such being the view generally entertained in Ireland respecting the Poor-Law, it must be said that the Government evinced much unwisdom in taking no pains to overcome the popular antipathy.

Mr. Nicholls, who was virtually the sole administrator of the law between 1838 and 1842, paid little attention to Irish public opinion. He surrounded himself with English officials, sought no counsel from the popular representatives, and took no heed of the popular complaints. He looked at the subject entirely from an English standpoint, putting aside completely Irish prejudices and predilections.<sup>5</sup> It is, however,

<sup>5</sup> The practice of not making popular appointments remained long in force after Mr. Nicholls' time. So late as 1861 the commissioners were Englishmen, or Ascendancy-men. (Evidence of Archbishop Cullen before Select Committee of 1861, Q. 3950). Of 163 clerks 87 were Protestants, and 78 Catholics. In Ulster, out of 45 (included in the 163) clerks there were but 5 Catholics; out of 156 masters the Catholics numbered 85; and in Ulster, out of 43 masters, all, except 3, were Protestant. With reference to the appointment of matrons, out of 163 in the south, 88 were Catholic, and in Ulster, out of 44, all, except 3, were Protestant. While the officials were thus mainly Protestant, the paupers were mainly Catholic.

only fair to Mr. Nicholls to say that he was impartial in his disregard of Irish public opinion, for he treated the views, both of landlords and people, with supreme indifference.

But more censurable than the conduct of Mr. Nicholls—who, after all, was but a mere official—was the conduct of Lord John Russell, who, by increasing the number of *ex officio* guardians in 1847, rendered the Poor-Law more obnoxious to the people, and impaired its efficacy for good. On the introduction of the original bill in 1838, O'Connell had protested against the application of the *ex officio* principle to Ireland at all. If, he said, the magistrates and landlords deserved to be elected by the ratepayers, they would be elected, and if they did not, then they had no right to be on the Board. A precisely similar view, expressed almost in O'Connell's words, was taken by Smith O'Brien in 1847. "If," said the Young Ireland Chief, "the magistrates are fit to administer the affairs of the poor, they will be elected by the ratepayers; if they are not fit, I think it is scarcely questionable whether they should sit on the Boards or not."<sup>6</sup>

But Lord John Russell disregarded alike the opinions of "Old Ireland" and "Young Ireland."

Respecting this question of *ex officio* guardians, I am bound to say that, having carefully perused the evidence given before the various Select Committees<sup>7</sup> appointed from time to time to inquire into the subject of the administration of the Irish Poor-Law, I feel satisfied that the great blot in the system has been the recognition of the *ex officio* principle. Its effect, has been to throw the administration into the hands of the landlords (who, be it remembered, not only

<sup>6</sup> Hansard, March 1st, 1847.

<sup>7</sup> The following are the Select Committees to which I refer: House of Lords, 1846; *ibid.* 1849; House of Commons, 1849; House of Commons, 1861; House of Commons [Committee on Union Rating], 1872.



constitute, by virtue of the law, one-half of the whole body of guardians, but who, by virtue of their territorial powers, influence the votes of many of the elected guardians); and I think there are good reasons for believing that the landlords have not administered the system in the interest of the class for whose advantage it was established.<sup>8</sup> As an instance of the manner in which the landlords have worked the Poor-law, and of their sympathies generally with the poor, I shall quote the examination of Father Browne, parish priest of Ballintober, in the County Mayo, before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1849.

FATHER BROWNE,—There has been in the parish the greatest depopulation; whole villages have been swept away together.

GEORGE CORNWALL LEWIS,—Will you describe to us the causes of whole villages being swept away?

FATHER BROWNE,—The causes were that the landlords wanted to get the lands into their own hands. There was partly a cottier tenantry not rated according to law for the poor-rates [their holdings being] under 4*l.* valuation.<sup>9</sup> The landlords felt the consequences of this press upon themselves; the tenantry had no means to pay rent, and had no means to meet any of the ordinary demands, and the landlords considered, of course, that their only alternative was to get the land into their own possession.

SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—The landlord had to pay the poor-rate for the tenant?

FATHER BROWNE,—Yes.

SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—And he got no rent from the tenant?

FATHER BROWNE,—He got no rent from the tenant for the last year.<sup>1</sup> [This was a famine-period, be it remembered.]

SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—Where did he get the money to pay the poor-rate?

FATHER BROWNE,—The landlords themselves were very much pressed.

SIR LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—Must not they have been ruined?

<sup>8</sup> A fact which, as it appears to me, makes the conduct of Lord John Russell, in increasing the number of *ex officio* guardians, more culpable is, that, Sir Robert Peel introduced a similar clause in his Bill of 1843, but on reflection withdrew it.

<sup>9</sup> See ante, p. 566.

<sup>1</sup> Father Browne was examined on the 28th of June, 1849.

Father BROWNE,—They must feel the pressure as much as the people, and they have a right to feel it.

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—How could they get the money to pay the poor-rate?

Father BROWNE,—For the first two years [1846, 1847] the rents were paid by the tenants partially.

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—When that became exhausted where did the landlords go to get the money?

Father BROWNE,—For the last year [1848-49] the landlords of Ireland have had no money; they have in fact got very little money from the tenants in my part of the country.

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—And in some of those cases they have, perhaps, paid some hundreds of pounds to the poor-rate?

Father BROWNE,—I must tell you there is a great deal of poor-rate due in those villages. In the Union of Castlebar I think there is 10,000*l.* due for the poor-rates.

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—And the landlords are liable?

Father BROWNE,—Yes.

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—Then the landlords must be ruined by the law?

Father BROWNE,—I know that all classes participate in the general ruin.

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—It ruins him?

Father BROWNE,—It presses on him, but it is only one of the consequences of the famine—unforeseen and unprovided-for consequences which threaten the total decomposition of the entire social system in the west of Ireland.

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—Then it compels him to eject the tenant?

Father BROWNE,—Yes, he ejects the small [4*l.*] holder for the purpose of getting the land into his own hands.

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—Then that law [the 4*l.* exemption rating clause of Peel's Act] is of the most cruel character that can be, both to the landlord and the tenant?

Father BROWNE,—The law is used as an instrument of eviction.

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—How can it be otherwise?

[At this stage Father Browne was called on to withdraw, and the room was cleared. After a few minutes the Committee resumed, and Father Browne's examination was continued.]

\* \* \* \* \*

The CHAIRMAN,—You attribute the general distress of the country to the famine, and not to the Poor-Law?

Father BROWNE,—Decidedly to the famine, not to the Poor-Law, because I look upon the Poor-Law as the best machinery



(that is my own conviction), that, possibly can be contrived for carrying out relief; with all its faults, it is the best machinery that can be devised—the cheapest.

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN [who, like a true O'Brien, was still eager for the fray]—Did you not intimate to me that that portion [the 4*l.* exemption clause] of the Poor-Law, at all events, is one of the causes of the depopulation of these villages?

Father BROWNE,—No, . . . I said that it was the peculiar circumstances of the times with which the Poor-Law, as a Poor-Law, was unable to cope. . . .

Sir LUCIUS O'BRIEN,—But if the landlord is obliged to pay the poor-rates over a large tract of country, out of which he receives no rent, does it not almost coerce him to eject the people?

Father BROWNE,—Yes; but I always wish to carry with me this principle, that there were no means at all in the country to pay the rate; there were no assets; and I take the liberty of asking if this ejecting of tenants could ameliorate the condition of the landlord? He has now ejected the tenants, and there are whole tracts of country in my parish waste, without a single thing—there are 1200 acres of fine land . . . without a single thing. In the parish of Ballintober nearly the whole district was depopulated; the whole of that land near me is waste. How far has the landlord bettered his condition? . . .

POULET SCROPE,—Then those landlords begin to find that they have cleared their estates too rapidly?

Father BROWNE,—They do, and they regret it. I know them to regret. . . . They cannot [now] get the ordinary hands to employ. . . . I know one landlord who has 3000 acres of oats upon the soil of his tenants, and he has very great apprehension that he will not get hands to cut this quantity of oats.<sup>2</sup>

It seems to me that Sir Lucius O'Brien, representing his class, cuts a pitiable figure in this examination of Father Browne. His callousness; his inability to appreciate the effects of the terrible visitation from which the country was still suffering; his childish efforts to attribute the national calamities to the Poor-Law; his want of fellow-feeling; his total absence of all sense of social and political respon-

<sup>2</sup> Select Committee [Commons] on Irish Poor-Law, 1849, part ii. pp. 71, 72, 73.

sibility—all this, I say, is pitiable, but it is the Irish landlord every inch: inconsiderate, regardless of the welfare of the masses of his fellow-countrymen, selfish, pitiless, anti-national.<sup>3</sup>

Another subject deserving of notice in connexion with the Poor Law, as illustrating the disposition of the class<sup>4</sup> into whose hands Lord John Russell, by the Act of 1847, so largely threw its administration, is that of electoral rating. When, in 1838, the Duke of Wellington proposed the substitution of electoral for union rating, he did so with the express object of inducing the landlords to interest themselves in the well-being of their tenants. If, the Duke argued, the peasants in any given electoral division fall into a state of poverty, the landlords in that division will be taxed for their support, and the measure of the tax will be the measure of the tenants' distress. Therefore, reasoned the Tory leader, it will be to the advantage of the landlord to keep the tenants off the rates in the rural electoral divisions, and for this purpose he will be stimulated to exert himself to save them from want.<sup>5</sup> But, the Duke in thinking that by a stratagem of this kind he could pin the Irish landlords

<sup>3</sup> Another feature in the Act of 1847 was the introduction of the quarter-acre clause [10 Vic. 31] by which no occupier possessing more than a quarter of an acre of land could obtain out-relief. There has been a considerable conflict of opinion as to the operation of this clause. Before the Select Committee of 1849, Twisleton and Aubrey de Vere approved of it as a safeguard against imposture and a test of solvency. The late Mr. McCarthy Downing and others condemned it, contending that quarter-of-an-acre occupiers were the class of peasants who, under a sudden pressure of adversity, need temporary relief, and ought to get it. They also said that the clause was used as an instrument of eviction. The Committee of 1849 did not, however, think that a case had been made out against the clause, but the Committee of 1861 did, and advised its repeal. See Report and Minutes of Evidence of Committees of 1849 and 1861.

<sup>4</sup> It was stated before the Committee of 1861 that the *ex officio* guardians seldom attended unless when a job was to be done. See Evidence of Mr. Mahony, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, and Mr. Hogan, Qs. 1898, 2396.

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xliii. p. 23.



to the discharge of their duties, reckoned without his host. The landlords certainly exerted themselves to keep the tenants off the rates in the rural electoral divisions, but they did not exert themselves to keep the tenants from want. What happened was this; when the tenants—from causes which I shall not pause to investigate now, for the subject belongs more properly to the Land Question—became destitute they were evicted, and when evicted they flocked to the towns, where they soon came upon the rates; and thus, the landlords, by a *coup de main*, cleverly succeeded in getting rid, to a large extent, both of their poor, and their poor-rates, the burden of maintaining their evicted, and poverty-stricken tenants, falling, mainly, not on them, as the Duke of Wellington intended it should fall, but upon the ratepayers of the urban divisions.

Since 1847, when Morgan John O'Connell moved a resolution on the subject in the House of Commons,<sup>6</sup> the question of union *versus* electoral rating has been mooted from time to time in and out of Parliament; the case of the opponents of the electoral system contending that its effect has been to unjustly diminish the amount of rates in the rural divisions at the expense of the urban.<sup>7</sup> The matter was inquired into before the Poor-Law Committee of 1849, but no decision respecting it was arrived at. It also formed a subject of consideration and discussion before the Committee of 1861, the Committee re-

<sup>6</sup> Mr. O'Connell moved the substitution of electoral for union rating. His motion was negatived by a majority of 124 to 25 votes. List of the minority: John Bright, Blake, Brotherton, Dillon Browne, Callaghan, Callett, Damer, Dennistown, Duncan, Ewart, Fitzwilliam, Hall, Hallon, Joliffe, Ker, Lawless, Layard, McCarthy, McDonnell, Napier, Smith O'Brien, J. O'Connell, Wawn, Williams, Yorke. Tellers—M. J. O'Connell and Col. Rawdon.

<sup>7</sup> Abbé Perraud, "Ireland under English Rule," p. 321. See also Evidence of Dr. Phelan before Select Committee, 1861, and Hansard, Third Series, vols. clxxxiv. exciv. and ccxiv; also Pamphlet entitled "Union Rating" (Dublin, 1871).

porting, that, "several witnesses have recommended the substitution of union for divisional rating, but that it is not desirable to alter the present law in that respect."<sup>8</sup> Between 1861, and 1871, it was on several occasions brought before the House of Commons by the present Mr. Justice Barry (when member for Dungarvan), and the late Mr. Patrick McMahon, who in an especial manner made the subject his own. In 1871, a Committee of the Commons was appointed to inquire into the question, and it reported by a majority of one in favour of union rating. In 1873, Lord Hartington, who presided over this Committee, said in the House of Commons, that, the system of union rating ought to be adopted, as the system of electoral rating had "placed undue pressure on the urban divisions, encouraging the destruction of labourers' houses, and discouraging their erection."<sup>9</sup> In 1874, Mr. O'Shaughnessy introduced a bill<sup>1</sup> to substitute union for electoral rating, but it was rejected on the motion of Mr. Kavanagh, then member for Carlow, and the subject has been allowed to hang fire since.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Report, p. 3. Hansard, Third Series, vol. xci. p. 357.

<sup>9</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. ccxiv. pp. 765, 766.

<sup>1</sup> The following table was laid before Lord Wodehouse when Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland :—

AMOUNT RATE PER POUND OF VALUATION.

	On the Union.	On the County Electoral Division.	On the Civic Electoral Division.
	s. d.	d.	s. d.
New Ross . . . .	0 11	7	2 10
Kilkenny . . . .	0 10	3½	2 2
Limerick . . . .	1 0	3	2 1
Waterford . . . .	0 11	5	1 11
Dungarvan . . . .	0 8	3	1 11
Youghal . . . .	0 9	4	1 9½
Cloumel . . . .	0 10	5	1 8
Cork . . . .	0 8	2½	1 1
Average . . . .	0 10	4	1 11

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. ccxix. p. 541.



The last topic to which I shall refer in connexion with the Poor-Law is the power possessed under it of removing from England to Ireland paupers of Irish birth, who have lived and worked the best part of their days in the former country. This power has sometimes operated with much injustice and harshness. Irish labourers, who have been settled in England from their youth, have, not infrequently, been despatched in old age, to their native land, where they, sometimes, found themselves in the position of strangers and outcasts. Worse still, no pains were taken, in the matter of these removals, to see that the paupers should be landed in or near to the locality from which they had originally come—a circumstance which tended to make the condition of the unfortunate immigrants yet more forlorn and wretched. For instance, a man who had been born in Kerry would, perhaps, be landed in Belfast, and left to work his way as best he could to his native place; a labourer who, at the age of nineteen or twenty, had probably left an extreme part of Connaught to seek his fortunes in England, would, at the age of seventy, be cast in a state of helplessness and misery on the coasts of Louth or Wexford. Another circumstance of aggravation in the case of these Irish removals has been, that, whereas English paupers who were removed from parish to parish in their own country received help and sustenance on the way, the Irish pauper received none.

“In the removal of English paupers,” says Mr. Nassau Senior, “the party is supported with food during his route, and all his wants are carefully attended to, which is not the case in the removal of an Irish pauper; the party does not even receive food on board the ship.” Again, Mr. Senior adds, “in the English removals a printed document is given with every removal, stating all the main facts of the case, which paper is totally deficient in Irish removals.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Select Committee on Irish Poor-Laws, 1861, Q. 1902. On this subject of removals, see Mr. (now Judge) Morris' Speech in

With these words of Mr. Senior on the subject of Irish removals, I close my sketch of the Irish Poor-Law, merely observing that I can find no convincing proof of the accuracy of the statement often made, that the system has, in an especial manner, demoralized and degraded the Irish peasantry.<sup>4</sup> What I do find convincing proof of is, that the Irish peasantry were demoralized and degraded before a Poor-Law was ever established in the country; and that they are, to a painful extent, demoralized and degraded yet. Why? I shall answer this question very fully when I come to deal with the subject of the Land.

the House of Commons on the 12th of June, 1866, and the Evidence of Mr. Doyle (Inspector of Local Government Board, England) before Select Committee of House of Commons on Poor (Irish) Removals, 1878, pp. 138, 139; also the following Parliamentary papers and returns: Papers relating to the cases of Elizabeth Finn and Mary Barry, printed by order of the House of Commons, May 4th, 1866; Return of persons removed from England and Wales and Scotland to Ireland, from January, 1866, to December, 1869; and Correspondence relating to Irish Removals, printed by order of House of Commons, February 14th, 1871. Between the above dates 2650 Irish poor were removed from England and Wales to Ireland, and 1271 from Scotland. See also Return and Correspondence relating to Irish Removals, printed by order of the House of Commons on the 13th of August, 1875. The Minutes of Evidence of Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on (Irish) Poor Removals in 1878 will also repay perusal.

<sup>4</sup> I do not enter into the question as to whether the Workhouse system generally is demoralizing or not. I confine myself to the remark that I cannot discover evidence of the Irish system being especially so. At the same time I feel bound to add, that, the disposition, often evinced, to substitute the "workhouse test" for remedial measures of a statesmanlike character, has much tended to bring the Irish Poor-Law into merited disrepute.



# BOOK V.

## THE MUNICIPAL REFORM ACT, 1840.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE INTRODUCTION OF MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS INTO IRELAND.

THE establishment of municipal institutions in Ireland may be said to date from the time of the Anglo-Norman invasion.<sup>1</sup>

In 1172, Henry II. granted two charters to the citizens of Bristol, by the first of which they became possessed of the City of Dublin, "with all the liberties and free customs which the men of Bristol had at Bristol and throughout the king's territory," and by the second of which they were freed from "all imposts throughout England, Normandy, Wales, France, and Ireland."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is said that some of the Irish corporations were of older date, and were perhaps of Danish origin. See post, and O'Connell's speech in the House of Commons, July 31st, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Commissioners on Irish Corporations, Parliamentary Papers, vol. xxvii. for 1835, and Gilbert's "Historic and Municipal Documents of Ireland," preface, pp. xxiv, xxv, and text, pp. 1, 2. The words of the Dublin Charter are identical with the words of a charter granted to the citizens of Bristol in 1164. See Report of Commissioners on English Corporations, Parliamentary Papers, vol. xxiv. for 1833, p. 1152. Leland, "History of Ireland," pp. 81, 82; Lyttleton, "History of Henry II.," vol. iii. pp. 270, 271.

The privileges conceded by the charters of Henry were confirmed and extended by several charters of John—some granted when he was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, others when he was King of England, and all of which were paid for by the citizens in hard cash.<sup>3</sup>

The most important of John's charters were those granted in 1192 and 1215. By the first, the boundaries of the city were defined, and power was given to the citizens (1) to distrain their debtors by their chattels in Dublin, and to hold pleas, according to the custom of the city, of debts lent in the city, and pledges therein given;<sup>4</sup> (2) to have all their reasonable guilds as the burgesses of Bristol had; (3) to possess, and dispose of at their pleasure all the tenures within and without the walls up to the boundaries. This charter also declared that the city was not to be amerced for murder; "nor is a citizen on any appeal to wage battle, but to abide his trial by forty lawful men of the city sworn as compurgators." By the Charter of 1215 (which confirmed all the former ones both of Henry and of John) the payment of an annual rent imposed on the citizens was substituted for the irregular contributions previously levied under that name.<sup>5</sup>

From the reign of John onwards, the citizens of Dublin grew in favour with the Anglo-Norman monarchs, who interposed more than once to protect their rights and privileges. Thus, in 1220, we find Henry III. writing to the Irish Viceroy<sup>6</sup> with reference to some complaints preferred by the citizens against the exactions of the Castle,<sup>7</sup> and commanding him "to take

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert, preface, p. xxv.

<sup>4</sup> "A power now exercised by the process of attachment from the City Record Court, and stated to be founded on this charter."—Report on Irish Corporations (Dublin), Parliamentary Papers for 1835, vol. xxvii. p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Gilbert, preface, p. xxv, text, pp. 55—65.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey de Marreis.

<sup>7</sup> Dublin Castle was built in the year, 1204.



nothing [in future] without the consent of the vendor," who, "if a denizen," had to be paid within forty days, and if a foreigner, "immediately."<sup>8</sup>

Nine years afterwards, the office of mayor was created, the new chief functionary being hedged around with almost semi-regal safeguards.<sup>9</sup> "Heavy penalties," we are told, "were decreed against those who insulted the mayor either in the town or in his court;" and "If the mayor's blood were drawn the offender was liable to a fine of 500*l.*, or to lose his right hand, or to be imprisoned for life."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the citizens were not apparently always desirous of seeking the mayoralty, for it seems to have been necessary to make regulations rendering every "citizen, eligible to the office, who absented himself on the day of election [which took place annually on St. Michael's Day] liable to amercement."<sup>2</sup>

Between the reigns of Henry III., and Henry VIII., many charters, confirming old privileges, or conferring new ones, were granted. In 1327, the profits of the markets (established in the reign of John) and "all matters appertaining to their management," were vested in the "mayor and citizens."

In 1402, the mayor was accorded the privilege of having a sword "borne before him, as the Mayor of London had."

In 1419, he was made a justice of the peace and clerk of the market, and in 1484 a justice of oyer and terminer, and gaol-delivery within the city—a distinction also conferred about the same time on the Recorder.<sup>3</sup>

But in the reign of Henry VIII., favours of a more substantial kind were bestowed on the municipality.

<sup>8</sup> Gilbert, p. 75.

<sup>9</sup> Previous to this time the chief officer was called "provost."

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert, preface, p. xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> "Report on Irish Corporations (Dublin), Parliamentary Papers, vol. xxvii. for 1835, pp. 4, 5.

In 1538, the king, "in consideration of their services in defending the city against the rebellion of Thomas Fitzgerald, granted to the mayor, bailiffs, citizens, and commons, the site and estates of the dissolved priory of All Saints in the counties of Dublin, Meath, Kildare, Louth, Tipperary, and Kilkenny, and elsewhere in Ireland, at the yearly rent of 4*l.* 4*s.* 0½*d.*"<sup>4</sup>

This grant of Henry was confirmed by Edward VI., who, in addition, bestowed a new charter of incorporation creating the city and its suburbs and liberties a county of itself, by its present name of the County of the City of Dublin. In the reign of Elizabeth, the corporation obtained another grant of lands—part of the sequestered possessions of the monasteries of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Thomas-the-Martyr, the rent fixed by her Majesty (who imposed a fine of 80*l.* every 21st year as well) being 40*l.* per annum.<sup>5</sup> Finally, in the reign of Charles I., the chief officer of the city was permitted to assume the title of "lord mayor." Thus, upon the whole, the municipality fared excellently well until the reign of James II., when an attempt was made practically to suppress it altogether—James having proceeded against the Corporation of Dublin, as he proceeded against other corporations in Ireland and England, by writs of *Quo warranto*.<sup>6</sup>

With reference to the right of admission to the corporation and the mode of election, the earlier charters contain few particulars. Doubtless, originally, all the inhabitants were entitled to membership,<sup>7</sup> and the exercise of the franchise, but, by degrees, the controlling and elective power became vested in a select

<sup>4</sup> A considerable portion of the estate of the corporation was held under this grant in 1840.—*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Report on Irish Corporations (Dublin), vol. xxvii. p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Report on Irish Corporations, Appendix i. (Dublin), Parliamentary Papers for 1835, vol. xxvii. p. 6. James really wanted to get the corporation under his own thumb.

<sup>7</sup> Report on Irish Corporations, Parliamentary Papers for 1835, vol. xxvii. pp. 11, 13.



few, who were known by the name of the common council.

From the time of Queen Elizabeth,<sup>8</sup> to the passing of the Catholic Relief Act of 1793, Catholics were excluded from the Corporation of Dublin by law, and from 1793 to 1840 they were excluded from it in fact.<sup>9</sup>

In the latter year, the corporation consisted of a lord mayor, 2 sheriffs, 24 aldermen, and 144 common councilmen; and, perhaps, no fairer idea can be given of its condition at that time, than by the statement of the fact, that, none of the respectable traders, and merchants of the city were members of the common council.<sup>1</sup>

In truth, the corporation was an exclusive, self-elected body, wholly in the hands of what O'Connell rightly described as a "beggarly," and "rotten" class, who misapplied the public money, and abused the public trust.

In addition to Dublin, the following municipal bodies were established in Ireland previous to the reign of James I.: Limerick, Trim, Kells, Duleek, Waterford, Cashel, Cork, Drogheda, Kilkenny, New Ross, Athenry, Carlingford, Clonmel, Donegal, Roscommon, Wexford, Ardee, Carrickfergus, Dundalk, Galway, Kilmallock, Kinsale, Thomastown, Bannow, Callan, Athboy, Gowran, Naas, Dungarvan, Feathard (Tipperary), Irishtown, Navan, Dingle, Maryborough, Philipstown, Inistogue, Fore, Kildare, and Knochtopher. Of these municipalities, Limerick, Cork, Cashel, Carlingford, Clonmel, Ardee, Carrickfergus, Dundalk, Galway, Kinsale, Callan, Athboy, and Naas, were, apparently, the most ancient, their corporate privileges having, according to the Report of the Commissioners on Irish Corporations,

<sup>8</sup> By the 2 Eliz. cap. 1, the mayor and other lay or temporal officer, &c., was bound to take the oath of supremacy. See Gale, "Inquiry into the Ancient Corporate System of Ireland," p. 134.

<sup>9</sup> Report on Irish Corporations; speech of Sir Michael O'Loughlen. —Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxi. p. 1022.

<sup>1</sup> See Report on Irish Corporations, Appendix i. (Dublin), p. 14, *et seq.*

existed by prescription. To Limerick, however, belongs the distinction of having obtained the earliest Anglo-Norman charter, which was granted by Earl Morton in 1199.

Trim, Kells, and Duleek, were enfranchised in the reign of Richard I., by Walter De Lacy, Lord of Meath; and Waterford received a charter from King John in 1206. Cashel, Drogheda, Cork, Carlow, Kilkenny and New Ross received charters of incorporation in the reign of Henry III., and Kildare in the reign of Edward I.; Athenry, Carlingford, Clonmel, Donegal, Roscommon, and Wexford were enfranchised in the reign of Edward II. Edward III. granted charters of incorporation to Ardee, Carrickfergus, Dundalk, Galway, Kilmallock, Kinsale, Thomastown; Richard II. to Bannow and Callan; Henry IV. to Athboy; Henry V. to Gowran and Naas; Edward IV. to Dungarvan, Feathard, and Irishtown; Edward V. to Navan, and Elizabeth to Dingle, Maryborough, and Philipstown. At what time charters of incorporation were granted to Fore, Inistogue, and Knocktopher is not known, the muniments of those towns having completely perished. All the charters above referred to were confirmed from time to time, most of the confirmatory grants having been made during the reigns of Edward I., Henry IV., Henry V., Henry VI., Henry VIII., and Elizabeth.

With respect to the nature of these charters, it may be stated, that, some were granted as an inducement to Anglo-Normans to settle in the country; while according to the terms of others, the inhabitants were subjected to the payment of a fixed rent, or of fixed dues, or required to fortify and protect the towns against attacks from the native population, in consideration of the privileges conceded.

So much for the municipalities which were in existence during the reigns of the Plantagenets and Tudors. I shall now turn to those which were created by the Stuarts, and of which there were altogether sixty-two,



viz., forty-six created by James I., one by Charles I., and fifteen by Charles II. The corporations created by James I. were ; Armagh, Askeaton, Athlone, Augher, Athy, Ballinakill, Ballyshannon, Baltimore, Bandon Bridge, Bangor, Belfast, Belturbet, Boyle, Carrick-on-Shannon, Castlebar, Cavan, Charlemont, Clogher, Cloughnakilty, Coleraine, Dungannon, Ennis, Enniscorthy, Enniskillen, Feathard (Wexford), Gorey, Hillsborough, Jamestown, Kilbeggan, Killileagh, Killebegs, Lifford, Limavaddy, Lismore, Londonderry, Mallow, Monaghan, Newry, Newtownards, Sligo, St. Johnstown (Donegal), Strabane, Tallagh, Tralee, Tuam, Wicklow. Charles I. created the corporation of Banagher; and Charles II. the corporations of Baltinglass, Blessington, Carisfort, Castlemartyr, Charleville, Dunleer, Granard, Harristown, Lanesborough, Middleton, Portarlinton, Johnstown, Longford, and Tulkse.

Respecting the terms of the Stuart charters, suffice it to say, that nearly all the above towns were enfranchised for the purpose of returning members to Parliament, and of strengthening the influence of the Crown.

Altogether, between the reign of Charles II. and the Union, there were 112 municipalities in Ireland, viz.: Ardee, Ardfert, Armagh, Antrim, Askeaton, Athboy, Athenry, Athlone, Athy, Augher, Ballinakill, Ballyshannon, Baltinglass, Banagher, Bandon Bridge, Bangor, Bannow, Belfast, Belturbet, Blessington, Boyle, Baltimore, Callan, Carisfort, Carlingford, Carlow, Carrickfergus, Carrick-on-Shannon, Cashel, Castlebar, Castlemartyr, Cavan, Clogher, Charlemont, Charleville, Cloughnakilty, Clonmel, Coleraine, Cork, Dingle, Donegal, Drogheda, Dublin, Duleek, Doneraile, Dundalk, Dungannon, Dungarvan, Dunleer, Ennis, Enniscorthy, Enniskillen, Feathard, Feathard, Fore, Galway, Granard, Gorey, Gowran, Harristown, Hillsborough, Jamestown, Inistogue, Irishtown, Kells, Kilbeggan, Kildare, Kilkenny, Killi-

begs, Killileagh, Kilmallock, Kinsale, Knocktopher, Lanesborough, Lifford, Limavaddy, Limerick, Lismore, Londonderry, Lisburn, Longford, Maryborough, Mallow, Middleton, Monaghan, Mullingar, Naas, Navan, Newcastle (near Lyons, Dublin), New Ross, Newry, Newtownards, Old Leighlin, Philipstown, Portarlington, Rathcormac, Roscommon, Randalstown, Sligo, St. Johnstown (Donegal), St. Johnstown (Longford), Strabane, Thomastown, Tralee, Trim, Tuam, Tulkse, Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow, Youghal.

Between 1800 and 1835, the following of those municipalities became extinct: Castlebar, Ballyshannon, Roscommon, Banagher, Limavaddy, Granard, Athboy, Ballinakill, Carrick-on-Shannon, Askeaton, Philipstown, Gowran, Donegal, Killibegs, Dunleer, Knocktopher, Blessington, Newcastle (near Lyons), Lanesborough, Feathard (Wexford), Jamestown, St. Johnstown, Augher, Bannow, Carisfort, Fore, Harristown, Old Leighlin, St. Johnstown (Donegal), and Tulkse.

Finally, between 1835 and 1840, the following towns remained enfranchised: Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Belfast, Galway, Waterford, Kilkenny, Londonderry, Drogheda, Sligo, Clonmel, Kinsale, Athlone, Youghal, Wexford, Dundalk, Bandon Bridge, Tralee, Armagh, Carlow, Carrickfergus, Ennis, Cashel, Tuam, Callan, Enniskillen, Enniscorthy, Coleraine, New Ross, Charleville, Strabane, Longford, Athy, Navan, Dingle, Kells, Ardee, Monaghan, Naas, Cloughnakilty, Dungarvan, Boyle, Feathard (Tipperary), Trim, Maryborough, Portarlington, Gorey, Thomastown, Bangor, Wicklow, Belturbet, Kilbeggan, Baltinglass, Hillsborough, Athenry, Kilmallock, Killileagh, Castle-martyr, Ardfert, Carlingford, Cavan, Charlemont, Duleek, Inistogue, Kildare, Lifford, Newtownards, Middleton.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to 1840, all these municipalities were in the

<sup>2</sup> Report of Commission on Irish Corporations, Parliamentary Papers, vol. xxvii. for 1835, pp. 4, 5, 6, 8.



hands of the Ascendancy,<sup>3</sup> and all were self-elected, and exclusive, “beggarly, and rotten.”

To show their exclusive character I subjoin the following table:—

Towns.	Population.	Corporators.
Limerick	66,000	271
Maryborough	5,000	9
Cashel	7,000	38
Cork	100,716	2,665 <sup>4</sup>
Drogheda	17,365	426
Kilkenny	23,741	469
Wexford	10,673	524
Clonmel	15,134	178
Waterford	28,821	869
Dundalk	10,750	40
Kinsale	13,997	63
Youghal	11,327	221
Galway	33,120	1,770
Dublin	265,316	5,000
Naas	3,808	16
Ardee	3,975	53
Thomastown	2,871	9
New Ross	5,011	28
Feathard (Tipp.)	3,405	22
Kilmallock	1,213	16
Kells	4,326	58
Kildare	1,753	13
Trim	3,282	110
Athenry	1,319	23
Dingle	9,329	13
Callan	6,111	20
Inistogue	906	13
Londonderry	19,620	38
Belturbet	2,026	9
Cavan	2,931	6
Boyle	3,483	13
Coleraine	5,732	36
Enniskillen	6,056	30
Longford	4,516	15
Armagh	9,470	16
Bangor	2,741	13

<sup>3</sup> Tuam alone had a fair number of Catholic corporators.

<sup>4</sup> Of which only seventy-three were Catholics, though “a large majority of the population and much of the wealth and respectability of the commercial interests were Catholic.”—Hansard, xxxi. p. 1036.

Towns.	Population.	Corporators.
Belfast	53,287	21
Carlingford	1,319	13
Carrickfergus	8,706	960
Dungannon	3,515	16
Dunleer	710	10
Hillsborough	1,453	16
Killileagh <sup>5</sup>	1,147	25
Monaghan	3,848	19
Newtownards	4,442	8
Enniscorthy	5,955	24
Gorey	3,044	12
Wicklow	2,472	57
Ennis	9,568	13
Tralee	9,568	14
Tuam	6,883	14
Athlone	11,406	243
Athy	4,494	27
Baltinglass	1,670	12
Kilbeggan	1,985	47
Portarlington	3,091	16
Bandon Bridge	9,917	217
Castlemartyr	830	15
Cloughnakilty	3,807	18
Carlow	9,114	23
Charleville	4,766	16
Strabane	4,700	—
Charlemont	523	2
Navan	4,416	18
Lifford	1,096	—
Middleton	2,034	15
Ardfert	2,022	—
Sligo	15,152	28

How the Government of Lord Melbourne dealt with these corporations, we shall see in the ensuing chapters.

<sup>5</sup> Killileagh was a borough of the Dufferin family. It will be observed that with a population of 1147, it had more corporators than Belfast with a population of 53,287.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE IRISH CORPORATIONS BILL OF 1835.

ON the occasion of the introduction of the English Corporations Bill in 1835, O'Connell gave the measure his hearty support, and said that there was but one thing in it, or rather not in it, to which he objected—the omission of the word Ireland. The Government at once recognized the justice of O'Connell's objection, and promised to introduce a Municipal Reform Bill for Ireland immediately.

On the 31st of July, 1835, Mr. Perrin, the Irish Attorney-General of the day, rose to fulfil the Government pledge, and to ask for leave to introduce a bill in accordance with it. Having briefly referred to the history of the corporations, he explained the details of the Ministerial measure. By their charters of incorporation, he said, corporate privileges had been originally bestowed on “all the inhabitants” of the Irish municipalities. But, in the course of time, these privileges had been usurped and monopolized by a mere section of the community, who, self-elected, and irresponsible, mismanaged the public business, and misapplied the public funds. It was the intention of the Government to reform these abuses, and to restore to the citizens of the Irish corporate towns the privileges originally granted to them. Therefore, the Government proposed to convert the governing bodies of every municipality into councils elected by popular suffrage. In seven of the largest towns, viz. Dublin, Limerick,

Belfast, Kilkenny, Waterford, Cork, and Galway, the electors were to consist of 10*l.* householders, and in all the others, of 5*l.* householders. The qualification of a councilman in the former cities was to be the possession of 1000*l.*; in the latter, of 500*l.* The councillors who received the greatest number of votes were to be aldermen; one-half of the aldermen were to retire triennially; and one-third of the councillors were to go out of office once a year.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the main provisions of the Government bill.

It was the practice of the Irish Ascendency members, in those days, to "rise," not for the purpose of defending the abuses, which all the same they loved to perpetuate, but of asking "for time" when, as almost always happened, they had no arguments to offer. Mr. Shaw now rose to ask for time. It was too late in the session, he said, to bring forward so important a measure, and he could scarcely believe that the Government were serious in asking the House to pass it before the prorogation of Parliament. He, therefore, had little doubt, that, his request, that, the bill should be allowed to stand over until next session would be granted. Lord John Russell having expressed his determination to go on with the bill that session, O'Connell followed the leader of the House, and answered Shaw's speech in the style in which he was in the habit of answering the speeches of men of the calibre of the Recorder of Dublin. O'Connell had different ways of dealing with different men. When he came to reply to the speeches of Stanley, and Peel, he girded up his loins to do battle with giants. When

<sup>1</sup> In setting forth the main provisions of the Government measure, I have summarized both Mr. Perrin's speech of 1835 and the speech of Serjeant O'Loghlen—better reported—delivered in 1836. I have also availed myself of Mr. Spencer Walpole's lucid narrative. See Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxix. pp. 1302, 1306, and vol. xxxi. pp. 1039—1050; Spencer Walpole's "History of England," vol. iii. p. 347.



he came to reply to the speeches of men like Shaw, and Lefroy, he disposed of them without an effort, and, occasionally, without an argument, contenting himself with leering at them or yawning<sup>2</sup> them down, or exchanging a stage-whisper with one of his colleagues, conveying some ridiculous remark which was calculated to tickle the House, or cause a "scene," and which, in any event, was certain to discompose and discomfit his pigmy opponents. A third mode of reply to which the great Agitator used sometimes resort in disposing of the Shaws and Lefroys was—what in his hands became a very effective weapon—good-humoured *badinage*, under the cover of which, however, he, not infrequently, dealt a swashing blow. The third was the mode of reply which he now adopted in answering the Recorder of Dublin.

Sir [he said], I am exceedingly glad that the right honourable gentleman, the learned Recorder of Dublin, has no objection either to the principle or to the material details of this bill. For, if he had any objections, he would, I am sure, have felt it his duty to urge them upon the House. It seems to me, sir, as if he were influenced by his judicial recollections, remembering that when a criminal is convicted his only resource is to cry out for a long day. "Oh," says the right honourable gentleman, "is it in the month of August you think of bringing in a bill for the reform of municipal corporations? Do let them live a little longer: let them flourish for another season of cold weather." Oh, no, sir, this prayer for a long day must not be granted. The days of the corrupt corporations are numerous. It is time that the municipal institutions of Ireland should be identified with the interests of the people of Ireland, and that an end should be put to the anomaly by which the affairs of 920,000 people are administered by 13,000. But it appears that everything in Ireland must, in one shape or other, assume the colour of Protestantism, and every abuse must be maintained for the protection of what is termed "Protestantism." No relief is to be granted if it interferes with the monopoly that has so long existed under that title. What a

<sup>2</sup> O'Connell sometimes yawned down bigger men than Shaw or Lefroy. He was on one occasion called twice to order for yawning at Sir James Graham.

way this is to recommend Protestantism to the people of Ireland. And, so the corporations were instituted for "the protection of Protestantism;" so says the right honourable gentleman opposite. Why, sir, except the smaller boroughs instituted by James I., these corporations are "relics of Popery." Some of them, in the large towns, existed before the Reformation, and some of them before the time of Henry II. The Corporation of Limerick, for instance, existed before any British power in Ireland. The Corporation of Cork and Waterford so existed, and in the latter, the free Danes held it before the reign of Henry II. So far for the right honourable gentleman's historical knowledge of the foundations of corporations. Oh, but he tells us they were instituted for the protection of British connexion. And what, may I ask the right honourable gentleman, was the British connexion to be protected before the time of Henry II.? Oh, but I like the way in which the right honourable gentleman would preserve his connexion, he would shut out 900,000 persons from the management of their own municipal affairs, and confer it upon 13,000. And this is the way he proposes to protect British connexion. Why, if they were Janizaries—as they are not—they could not effect this. The only means of effecting it is by allowing the Irish people to share the advantages of the British institutions; and this it is proposed to do under the present bill. But, the Ascendency plan of preserving British connexion is a solid and substantial love of their own power and domination in a country over which they have so long ruled with a most desolating despotism.<sup>2</sup>

After some observations from Mr. Goulburn, who opposed the bill, and from Mr. William Roche, who supported it, Mr. Lefroy essayed the venturesome task of replying to O'Connell. The effect, he said, which was likely to be produced by the bill might be gathered from the hope expressed by the member for Dublin, viz. that all the corporations of Ireland would soon be like Tuam, composed almost exclusively of Catholics. At this point O'Connell interposed, causing a "scene."

O'CONNELL,—I said nothing of the kind, and the honourable member knows I did not.

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxix. pp. 1314, 1315.



SHAW,—I rise to order. My right honourable friend [Lefroy] has made an observation—whether right or wrong I care not—but the honourable and learned member has accused him of stating a fact which he knows is not true. I appeal to you, sir, whether such conduct is not disorderly, and I would ask the House whether we really have not had enough of these scenes.

O'CONNELL [who knew how to retreat, as well as to attack],—I withdraw it.

Lefroy then proceeded with his speech, asserting, among other things, that the Corporation of Limerick was not “anterior to the establishment of the English power in Ireland,” and saying that if the Government bill became law the “Protestant religion would be ruined in Ireland,” and “the connexion between the two countries severed.” O'Connell—who, among his other extraordinary qualifications, had a knack of making two speeches on the same subject on the same night before any one had, apparently, had time to stop him—rose after Lefroy had sat down, and said he begged to “explain.” The right honourable member had given a meaning to what he had said totally different from that which he intended to convey. He described the Corporation of Tuam, and said that perfect harmony prevailed among the inhabitants of the town of different religious persuasions; and then he expressed the wish, which was so offensive to the right honourable member, namely, that every corporation in Ireland might soon be like that of Tuam. He knew that that was not the right honourable gentleman's wish. The right honourable gentleman wished for Ascendency; he [O'Connell] wished for equality. The right honourable gentleman had also mistaken what he said about the existence of corporations in Ireland at a remote period. In the time of John it was stated that Limerick had been a corporation from time immemorial. Here, Colonel Perceval rose to order, and said that the honourable and learned gentleman, instead of confining himself to explanation, was making a

second speech ; whereupon O'Connell retorted, that, he could excuse the interruption of the honourable member, because he was aware that he could not comprehend what he was saying. (Cries of "Speaker," "Chair," "Order.") "Well," continued O'Connell, "but I have a right to show that I have not said what the right honourable member [Lefroy] has attributed to me. The right honourable gentleman has insinuated, because he is ignorant, that a fact has no existence. I admit the right honourable gentleman's ignorance at once." \*

The "scenes" caused by O'Connell being over, the debate became dull ; and the debate, having become dull, it was fittingly wound up by Colonel Sibthorp, who thought that everybody and everything was in danger, and that the country was going headlong to the devil under the pilotage of Lord John Russell and his "leveling and revolutionary" colleagues. The bill, however, was read a first time without a division.

It was read a second time, without a division, on the 12th of August ; it passed through committee on the 13th, and was read a third time, without a division, on the 17th. It was then quietly dropped by the Government, who considered the chances of success in the Lords at that late period of the session hopeless.

\* Ibid. p. 1323.



## CHAPTER III.

## THE IRISH CORPORATIONS BILL OF 1836.

ON the opening of Parliament on the 4th of February, 1836, the king's speech contained the following paragraph relating to the Irish corporations:—

“ You are already in possession of the report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the state of the municipal corporations in Ireland, and I entertain the hope that it will be in your power to apply to any defects which may have been shown to exist in those institutions, a remedy founded upon the same principles as those of the Acts which have already been passed for England and Scotland.”

In conformity with the views and wishes expressed in this paragraph, Sir Michael O’Loghlen, on the 29th of February, moved the second reading of the Irish Municipal Reform Bill, in a moderate and judicious speech. The Tories had now made up their minds to resist the measure in force, and Peel, as became him—for the days of his “ education ” by Mr. Cobden were yet far off—led the opposition to it. He followed O’Loghlen in a very long, and a very able, but in a purely party speech, and a party speech pitched from a low level. I remember Mr. Bright once appealing to the leaders of the two great English parties in the House of Commons, and asking them if they meant to deal with the Irish question as “ statesmen,” or as “ clerks.” Sir Robert Peel dealt with the Irish Municipal Reform Bill of 1836 as a “ clerk,” and, I feel constrained to add, as

a not very honest "clerk" either. He had not, he stated, one word to say in defence of the corporations. They were as bad as they well could be. Indeed, the fact that Catholics were excluded from them was quite enough for him. It was the design of the Catholic Emancipation Act that Catholics should be placed on a footing of equality with their Protestant fellow-subjects, but as long as they were practically excluded from the corporations, that design could not be carried out. In reality, the Emancipation Act was a dead letter so far as the corporations were concerned, and that was unjust.

With reference to the financial abuses and general mismanagement of the Irish municipalities, the Tory leader offered not a remark even in extenuation of the misdeeds charged. In fact, he admitted the full strength of the Government case against the corporations, but he opposed the Government bill all the same. Sir Robert had a plan of his own. The Irish corporations, he said in effect, were so worthless, and corrupt, that there was but one way of dealing with them. They ought to be swept away completely, and a body of commissioners, appointed by the Crown, established in their place. This was the plan of Sir Robert Peel; and this plan was expounded in a speech in the course of which he expressed himself shocked that the Catholic Emancipation Act had been made a dead letter. Sir Robert was in favour of a policy of equality for the Irish Catholics, but it was to be the equality, not of freemen, but of slaves. Rather than permit them to be lifted to the level of their Protestant fellow-subjects, he was resolved to pull the Protestants down to their level; rather than allow the masses of the Irish people to have a share in local self-government, he was resolved to destroy the principle of local self-government altogether. And yet Sir Robert Peel was the greatest English statesman of his time. It is almost incredible, but it is the fact, that, in the same speech—almost in the same



breath—in which this distinguished man expressed regret that Catholic Emancipation had been made a dead letter, he referred with scorn to the “vaunted principle of assimilation” enunciated by the Government. The Minister of Catholic Emancipation had the hardihood to declare, in substance, that the Irish Catholics were not fit to be assimilated—not fit to be treated on terms of equality—with Englishmen and Scotchmen. But this was not all. Having talked cant about Catholic Emancipation; having advocated the abolition of all the Irish corporations, this great English statesman was not above descending to the low Ascendancy trick of abusing O’Connell in default of argument. Among certain legal practitioners there is, I believe, a maxim to the effect that “when you have no case, abuse the attorney at the other side.” Whenever the Irish Ascendancy had “no case”—which, indeed, was almost always—they betook themselves to the healthy exercise of abusing O’Connell. Peel betook himself to that exercise now. In presence of the utterly indefensible position of the Irish corporations, he knew full well that the only way of turning English public opinion against the Government was to show that the bill would place the corporations in the hands of O’Connell, and that for the advancement of English interest in Ireland, these bodies could not be placed in worse hands. Why, he said, the member for Dublin had told them what the effect of municipal reform would be. He had prophesied that the corporations would become “the normal schools for teaching the science of agitation.” “I said peaceful political agitation,” interjected O’Connell. “Very well,” retorted Peel; “I was quoting from memory, but in order that there may be no ground for cavil, I will repeat the exact words of the learned gentleman as he was reported to have delivered them:”—

England has received an instalment of what was due to

her, and right well has she used it. You [the Tories] have reason to regret it—you feel the sore festering within you—the triumphs of the reformers in the great towns. Every one of them will be a normal school for the science of agitation.

“If that be true,” continued Peel, “with respect to England, is it false with regard to Ireland? If it be true with respect to Ireland, have we not ample ground to protest against the administration of justice being reposed in such hands?”; and then he wound up with the following appeal:—

We ask of you to consider the present condition of Ireland—to recollect your own principles in respect to many subjects of legislation in which you have found it necessary to apply in Ireland a rule different from that adopted in this country. If you have reason to believe that, in the present state of party feeling, annual elections in every town are likely to engender bad passions; if you have reason to believe that the town councils so elected will be converted into political clubs, we call on you as you value religious peace, we call on you as you value equal laws, as you prize the security and integrity of this great empire, not to lend the sanction of your authority—of your moral and legislative authority—to the institution in Ireland of normal schools for teaching the science of agitation. But, above all, we demand of you, respectfully but firmly, that you will not make the graduates in those schools, and the professors of that science, the chosen instruments to wield the civil force, and to dispense public justice.

Spring Rice having replied to Peel in a more or less feeble speech, Stanley followed Spring Rice in a skilful and moderate one, adopting the lines laid down by Peel. He was in favour of the principle of equal laws for Ireland; but he would not consent to any proposal which might have the effect of giving to one class an “undue ascendancy” over another, and as the bill of the Government was likely to have this effect—likely to have the effect of giving an undue ascendancy to the Catholics—he would oppose it.

O’Connell took no part in this debate. He left Sheil—the Ney of the Irish party—to deal with Peel and Stanley, which Sheil did summarily and effectively.



The abuses of the corporations, he said, were admitted on all hands. But when was the discovery of those abuses first made? When did this fit of virtue seize the Conservatives, by whom the abuses of the corporations were now for the first time deplored? Did they not know that public property was plundered; that justice was vitiated to its source; that to the foulest political purposes, the corporations had been turned. "When the House compared the former connivance of the Tory party, and their protestations of newly, and suddenly, and unexpectedly excited horror at the deformities with which they were so familiar, it was not unreasonable to conjecture that they abandoned the corporations, because those bodies could no longer serve their turn; that they would abolish all that was sound, because they could not preserve what was rotten; that they would fell those institutions to the earth, not because they had yielded poison, but because they might be made to yield salutary fruit. The right honourable member for Tamworth [Peel] was, indeed, afraid that these corporations should become, as the member for Dublin had said, "normal schools of agitation;" but the right honourable baronet had never objected to them when they were the Polytechnic schools in which Conservatism brought up its pupils." In this single sentence Sheil described the position of Peel and the Tories with the most perfect accuracy. While the Irish corporations were hotbeds of Orangeism, nests of corruption, and the nurseries of faction, not a word was raised by the Tory leader or his Irish allies against them. But, the moment they were to be purified; the moment they were to be based on popular suffrages, then the cry was raised "Away with them." Sheil's peroration was effective, and statesmanlike, and in this respect, forms, I think, a marked contrast to the Ascendency clap-trap, and Tory hullabaloo of Peel.

Sir, we are entitled to British institutions, and have them we must and will. What is the plan of the Conservatives? To transfer the nomination of sheriffs, of magistrates, of police,

the management of property, the administration of local justice, to the Crown. This, in England, they did not dare to propose; this, in Ireland, please God and the people, they shall never carry. No! we must have municipal, as we have secured Parliamentary reform. By the same policy both countries must be governed; and if corporations in England have been submitted to popular control, so must corporations in Ireland. Do you think that we will or that we ought to acquiesce in any measure short of complete equality with England? Don't you know that if you treat us as a province and a colony, and not as part and parcel of yourselves—if you refuse us what we call justice, and what your hearts must tell you we rightly designate as such—a perilous question [Repeal] will be revived, and its discussion will inevitably be resuscitated. But, if you carry the great international compact into real, substantial, practical effect; if you abolish all distinctions (political and religious); if you give us the same laws, the same rights, the same privileges, the same institutions; if you place us on a noble level, and establish a glorious parity between us; if you fill our hearts with the glorious consciousness of British citizenship, and make us feel that we are even as you are—then you will not only have refuted the argument for Repeal, but you will have annihilated its pretence; you will not only have removed the motive, but eradicated the desire. And, that, you may act this wise part, is the prayer of one who holds at heart the interests and peace of his country, and the glory of that great empire of which it forms so essential, and of which, I trust that, ere long, it will prove a prosperous part.

With Sheil's speech all interest in the debate subsided, and the second reading of the bill was shortly afterwards taken without a division. The Tories reserved the grand assault for the going into committee stage.

On the motion for going into committee, on the 7th of March, Lord Francis Egerton moved an "instruction" embodying Peel's plan. Lord Francis' speech, which was couched in moderate and courteous language, simply came to this: The ministerial proposal would have the effect of taking the government of the Irish towns out of the hands of the "intelligent and propertied" classes, and placing it in the hands of the unintelligent, and unpropertied. To prevent



such a catastrophe, Lord Francis considered that the proper course to adopt was to entrust the government of the towns to commissioners appointed by the Crown.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Lefroy, who infused into the discussion—what Lord Francis Egerton did not—the old Ascendency spirit. Indeed, the discussion, so far as the Irish Ascendency and the Tories were concerned, soon resolved itself into a debate, not on the corporations, but on O'Connell. The Irish Ascendency members, wise in their generation, thought that the best tactics to adopt were to draw public attention away from the corporations, and fix it on O'Connell—to frighten English public opinion, by holding up to the popular gaze the awful spectacle of a number of Irish corporations filled with demagogues, and rebels, plotting, under the leadership of the terrible Agitator, the destruction of the British empire, and the Protestant religion. Conspicuous in carrying out these tactics, were Serjeant Jackson—from whom better could not, perhaps, have been expected—and Sir Henry Hardinge, and Sir James Graham—from whom better might very well have been expected. All three read extracts from speeches made by O'Connell, or his colleagues, during the elections, to show the unruly, and lawless character of the Agitator, and his friends. “At Limerick,” said Serjeant Jackson, “the member for Dublin, addressed the electors thus: ‘Electors of Limerick, I address you especially. Your tried, your efficient representatives, the Roches, are before you. I am a witness to their excellent character; on their behalf I claim your undivided support. Let every man exert himself. Organize at once your political unions, your Liberal clubs and committees. Let not one moment be lost. Whoever votes against the Roches, or either of them, is, I tell you, an Orange traitor, an enemy to our common Christianity, and really a supporter of the blood-stained tithes. Hurrah then for William and David Roche!’

Hurrah for David and William Roche! No Orange Tories! The Roches! and old Ireland for ever!’”

O’Connell’s address at New Ross, Serjeant Jackson said, “was still worse. ‘Men of the surrounding parishes about New Ross, who afford a livelihood, aye, and by your industry and money, make fortunes for the voters of New Ross, meet at once in your respective parishes; appoint a deputation of three or four from every parish—appoint substantial, quiet, honest men; let a deputation from every parish go into New Ross, and canvass from door to door. Let them cheer men who are honest; let them put on the door of every honest voter, in large letters: *Talbot for ever! and no tithes! no Orangemen!* Let them take down and publish in their parishes the names of any of those traitors to Ireland! Let no man deal with them! Let no woman speak to them! Let the children laugh them to scorn! I will not believe that a Tory candidate can have any chance whilst there is so much honesty and patriotism in New Ross. Then, hurrah for Talbot! and no Orange Tories! no tithes!’”

“The House will allow me,” said Sir James Graham, “to give one glimpse at what I am satisfied will be the first and immediate effect of the passing of this bill. The honourable and learned member for Dublin has already told his constituents, that, when this bill is passed, ‘we will have a roaring mayoralty,’ and that he would condescend to be the first mayor. Let the House imagine the first meeting of the council under this mayoralty, the mace lying on the table, and the honourable and learned member arrayed in all the robes and dignity of office. I will suppose that the mock solemnity of debate is begun, that the subject of debate is a petition to Parliament praying for the abolition of tithe; the object of invective, the House of Lords. . . . And is this to be their ‘normal school for sound political opinions.’ It is nothing else than the darling dream of the honourable and learned member for Dublin. It is neither more nor less than



a parliament assembled on College Green, without the 'nuisance,' as he termed it, of a secondary hereditary chamber. Call them what they please—'normal schools for peaceful agitation,' or 'normal schools for sound political opinions'—they can only end, in my opinion, by becoming schools for treason and rebellion—the last fatal symptoms preceding the dissolution of the Legislative union between the two countries."

O'Connell listened patiently and calmly as attack after attack was made upon him, interposing once to correct Sir Henry Hardinge on a question of fact, and a second time, with less justification, to "yawn aloud" (as the official report has it), while Sir James Graham was in the middle of a dull sentence. "I beg the honourable and learned member's pardon," said Sir James, "but I hope, if he can prevent it, that he will not again subject me to so unseemly an interruption." O'Connell took no notice of this remark; but cast a look of contempt at Sir James, and one of defiance all round the House. After two days of incessant attack, the combative spirit, which indeed it was never very difficult to awaken, had been thoroughly roused within him. When Sir James Graham sat down he rose, and resolved that the debate should be, not an "O'Connell," but a "Corporation" debate, referred but briefly to the personal attacks made on himself, and dashed at once *in medias res*.

The question is [he said, rushing straight at the Tory position] whether we shall put an end to the Irish corporations. Indeed, every one seems agreed on giving them up; every one has declared them to be corrupt and profligate to the last degree, influencing and at the same time polluting the sources of public justice. Of all the members who addressed the House upon the subject, they are all so honourable, that there is not one to defend these corporations; not one to stand up for them! There is the noble lord the member for North Lancashire (Stanley), and the noble lord the member for South (Egerton), two noble lords, North and South; then there is the honourable and gallant officer (Hardinge), and the honourable and learned serjeant, the member for Bandon (Jackson), and the honourable

and learned Recorder (Shaw) —whose face is just brightened up by a smile, but who wore a countenance, not two minutes ago, very fit for an undertaker—even the honourable and learned Recorder had not a word to say for the poor corporators. But, what I want to know is, when did these noble lords, and honourable and learned gentlemen first find out that these corporations were so very bad? When did this new light shine upon this galaxy of talented Irish rulers? All I can say is, that I think it very cruel of the honourable gentlemen to find it out at this precise time, and to consent to abolish all at once these venerable corporations—

“Abandon’d in their utmost need  
By those their former bounty fed.”

Now, first, here is one specimen of the wisdom of our ancestors: the beauty of these corporations. Here is a document of the year 1816: “Resolved unanimously that Robert Peel, Esq., deserves our warmest thanks, and those of all loyal subjects, for his true Protestant principles, and particularly for his heroic opposition to that public nuisance who designated our constitutional body a beggarly corporation; and that the Orange Peel with the Orange lily shall henceforward be the combined emblem of true loyalty.” Oh, little did the poor Dublin corporators think how blighting would the contact eventually prove of what they considered substances of a congenial nature.

At this point Sir H. Hardinge interrupted O’Connell.

O’Connell’s great combatants in the House rarely interrupted him in the course of a speech, or did he them, unless with reference to some essential statement of fact which they, or he, as the case happened, thought could be confuted on the instant. Peel, and Stanley felt that on their legs they could make a good stand, if not always a successful one, against the great Tribune; and, besides, they carried guns of too weighty material to lend themselves to the *franc-tireur* warfare practised by smaller men. Those smaller men were well aware that they could not, under any circumstances, “stand up” to O’Connell, and they, therefore, took, occasionally, to the practice of interjecting interruptions securely from their seats while he was addressing the House, hoping, doubtless, in the simplicity of their minds, that



the veteran debater might be discomposed, or thrown off his balance. But, these interruptions were always attended with danger to the interrupters. They simply afforded O'Connell, who was always ready, an opportunity of dragging in some personal topic, which he could not otherwise introduce, or of firing off a witticism which tickled the House, and made even the colleagues of the interrupter laugh at his discomfiture. However, on the present occasion, Sir Henry Hardinge interposed to shelter Peel. "When was that resolution passed?" he asked in a commanding voice.

O'CONNELL,—In the year 1816—[a pause] shortly before the picture was voted to the right honourable baronet [laughter, in which Sir Robert Peel joined]—which picture, by the way, he got leave to pay for himself [renewed laughter in which Sir Robert Peel did not join, and at which Hardinge utterly collapsed.] Having disposed of Hardinge, O'Connell resumed: But what can you think of the situation of those persons who are subject to the government of such a body as this corrupt corporation, by which justice is poisoned to the source, by which partisanship is practised by sheriffs and sub-sheriffs, by grand juries and petty juries—all admitted abuses now, but all existing when the right honourable baronet and the noble lords who, at various times, filled the office of Secretary to Ireland, were in power. I hurl these abuses—which they never even attempted to remove when they were, from the nature of their office, called upon to do so—in the name of my country I hurl these abuses at them now. How can they account for having suffered these nuisances, to remain not only undisturbed, but to become still more offensive? What reason can they give for allowing the pure waters of justice to become a mephitic pool—which, instead of diffusing gladness, and health, and vigour, spread pestilence and death around them? Why, sir, these are the bodies that the independent and pure gentlemen on the opposite side of the House felt proud in countenancing, and encouraging. Did not the right honourable baronet and the noble lords to whom I have before alluded, and who filled the office of Secretary of Ireland, remain during the tenure of their office in ignorance of the evils of this corrupt and abominable system? There was one of them—the noble lord the member for North Lancashire—to whom I will do the justice of expressing my belief that he was not blind to the grievances which these burdens imposed on those whom they governed.

But, with that exception, was there one of these noble and right honourable Secretaries, during the time they remained in office, who did not glory in being the subjects of the toasts and speeches of these very corrupt jurors, these partisan sheriffs, and these infamous corporate bodies—nay, were not their own addresses, made to assemblies composed of such individuals, received with the long-continued and oft-repeated “hurrahs” of these corruptionists, whom—with the strangest gratitude, it must be admitted—they now with one voice unite in condemning. Now, I am told that the state of Ireland is diseased. Need I, after the topic to which I have just adverted and which can’t be questioned—need I ask you who has made it so? You [pointing to the Opposition side] have committed the crime, and, with singular consistency, you desire to inflict on us the punishment. [Here Stanley took a note.] O’Connell,—The noble lord [Stanley] is, I see, dipping pen in ink; he may dip it in congenial gall if he chooses, but he cannot weaken the position which I have laid down. As I said already, I believe the noble lord the member for North Lancashire was well aware of the abuses of the Irish corporations. Perhaps the other noble and right honourable secretaries did not take much pains to see them. But why did they not? Is there any excuse for their neglect of what should have been one of their chief duties? They ought to have known them well, for they were often reminded of them; and I remember that I myself, even so far back as the trial of Magee in Dublin, said, in the presence of the right honourable baronet the member for Tamworth—at least he was in the court during the trial—that ‘a jury appointed by such sheriffs as the Irish corporations nominated, stood in a situation closely resembling that of a man taken to a gaming-house to play with men who he knew used loaded dice.’ The right honourable baronet the member for Tamworth says my plan is to make all the inhabitants of Ireland equal. Sir, it is true that all the Catholics ever asked—though it was insinuated they desired more—was equality, and equality they shall have! But how is this equality to be established? By destroying institutions whose natural foundations are the principles of freedom, and—because Protestants can no longer monopolize privileges and rights intended for the whole of the people—by suffering no civil rights to appertain to any portion of the inhabitants of Ireland? [That is the right honourable baronet’s plan. But] I deny, sir, that that is an equality which can be beneficial to any people having the least pretence to the enjoyment of freedom. It is an equality which may be boasted of by the most despotic monarch and enslaved



people on the earth, but it is an equality which the people of Ireland have no desire to share in common with them. Sir, I have always said that my principle of equality as applied to Ireland was not to pull down the Protestants to my level but to raise the Catholic to the level of the Protestant. I shall be a party to no base compromise; I shall not consent to the subversion of the institutions from which Catholics are excluded, in order that Catholics and Protestants may all be equally slaves. I will never consent to that.

I demand, respectfully, but firmly, the same measure of municipal reform for Ireland that you have granted to Scotland and England. The Scotch corporations were in the same situation with the Irish—they were self-elected, they were corrupt, there was no identity of feeling between them and the populations of the towns. No man stood up to defend the old corporations of Scotland. Every one threw them overboard. But did any man dare to raise his voice in this House for the purpose of proposing the extinction of the Scotch corporations? If any one had the temerity to do so, how would the proposition be received here? or how would it be treated by the inhabitants of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Paisley? I tell you that it would not be submitted to, and the Scotch would be—what they have never been—cowards and traitors to their native land, if they consented to such a degradation. Next came England where your corporations were corrupt, and profligate, and bigoted; where Dissenters were excluded, first by law, and next by unjust trammels. You destroyed the whole system, but was it proposed to annihilate the corporations altogether? No man dreamt of such a proposal. Scotland got a new system; England has got a new system; and will you tell me that Ireland is not to get a new system? The right honourable baronet . . . proposes a different plan for us—a royal commission, forsooth. The people of Ireland have not sense enough to manage their own affairs, and a commission of lunacy must be issued against them. That is your mode of governing the country; that is the right honourable baronet's splendid plan. . . . Are you not tired of continuing this mode of governing Ireland? Does the noble lord the member for North Lancashire imagine that he has made an invention in opposition to the principles on which the other 25, or it may be 250, Secretaries of Ireland have acted in the government of Ireland. Sir, the scene which is now enacted in the House—the scene which Ireland now presents is the same that it has exhibited for 700 years. [O'Connell then quoted a well-known passage from Sir John Davies, in

which that shrewd statesman censures the Anglo-Normans for treating the native Irish rather as enemies than friends ; and continued] That was written 221 years ago, and here am I now, a descendant of that people just described, debating the same question which this historian dwelt upon, and telling you not to dare to insult us any longer by admitting that Scotland and England are entitled to municipal franchises, and that we are not.

I tell you that, as we are subjected to one king, and one allegiance, there shall, and there must be but "one law." The Union indeed ! is there a union between the countries ? There is a parchment union. But I ask you now if the Government of this country was carried on in Ireland, and that a measure for Irish corporate reform was passed by a Parliament sitting there, and yet that a similar measure of relief was denied the English, what in that case would you do with the parchment union ? Tear it in pieces, of course, or what is much more likely, break with your good broadsword, the head of the man who presumed to offer *such an affront to your country*. So England—so Scotland (in accordance with her brave conduct at Bannockburn) would act under such circumstances. And do you mean to say that what you would not dare to tell England or Scotland, you are at liberty to call on Ireland to submit to. The men of Ireland are men who shrink from peril and love not liberty ? I deny it. I, as one of them, may seem to shrink from danger in order to avoid a violation of conscience, which rather than commit, I am ready to bear with any taunt ; but I mistake much those that sent me here, and the whole of the Irish nation, if the noble lord, and right honourable baronet, or any other of the pious, and pure protectors of corporate abuses, can, if equal civic privileges, and rights are denied to the Irish people, prevent the Repeal of the Union, if not the ultimate separation of the two countries, for while we live and move we will never despair of achieving for ourselves the liberty which you deny us."<sup>1</sup>

The above extract will, I think, give a fair though by no means a complete notion of O'Connell's speech, which was conceived in his happiest vein, and was loudly cheered from the beginning to the end by the Irish members, and the Ministerialists ; and was indeed thoroughly appreciated—as a good speech, no

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxii. pp. 65—83.



matter by whom delivered, generally is—in all parts of the House. He was followed, in succession, by Stanley, Russell, and Peel.

The substance of Stanley's speech may be compressed into a single sentence. The principal functions of corporations, he said in effect, were to attend to the "lighting and the paving of the streets," and a Board of Commissioners, appointed by the Crown, could discharge these functions as effectually as councillors and aldermen elected by the people. Russell simply reminded the House that all were agreed as to the rottenness of the Irish corporations, and that the only question in dispute was whether they were to be reformed or abolished.

Peel followed Russell, and commenced by opening fire on O'Connell. He would not, he said, indulge in the vituperation which the member for Dublin had so freely used. He was not surprised that the honourable member had attacked him. The honourable member had, from the first moment of his entrance into public life, attacked every Englishman sent to administer the affairs of Ireland. Indeed, to be an English official in Ireland was quite sufficient to incur the displeasure, and earn the hostility of the learned gentleman. But, what surprised Peel was that his Majesty's ministers should have joined the Irish members in warmly and continuously cheering O'Connell, while O'Connell had been denouncing the whole system of British misrule in Ireland. Did Ministers forget that it had not been so very long since O'Connell denounced the Whigs even as he had that night denounced the Tories. He [Peel] would refresh their memories. Peel then read a long extract from a speech of O'Connell, denouncing the Government of Earl Grey, after the passing of Grey's Coercion Act. But, this extract was of doubtful effect, for the House well knew that O'Connell had always distrusted Grey, and intensely disliked Stanley, and had often said that he would not rest until both

were driven from office. In fact, he looked upon both rather as Tories than Whigs, and used to say they were "worse than Peel and Goulburn." Therefore, to quote the words used by O'Connell with respect to Grey, and Stanley, and by quoting them to attempt to hit the Government of Lord Melbourne—not a member of which had, practically, ever been attacked by the great Agitator—was to strike wide of the mark, and Peel's blow, accordingly, did not "tell."

Having ineffectually dealt with O'Connell's speech, Peel next tackled Russell. The noble lord, he said, had in the framing of his bill practically admitted the force of his [Peel's] contention, that political institutions similar to those existing in England could not, with safety to the empire, be extended to Ireland. In the English Corporation Bill, the town councils were permitted to appoint, and regulate the police; but there was no such provision in the Irish bill. The noble lord had taken care to place the Irish police under the control of the Executive. Why? Because he knew the town councils of reformed Irish corporations could not be trusted. Again, in the English bill the town councils were allowed to appoint the sheriffs; but in the Irish bill the appointment of the sheriffs was vested in the Lord-Lieutenant. "No, no," interposed Russell, "he has only a right of veto." "No matter," retorted Peel, "it comes to the same thing."

Having referred to some other features of the bill by way of illustrating his argument, that the Government agreed with him as to the impropriety of giving Ireland institutions similar to those enjoyed by England, Peel went on to show, with more ingenuity than candour and honesty, that he was as anxious as any one to establish equal laws throughout the three kingdoms. In fact, he said, the reason of his hostility to the Government bill was that it would defeat this object which he had dearly at heart, for the effect of the bill would be to create normal schools of agitation; and the effect of the creation of normal schools of



agitation would be the severance of the Union, and perhaps separation, and then there would no longer be a chance of establishing equal laws.

It is not, I believe, too much to say, that, if Shaw, Lefroy, Serjeant Jackson, or even Sir James Graham, had used an argument of this kind, O'Connell would infallibly have yawned, but he was not in the habit of treating anything that fell from Peel or Stanley in this fashion, so he simply joined in the ironical cheers and laughter with which the Ministerialists received the casuistical exposition of the Tory leader.

In conclusion, Peel boldly asserted that in endeavouring to destroy the Irish corporations, he was simply carrying out the policy he had initiated in passing the Catholic Relief Act.

Allusions have been made [he said] to my former conduct, and we have been told that if we do not grant this measure we should go back and repeal the Act of Emancipation. I do not see that connexion. I am very far from regretting the course which I have taken in assisting to effect the removal of Catholic disabilities. Notwithstanding the experience I have since acquired, and the disappointment I have since sustained, yet I am still of opinion that, in 1829, the time had arrived when it was no longer safe to withhold the claims of his Majesty's subjects in Ireland. I stated at that time, that, though by no means so sanguine as many others were of the effect that would be produced by the Catholic Emancipation Bill, yet considering all the circumstances by which the question was then surrounded, the close divisions in the House of Commons, the growing feeling amongst the people of England in favour of Emancipation, and the divisions in the opinions of those in Ireland who had been opposed to it—considering all these things, I felt it my duty to recommend the complete removal of the Roman Catholic disabilities. The course I am now adopting in recommending the abolition of the Irish corporations is quite consistent with the principle on which I then acted. Its effect will be to remove a great source of exclusiveness, which all agree in regarding as highly prejudicial to the interests and happiness of Ireland. As the Roman Catholics then complained of exclusion from offices, so, I contend, will the Protestants complain of their exclusion from what they are entitled to, not from their numbers, but from

their wealth, their influence, and their intelligence. As in the case of Emancipation, my willingness was publicly avowed to encounter any risk that might be incurred, rather than perpetuate the danger I saw existing, by longer withholding the claims of the Catholics, so at present—when the question is not one of civil equality, but one which involves the predominance of one sect over another—I am quite ready, in accordance with the same principle, to come forward and resist any measure, however plausible, which is likely to diminish the security of the Protestant Establishment, and exclude Protestants from the corporations altogether. I know not whether the Protestant mind of this country will be satisfied with a measure for the abolition of the corporations of Ireland; but this I know, and, supported by the conscientiousness of the motives by which I am actuated, I say it fearlessly—that the measure which I advocate is conformable to justice and reason, and calculated to promote good and quiet government, and to soften down religious acerbity, and to secure an impartial administration of the law. Rather, therefore, than consent to a measure of an opposite tendency, which would introduce those corporate institutions into towns where they must give rise to partiality and exclusiveness, and weaken the just and salutary effect of the civil power, and form so many nuclei of assemblies more dangerous than themselves, I shall prefer the lesser evil, and incur the lesser hazard of rejecting it altogether.

How far Peel succeeded in establishing his claim of consistency, and demonstrating the “conscientiousness” of his “motives,” I leave my readers to judge for themselves.

After Peel’s speech the House divided on Egerton’s motion with the following result:—

Against the motion . . . . .	307
For the motion . . . . .	243
	<hr/>
Majority for Ministers . . . . .	64 <sup>2</sup>

The bill now passed rapidly through committee, without any alteration, and on the 28th of March, Lord John Russell moved “the third reading.” Shaw, “amidst loud cheers,” moved as an amendment, that

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxii. p. 119.



the bill should be read a third time that day six months, whereupon a lively debate ensued. All the old Ascendancy arguments were revived, the familiar abuse of O'Connell was indulged in, and prophetic warnings of the downfall of the British empire prognosticated, if Ireland were handed over, in accordance with the intentions of the Ministers, to the Papists and their rebellious leader. O'Connell took no part in this debate beyond a "yawn" when Sir Robert Inglis was in the middle of a more than usually dull Ascendancy sentence—a proceeding which seems to have disconcerted Sir Robert, the result, doubtless, desired by the Agitator. To Sheil, on this occasion, was deputed the task of dealing with the whole Ascendancy case, and of answering Peel's speech of the 8th—a task which Sheil fulfilled with his accustomed effectiveness. Scarcely stopping to notice the speeches of the Ascendancy members, O'Connell's able lieutenant went straight for the Tory leader; analyzing skilfully Peel's ingenious argument in favour of the establishment in Ireland of equal laws by the founding of institutions dissimilar to those existing in England; and utterly demolishing his position that the destruction of the Irish corporations was an act quite in conformity with the policy of Catholic emancipation. "The right honourable baronet," said Sheil, "gave us a key that would not turn the lock, and when British justice is about to burst open the doors, he would level these institutions to the earth, and bring our rights, and his own act of emancipation—God forbid that I should add his dignity and good faith—under the ruins." Referring to Peel's argument that the Catholic Relief Act had not been attended with the success which some people anticipated, and, alluding to the attacks on O'Connell, the member for Tipperary continued:—

You think, perhaps, that emancipation has failed. Six years in a nation's life are less than as many minutes of individual duration. You have not given it—what you asked for yourselves—a

fair trial, and have yourselves, to a certain extent, counteracted its operation. At the very outset you entered into a struggle with the son of the earth, "who has rebounded with fresh vigour from every fall," and, notwithstanding all your experience—although injustice carries with it the principle of self-frustration, although the poisoned chalice is sure in its inevitable circulation to return to the lips of those by whom it is compounded—still adhering to your fatal policy, and haunted by your anti-O'Connellism; still, instead of rising to the height of great arguments, and ascending to a point of moral and political elevation from which you could see wide and far, you behold nothing but the objects which by their closeness become magnified, and have nothing but the fear of O'Connell before your eyes. You do not legislate for a people, but against a man. Even if I were to admit that he had been occasionally hurried into excesses for which your impolicy should in reality be responsible, give me still leave to ask, whether millions of his fellow-countrymen, and your fellow-citizens—for such, thank God, we are—and generations yet unborn must pay the penalty. Granting him a life as Ireland can pray for, and his adversaries can deprecate, will he not be survived by the statute-book? Have you made him immortal as well as omnipotent? Is your legislation to be built on considerations as transitory as the breath with which he speaks, and are structures that should last for ages to have no other basis than the miserable antipathies by which we are distracted? Let us remember, in the discharge of the great judiciary functions that are imposed upon us, that we are not only the trustees of great contemporary interests, but of the welfare of those by whom we are to be succeeded; that our measures are in some sort testamentary, and that we bequeath to posterity a blessing or a bane; and, impressed with that—and I do not exaggerate when I call it that holy—consciousness, let us not,—influenced by a sentiment of miserable partisanship—continue to perpetuate the unworthy distinctions between Catholic and Protestant. Let there be an end to national animosities, as well as to sectarian detestations. Perish the bad theology that inverts the Scriptures, makes God according to man's image, and with infernal passions fills the heart of man! perish the bad nationality that substitutes for the genuine love of country a feeling of despotic domination upon your part, and of provincial turbulence upon ours! And while, on spurious religion, and spurious notoriety I pronounce my denunciation, live, let me be permitted to add, the spirit of genuine, philanthropic, forbearing, and forgiving Christianity amongst us!; and combined with it,



live the lofty love of country which associates the welfare of both islands with the glory of this majestic empire !

Peel attempted to answer Sheil's speech, but signally failed. In fact, the Tory leader had taken up a position which it was impossible for a man, even of his genius, to defend ; and his efforts to prove the complete consistency of his conduct in emancipating the Catholics, and then endeavouring to abolish the corporations, lest the Catholics might enter them, served only to expose his veracity and honesty to doubt. After Peel's speech, the House divided on the third reading, with the following result :—

For the third reading	.	.	.	260
Against	.	.	.	199
				<hr/>
Majority for Ministers	.	.	.	61

On the 18th of April, the bill was read a second time in the Lords without a division. Lord Lyndhurst, who led the opposition to the measure in the Upper House, reserving, in imitation of Peel's tactics in the Commons, his attack on it for the going into committee stage.

On the motion for going into committee on the 18th of April, Lord Fitzgerald and Vesci, was put up to move an instruction to the committee "to make provision for the abolition of corporations, and for such arrangement as may be necessary, on their abolition, for securing the efficient and impartial administration of justice, and the peace and good government of cities and towns in Ireland." This motion, which Lord Melbourne strongly opposed, was carried by 203 to 119 votes.

In committee, Lord Lyndhurst moved a series of resolutions to give effect to the "instruction." They were all carried, the result being that the measure was reduced simply to a "Bill for the abolition of the Irish Corporations." In this form it was read a third time, and passed on the 18th of May, without a division.

It was during the discussions in committee that Lord

Lyndhurst, on the 9th of May, delivered his famous "alien" speech, which I shall set forth as it is given in Campbell's "Lives of the Chancellors:"—

If the bill deserved all the praise bestowed upon it, what is the situation in which his Majesty's ministers stand? In no former period of our history has the government of this country been placed in such a position. To whom do they look for support? To the enemies of the Protestant Establishment. In Ireland their supporters are composed of the declared enemies of the Protestant Church in that country. In England the Dissenters are their chief friends and patrons. Deprive them of such supporters, and what becomes of the Government? They feel that they are gone, and that they cannot float or draw breath a minute longer. My lords, where is this to stop? Concession leads to concession. When will the noble Viscount stop in his downward career? The Ministerialists themselves say: "We will receive all you offer, but we will only take it as an instalment, and we will never cease agitating till the Protestant Church is laid prostrate?" And this, the noble Viscount tells us, is the only mode of governing Ireland. It seems, my lords, that we Protestant Englishmen are to be governed by those who are aliens in blood, in language, in religion."<sup>3</sup>

There was no attempt made in the Lords to answer this speech. But, it was destined to be answered elsewhere in a manner which has made the name of Richard Lalor Sheil for ever memorable.

On the 19th of May, the bill, as amended, was sent back to the Commons, when Smith O'Brien asked Lord John Russell how the Government proposed to deal with the Lord's amendments. Lord John Russell replied that it was his intention to move that the Lords' amendments should be read a first time and printed; when, he added, the amendments had been printed, and were in the hands of hon. members, the House would be in a better position to consider them.

<sup>3</sup> Campbell's "Lives of the Chancellors," vol. viii. Campbell states that the speech was delivered in 1837. This is wrong; it was delivered in May, 1836. Lyndhurst's words as reported in Hansard are: "They [the English in Ireland] contend with a population alien to Englishmen, speaking many of them a different language, and professing a different religion."—Vol. xxxiii. p. 734.



After Russell's reply to O'Brien, a short and lively discussion ensued, in which Sir George Sinclair attacked O'Connell, and Hume defended him; and in which Sir James Graham made—what he often made—an anti-Irish speech, drawing from Lord Clements<sup>4</sup> the following warm reply:—

I feel it impossible to hear the interests of the Irish people alluded to as they have been, without protesting in the strongest manner against it. The blood boils in my Irish veins when I hear the disposition to do the people of Ireland justice, called concession! Are the municipal corporations of England to be reformed for the good of the people of England, and is the reform of the municipal corporations of Ireland for the good of the people of Ireland to be called a concession? I repeat that it is impossible for me to listen to such language, without protesting in the strongest manner against the doctrine which it involves. Sir, I think that the Protestants of Ireland have much more to fear from their zealous, but injudicious friends, than they have from their worst enemies. For myself, I hope and believe that I am conscientiously attached to the religion which I profess; but, I deeply regret that the interests of that religion have been taken up in the manner in which they have been taken up, and that the Tories seem desirous of maintaining the distinction between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, instead of trying to forget all religious differences, and to merge them in one general feeling for the common good. Sir, I am convinced that if this destructive measure sent to us by the House of Lords be adopted by the House of Commons, many a Protestant in Ireland will lose his rights. And why is this done? To me it is evident that, merely for the sake of destroying the rights of the Catholics in Ireland, the House of Lords has consented to destroy the rights of the Protestants in Ireland. We have heard of British dominion over Ireland and of concessions to Ireland! To such language I can never listen without resentment. Was it concession to Ireland when the penal laws against the Catholics in that country were abrogated? Was not that abrogation calculated to be at least as beneficial to the Protestants of Ireland as to the Catholics? I will always stand up for the country from which I come; and I will never

<sup>4</sup> Lord Clements became Earl of Leitrim in 1854, and was, as will be remembered, murdered in 1878 in his seventy-eighth year.

hear the terms concession or dominion applied with reference to that country, without the frank expression of my feelings. The House of Lords, by the course which they have adopted on this occasion, have prevented much good from being done. I do from the bottom of my heart believe that the majority of the House of Lords have taken the course which they have taken on the present question, because they dared to do with reference to the people of Ireland what they did not dare to do with reference to the people of England. Sir, I may have been led into too great warmth in the expression of my opinions, but I have for my apology my conviction, that, if the majority of the House of Lords be permitted to have their own way in this matter, it is all over with popular rights in Ireland; and I am quite sure that such is the opinion at the present moment of the great majority of the people of England.

The amendments of the Lords having been printed and read a first time, Lord John Russell, on the 9th of June, moved in effect, that the Commons should disagree with them. In taking this course, the Whig leader, in a long and able speech, animadverted strongly on the action of the House of Lords, and condemned with vigour the principles laid down by Peel, that there should be one mode of municipal government for England and Scotland, and another for Ireland. However, to prevent a collision between the two Houses, and to secure the passing of some measure of municipal reform for Ireland that session, Lord John Russell was prepared to accept a compromise scheme. The compromise scheme he proposed was as follows:—

1. Municipal corporations were to be retained, but reformed in the largest towns, viz. in Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Limerick, Waterford, Galway, Kilkenny, Londonderry, Clonmel, Drogheda, Sligo, and Carrickfergus; the franchise in those towns to be conferred on 10*l*. householders.

2. In all the other towns the corporations were to be abolished, and Commissioners appointed, under 9 Geo. IV.; the Commissioners, however, were not to be appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant as proposed



by Peel, but elected by the inhabitants; the franchise in those towns was to be conferred on 5*l*. householders.

Sharman Crawford condemned this compromise scheme. As the bill was sent to the Lords, he said, fifty corporations had been established in Ireland, but now the Government were prepared to retain only twelve, appointing Commissioners in the remaining thirty-eight. This was a compromise which he hoped O'Connell would never consent to. He trusted sincerely that the Irish leader would now remain true to the "forcible words" of his favourite motto:—

"Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not  
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?"

O'Connell, however, seems to have thought that the best "blow" he could strike, under the circumstances, was to accept Russell's proposal, and he accepted it accordingly. Peel opposed the compromise as vigorously as he had opposed the original bill, and, after two days' debate the House divided on the question that "it do disagree with the Lords' amendments," when the numbers appeared:—

Ayes	.	.	.	.	384
Noes	.	.	.	.	232
					<hr/>
Majority for Ministers					86

On the 14th of June, the Lords' amendments were taken into further consideration, and Sharman Crawford moved that the following corporate towns, which had been included in the original bill, should be restored to the schedule of the amended one:—

Towns.	Population.
Bandon . . . . .	9,917
Athlone . . . . .	11,406
Wexford . . . . .	10,000
Dundalk . . . . .	10,750
Youghal . . . . .	11,327

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxiv. p. 405.

Towns.	Population.
Armagh . . . . .	9,470
Carlow . . . . .	9,111
Tralee . . . . .	9,568
Ennis . . . . .	9,568
Cashel . . . . .	7,000
Kinsale . . . . .	13,997
Portarlinton . . . . .	3,091
New Ross . . . . .	5,011
Enniskillen . . . . .	6,056
Coleraine . . . . .	5,372
Dungannon . . . . .	3,515

Crawford having proposed this amendment in a moderate speech, it was found that no one on his side of the House seemed disposed to second it. After a pause, however, and when the Speaker had asked, "Who seconds this motion?" Serjeant Jackson jumped up and said that he "could not sit and hear it proposed, that, the town he had the honour to represent [Bandon, the home of Orangemen in the South of Ireland] should be included amongst the towns which were to have corporate honours and privileges extended to them, without rising to second the motion." A dull debate, relieved, however, by a lively "scene," ensued. Walter of the *Times* attacked O'Connell, introducing the subjects of the Poor-Law, and the tithes, and other irrelevant topics. When he sat down, O'Connell rose, and a scene of disorderly excitement followed. The Irish leader objected to the introduction of the Tithe and Poor-Law questions on the present occasion. Enough, he said, had already been written in the *Times* on the Poor-Law and with reference to the Church; the very first time the latter question was brought forward the member for Berkshire [Walter] had himself voted for the reforms he now spoke of as "spoliation." "I have seen his name in the list published in the *Times*, so he cannot renege from that." Here, Walter, who sat near O'Connell, seems to have disturbed him, whereupon the Agitator turned on the editor of the "*Thunderer*," saying, "I wish to heaven the honourable member would take himself from



this side of the House. I scented him here in the past session as 'the last rose of summer,' and yet he still remains amongst us. I wish he would go to the side upon which he votes, and not remain where he ought not to be." At this point, Colonel Peel, for whom O'Connell had a sincere respect, interposed, crying, "Order, order." O'Connell—"I leave it to the honourable and gallant colonel whether he could think it right himself to act in this way. I leave it to him as a man and a gentleman, whether he would condescend to pretend to be one thing, and yet be another." Colonel Peel made no reply, and O'Connell continued to blaze away at Walter, until, having referred to the "wages of iniquity" earned by the *Times*, Mr. Kearsley, member for Wigan, interposed, asking the Speaker if the House was to submit to such "bullying" conduct. "If his Majesty's Ministers do not interfere," said Mr. Kearsley, "I'll divide the House." But, his Majesty's Ministers did not interfere, and O'Connell went on: "I wish the honourable member for Berkshire joy of his ally. There could not be two more completely suited to each other. What an excellent constituency it must be that is represented by the honourable member for Wigan!" O'Connell, having disposed of Walter, and Mr. Kearsley, was about to address himself to the subject of the corporations, when Mr. Richards, member for Knaresborough, rose and appealed to the Speaker not to allow "the member for Kilkenny to browbeat and ruffianize." Then the scene reached its climax.

O'CONNELL,—The honourable member for Berkshire has reason to rejoice in his second defender.

WALTER,—I do not wish to interrupt the honourable and learned gentleman; I only ask the favour of being permitted to reply.

[Here, the Speaker said it would be most desirable if honourable members would only refer to what occurred in the course of the debate.]

O'CONNELL,—Certainly; and therefore I only wish to con-

gratulate the honourable member for Berkshire upon his second defender. I think nothing can be more flattering to him than the first—except the second; one, too, so especially remarkable for his exceeding delicacy and extreme polish—characteristics which make him shrink from anything that belongs to the kennel.

Mr. RICHARDS,—I rise to order, sir. It is not right to bring into this House the manners of a blackguard instead of those of a gentleman. (“Order!”)

[Here the Speaker interposed, and said that the House must agree with him in thinking that expressions had been used on both sides which were not proper to be used in that House. He would conjure the members, for the sake of that House, not to indulge in language inconsistent with propriety.]

O’CONNELL,—I care not for his expressions. As to mine, I only talked of hopping over the kennel, and I think it was not inapplicable to the occasion.

Mr. N. FITZSIMON,—I think that the debate cannot continue. The honourable member for Knaresborough has used most *offensive expressions*. *He has made use of a word which I am almost afraid to repeat, but which you, sir, I am sure, must have heard, as every honourable member near me has heard it.* I must, then, request of the honourable member for Knaresborough to withdraw before this House his exceedingly offensive expression.

[The Speaker observed that words had undoubtedly fallen from the honourable member for Knaresborough which ought not to have been used. The inference was that if they were not directly applicable to the honourable member for Kilkenny, they were intended to apply to him.]

O’CONNELL,—Oh! I do not remember them.

Mr. RICHARDS,—I hope that upon all occasions I shall bow to the Speaker. I understood the honourable member for Kilkenny to say that the words used by me were brought from the kennel. Understanding it so, if he did not use the word “kennel,” I withdraw the expression.

[The Speaker stated that he understood the honourable gentleman to have said that the words savoured of the kennel.]

Dr. BALDWIN remarked that, in the first instance, the honourable member for Knaresborough had used the word “*ruffianize*.” He left it to the House to say whether that was a proper expression to be used.

Mr. RICHARDS,—If the word was not applied to me in the manner I understood it, I withdraw the expression.

Mr. N. FITZSIMON,—I think that the honourable member for



Knarborough has no right to enter into a compromise upon this subject. I think he should be called upon at once to withdraw the offensive expression as indefensible.

O'CONNELL,—I shall not call on him to do so, feeling the compliment that has been paid to me by the honourable member for Knarborough.

Dr. BALDWIN,—But the other Irish members do feel it. I call upon the honourable member to explain the expression "ruffianize."

Colonel PEEL,—The honourable member I am sure will withdraw the expression; but I appeal to the honourable gentleman opposite [O'Connell] whether the tone in which he has conducted this debate is not calculated to call forth angry expressions.

Mr. RICHARDS,—As it appears to me I must have been under a mistake in the application of the word "kennel," I am at once ready to withdraw the expression objected to.

O'CONNELL,—I was arguing upon three points introduced into his speech by the honourable member for Berkshire: one on the Poor-Law, the other the Church, upon which he has voted against his colleagues; the third is the real question before the House, and I was proceeding to comment upon it when I was called to order by the honourable member for Wigan, who was very disorderly in doing so, and who sat down extremely quietly as he usually does when he is in the wrong. I was then next called to order by the honourable member for Knarborough, who got into that species of language which is so familiar that, until it was proved to him, he did not know it was improper. ("Order!")

Mr. SCARLETT,—The manner in which this debate has been conducted is a strong argument in favour of a Repeal of the Union. I will put it to the chair whether the debates of this House can be properly conducted if such language as that which has just been used is allowed.

O'CONNELL,—Behold! a third advocate. Another cause of congratulation for the honourable member for Berkshire! I do not believe a fourth could really be found in this House. The honourable member for Knarborough makes use of offensive expressions: I do not require any apology for them, whereupon the honourable member for Norwich—

Mr. GOULBURN,—It is not for the purpose of making a commentary that I now rise to order; but I submit to you, sir, whether, if this species of discussion is continued, it is calculated to insure respect to this House.

O'CONNELL,—I have done with the subject. I thought,

indeed, that a fourth could not be found. I forgot the right honourable gentleman ; I forgot that in this House a fourth could be found. If any gentleman calls me to order again, I shall immediately sit down ; but to find a fifth is impossible. And now, sir, I hope I may be allowed to go on.

Here, Serjeant Jackson rose, amid shouts of laughter, and cheers, making the "fifth" man ; and O'Connell, true to his declaration that, if a "fifth" man called him to order, he would sit down, sat down.

The learned Serjeant then threatened to "move the adjournment" if the honourable member did not conduct the business in a more regular manner ; but Sir Robert Bateson, without waiting to give "the honourable member" a chance, moved the adjournment on the instant, and Jackson seconded the motion.

Lord John Russell then, at last, interposed, and oil was finally thrown on the troubled waters. The House, finally, divided on Crawford's motion, which was defeated by a majority of 148 to 8.<sup>6</sup> A committee was next appointed, on the motion of Lord John Russell, to draw up reasons, to be offered to the Lords at a conference, for disagreeing with their lordships' amendments.

On the 27th of June the Commons' amendments were brought under the notice of the Lords by Lord Melbourne, who moved that they "be now considered."

The motion was opposed by Lord Lyndhurst, in a ferocious Ascendency speech, and negatived by a majority of 220 to 123.

On the 30th of June Lord John Russell moved, that the Commons should take the Lords' amendments into consideration that day three months, and the motion was agreed to without opposition. Four days later, Smith O'Brien proposed a resolution condemning the action of the House of Lords, but withdrew it at the suggestion of O'Connell.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The division list is not published in Hansard.

<sup>7</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxiv. p. 1281.



The subject of the Irish corporations was then permitted to drop.

So terminated the second Irish municipal reform Parliamentary campaign.

CHAPTER IV.<sup>1</sup>

## THE IRISH CORPORATIONS BILL OF 1837.

ON the 7th of February, 1837, Lord John Russell reintroduced the original bill of the previous session. In again bringing forward the measure, the leader of the House delivered a powerful speech, dealing exhaustively with all the arguments which had been used against it during the past year, and summing up those which had been advanced in its favour. Abuses, he said, had been found to exist in the English and Scotch corporations, and those bodies had been reformed. Similar abuses were admitted to exist in the Irish corporations, which, however, were not to be reformed, but abolished. He could not conceive upon what grounds the Irish municipalities were to be treated differently from the English and Scotch, unless, indeed, it was that "England and Scotland happened to be inhabited by Englishmen and Scotchmen, and Ireland by Irishmen." But he would not countenance these distinctions. He would not regard the Irish as "aliens." England and Scotland were governed in accordance with English and Scotch public opinion. Ireland should be governed in accordance with Irish public opinion. He was not afraid to announce his determination of following, in the management of Irish affairs, the "authority, the precepts, the maxims, of Charles James Fox." "My wish is," said Fox,



“that the whole people of Ireland should have the same principles, the same system, the same operation of government, and (though it may be a subordinate consideration) that all classes should have an equal chance of emolument; in other words, I would have the whole Irish Government regulated by Irish notions and Irish prejudices; and I firmly believe, according to another Irish expression, the more she is under Irish government, the more will she be bound to English interests.”<sup>1</sup>

Serjeant Jackson replied feebly to Russell, and was himself in due course annihilated by O’Connell, with an epithet. Jackson had made a vulgar attack on Mr. (afterwards Chief Baron) Pigot, one of the law-officers of the Government. Referring to it, O’Connell said that he did not care for attacks made on himself. He was accustomed to them, and despised them. But it was different when an attack was made on a valued and dear friend—upon a man whose intellectual attainments were only equalled by his amiable and justice-loving qualities. But, of course, those qualities could not be appreciated by an individual “possessed of that species of heart close to the leather lungs of the learned serjeant.” This sally was received with roars of laughter, and cries of “Order, order,” whereupon the Speaker interposed, appealing to O’Connell to be more guarded and moderate in his expressions, though the President of the House admitted that the Irish leader had been much provoked. O’Connell bowed to the authority of the chair, and continued his speech in a moderate tone.

The debate on the motion for leave was continued on the 8th of February, when Peel reiterated his objections to the measure, and in defending himself against the charge of inconsistency, and the accusation of having passed the Catholic Relief Act merely to hold office, used these remarkable words:—

“In the year 1829 we passed the Act for the relief

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxvi. p. 211.

of the Roman Catholics. I never took any praise to myself for the part I had in passing that measure, because I own it was forced upon me. I leave to others the sole credit of having passed it, but to charge me with having passed it for the purpose of retaining office is altogether unjust and groundless.”<sup>2</sup>

Leave having been given for the introduction of the bill, it was read a second time on the 17th of February, without a division. On the 20th of February, on the motion for going into committee, the Tory tactics of the previous session were repeated, and Egerton again proposed, as an amendment, the abolition of the Irish corporations. A debate which lasted for three days, and which was signalized by one of the most extraordinary scenes witnessed within the walls of Parliament since Sheridan’s “Begum” speech, ensued.

Lyndhurst’s “alien” oration of the preceding session had struck the Irish members home. During the recess, frequent allusions were made to it, and an Irish landlord—the Marquess of Lansdowne—had said that the words “aliens in race, language, and religion,” ought never to be forgotten. But no effectual reply to the furious invective of the Tory ex-Chancellor had as yet been given. The time, however, when such a reply was to be made, in a manner at once decisive, and remarkable, had now arrived. On the night of the 22nd of February, 1837, and after Stanley, and Sir James Graham had delivered vigorous speeches against the Government bill, Sheil rose, not only to deal with the hostile criticisms of the Tory champions in the Commons, but to answer once for all the attacks made upon his countrymen by their distinguished colleague in the Lords. The House was densely crowded, and, as Sheil was about to tackle Stanley’s speech, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst entered, and took up their places under the gallery.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 398.



“Does the noble lord forget the words which he himself uttered when Chief Secretary for Ireland?” asked the member of Tipperary, looking across the floor at the “Hubert of debate.”<sup>3</sup> “I shall refresh his memory. ‘If,’ said the noble lord, ‘they wish to give Ireland a real, solid, substantial grievance—if they wish to give some handle to excitement, and to present a solid argument for the Repeal of the Union—they need only show, that, in the British House of Commons, English interests are treated in one way, and Irish interests in another.’”

This is nobly expressed; but in the midst of our admiration of such fine sentiments, founded on such lofty principles, and conveyed in language at once so beautiful and so perspicuous, what melancholy feelings, what mournful reflections arise. Alas! that the man who uttered what I have just read, who was capable of feeling, and of expressing himself thus, in whom such a union of wisdom and eloquence was then exhibited—alas! that he should now be separated from his old associates, and that, united to his former antagonists, he should not only act on principles diametrically the reverse, but should denounce his colleagues, and enter into a derogatory league with the men he formerly represented as the worst enemies of his country. But, not content with joining them, in the transports of his enthusiasm he has gone beyond them; and, on the first night of this debate, taking up the part of a prophet when he had ceased to perform that of a statesman, he told the people of Ireland, in a burst of intemperate prediction, that never—no, never—should the municipal privileges granted to the people of England be extended to them.

STANLEY,—I never said so.

SHEIL,—Then the noble lord has been grievously misrepresented. I acknowledge that I was not present when he spoke, but I was told by several persons that he had stated that this measure never should be carried.

STANLEY,—I did not state that the measure never should be carried. I did state that the people of England would not yield to alarm and intimidation, and that the advocates of this measure were taking the worst means to effect their object. The honourable and learned gentleman confesses that he was not present when I spoke, and he should

<sup>3</sup> So Stanley was justly named.

therefore be cautious in attributing to me the opinions which he has ascribed to me in this attack which he has been making, knowing, as he does, that it is out of my power to reply.

SHEIL,—When the noble lord denies the use of certain expressions, and disclaims the sentiment conveyed by him, I at once accede to his interpretations of what he said, or rather meant to say. The noble lord observes that I am making an attack on him, knowing that he has no reply. The noble lord is well aware from experience, that, whether he has a right to reply, or not, I never had the least dread of him, and, that, on no occasion in this House have I ever, in the performance of my duty to my country, shrunk from an encounter with him. He calls my speech an attack on him. I am not pronouncing a personal invective against the noble lord. I am not exceeding the limits of fair discussion, or violating either the ordinances of good breeding or the rules of this House. I am exhibiting the inconsistencies and incongruities of the noble lord, and stripping his opinions of any value which they may possess, by proving him, at a period not remote, to have acted on, and to have enforced principles directly opposite to those of which he is now the intolerant advocate. This is the extent of my attack on him. He will, however, pardon me for suggesting to him, that, if I had assailed him with far more acrimony than I am disposed to do, he is the last man in this House who ought to complain. Who is there that shows less mercy to a political adversary? Who is so relentless in the inflictions of his sarcasms, even on his old friends and associates? However, I ought not to feel much surprise that he should be so sensitive as he shows himself to be; no man fears an operation so much as a surgeon; and the drummer of a regiment trembles at the lash. . . .

Having referred to the general system of English misgovernment in Ireland, and alluded (glancing the while at Peel) to the protestations often uttered by English statesmen of their desire to do justice to the Irish people, while in reality they were inflicting every species of outrage and wrong, the great rhetorician proceeded :—

From the day on which Strongbow set his foot upon the shores of Ireland, Englishmen were never wanting in protestation of their deep anxiety to do us justice; even Strafford, the deserter of the people's cause—the renegade Wentworth,



who gave evidence in Ireland of the spirit of instinctive tyranny which predominated in his character—even Strafford, while he trampled upon our rights, and trod upon the heart of the country, protested his solicitude to do justice to Ireland. What marvel is it, then, that gentlemen opposite should deal in such vehement protestations? There is, however, one man of great abilities, not a member of the House, but whose talents and whose boldness have placed him in the topmost place in his party, who, disdaining all imposture, and thinking it the best course to appeal directly to the religious and national antipathies of the people of this country—abandoning all reserve, and flinging off the slender veil by which his political associates affect to cover, although they cannot hide, their motives—distinctly and audaciously tells the Irish people that they are not entitled to the same privileges as Englishmen, and pronounces them in every particular which could enter his minute enumerations of the circumstances by which fellow-citizenship is created, to be aliens—aliens in race, in country, in religion. Aliens! [raising his voice to its highest pitch, and looking straight where Wellington and Lyndhurst sat] Good God! was Arthur, Duke of Wellington, in the House of Lords, and did he not start up and exclaim, ‘Hold! I have seen the aliens do their duty’? The Duke of Wellington is not a man of excitable temperament. His mind is of a cast too martial to be easily moved; but, notwithstanding his habitual inflexibility, I cannot help thinking that when he heard his Roman Catholic countrymen—for we are his countrymen—designated by a phrase as offensive as the abundant vocabulary of his eloquent confederate could supply—I cannot help thinking that he ought to have recollected the many fields of fight in which we have been contributors to his renown. The battles, sieges, fortunes that he has passed ought to have come back upon him. He ought to have remembered that, from the earliest achievements in which he displayed that military genius which has placed him foremost in the annals of modern warfare, down to that last and surpassing combat which has made his name imperishable—from Assaye to Waterloo—the Irish soldiers, with whom our armies are filled, were the inseparable auxiliaries to the glory with which his unparalleled successes have been crowned. Whose were the arms that drove your bayonets at Vimiera through the phalanxes that never reeled in the shock of war before? What desperate valour climbed the steeps and filled the moats of Badajos? All his victories should have rushed, and crowded back upon his memory—Vimiera, Badajos, Salamanca, Albuera,

Toulouse, and, last of all, the greatest.—Tell me, for you were there—I appeal to the gallant soldier before me [Sir Henry Hardinge], from whose opinions I differ, but who, I know, bears an honest heart in an intrepid bosom—tell me, for you must needs remember, on that day when the destinies of mankind were trembling in the balance, while death fell in showers; when the artillery of France was levelled with a precision of the most deadly science, and when to waver for a moment was to be lost—did ‘the aliens’ blench? And when at length the moment for the last and decisive movement had arrived, and the valour which had been so wisely checked was at last let loose—when, with words familiar but immortal, the great captain commanded the grand assault—tell me if Catholic Ireland with less heroic valour than the natives of this your own glorious country precipitated herself upon the foe. The blood of England, Scotland, and of Ireland flowed in the same stream, and drenched the same field. When the chill morning dawned, their dead lay cold and stark together; in the same deep pit their bodies were deposited; the green corn of spring is now breaking from their commingled dust; the dew falls from heaven upon their union in the grave. Partakers in every peril—in the glory shall we not be permitted to participate? and shall we be told as a requital that we are estranged from the noble country for whose salvation our life’s blood was poured out?

The effect produced by this speech upon the House was electrical. As Sheil fell into his seat, and almost into the arms of O’Connell, a ringing cheer burst from the Irish members, and was quickly taken up by the Whigs and Radicals.

The contagion spread even to the Tory benches, where it exhibited itself in what the French describe as “movement” and “exclamations.” Nor were the Irish members and the Radicals content with applauding in the usual way from their seats. They jumped up, and standing, waved their hats, and shouted their “huzzas” again and again. Meanwhile, all eyes were turned on Lyndhurst, who, carried away by the excitement of the moment, and forgetting the place where he was, sprang to his feet to answer Sheil there and then, and was, with difficulty, pulled back by the Duke of Wellington.



The triumph of the brilliant Irishman was complete. The powerful Tory peer was effectually crushed.

When the wild scene of excitement, caused by Sheil's oration was over, Peel rose to reply, and to obliterate the effect which it had produced; but he rose in vain. Indeed, in all his efforts to answer Sheil's speeches during the debates on the Irish corporations the great Conservative statesman had failed, but he failed more signally than ever now.

After some brief observations from O'Connell, and Russell, both of whom were anxious that the debate should be closed while Sheil's eloquent and stirring words still rang in the ears of honourable members, the House divided on Egerton's motion with the following result:—

For the motion	.	.	242
Against	.	.	322

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Majority for Ministers 80

The bill once more passed rapidly through committee without any material alterations, the only amendment proposed being one of Sharman Crawford to the effect that the power of veto given to the Lord-Lieutenant in the election of sheriffs should be taken away; but this amendment was negatived by a majority of 65 to 6 votes.<sup>4</sup>

On the motion for the third reading, on the 11th of April, the Tories again opposed the bill, which, however, was carried, after a debate of two nights, by a majority of 302 to 247 votes.<sup>5</sup>

On the 25th of April, Lord Melbourne moved the second reading in the Lords, and the motion was carried without a division. But on going into committee, on the 5th of May, the Duke of Wellington

<sup>4</sup> The minority consisted of Blake, Bridgman, Hindley, Cornelius O'Brien, E. Ruthven. Tellers—Crawford and Butler. Neither Smith O'Brien, O'Connell, nor Sheil took part in this division.—Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxvii. p. 675.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 1110.

moved that the further consideration of the bill should be postponed until the 9th of June; and the Tory leader made this motion on the unjustifiable, and scarcely honest grounds, that, as the Government had announced in the Speech from the throne their determination of introducing three measures of relief for Ireland—viz. a Tithe Bill, a Poor-Law Bill, and a Bill for the Reform of the Corporations—it was essential to have all three measures passed together. Lord Melbourne strongly opposed this preposterous amendment, but it was carried by a majority of 192 to 115 votes.

On the 9th of June, Lord Melbourne brought forward the bill again, and was met by Lord Lyndhurst with a motion for its further postponement until the 3rd of July. The Prime Minister protested, but protested in vain. Lyndhurst's amendment was carried by a majority of 205 to 119 votes.<sup>6</sup>

The bill was then dropped. The Lords were once more triumphant.

<sup>6</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xxxviii. p. 1329.



## CHAPTER V.

## THE IRISH CORPORATIONS BILLS OF 1838, 1839, AND 1840.

ON the 2nd of February, 1838, Lord John Russell, for the fourth time, moved the second reading of the Irish Municipal Reform Bill, and the motion was agreed to without a division—practically without a discussion. On the 27th of March following, the Whig leader asked Sir Robert Peel what course the Opposition proposed to take with reference to the Irish corporations, and Peel replied that before going into committee he would state the views of his party.

In accordance with this promise, Peel, on the 29th of May, on the motion for going into committee, announced the intentions of the Opposition. The Tory chief now completely abandoned the position he had originally taken up. He was no longer for the abolition of all the Irish corporations.

“To extinguish existing corporations in Ireland,” he said (performing a most complete right-about-face movement), “and to vest the management of the corporate funds and revenues in the hands of Commissioners to be appointed by the Crown is perfectly nugatory;” therefore he was prepared for the establishment of municipalities “on the basis of English corporate bodies, namely, election by the free choice of a legal constituency to be determined by Act of Parliament.”<sup>1</sup> Agreeing so far with ministers,

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xlviii. p. 448.

the leader of the Opposition, however (performing another wheel-about manœuvre), expressed his determination to propose—

1. That municipal privileges should, for the time being, be confined to the eleven largest towns in Ireland, namely, Belfast, Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Waterford, Clonmel, Drogheda, Londonderry, and Sligo; the franchise in these towns to be fixed at a 10*l.* ratable value.

2. That the majority of the electors in the smaller towns should be permitted to apply to the Lord-Lieutenant for a charter of incorporation.

3. That the franchise in the smaller towns should be the same as in the larger towns.

The alterations suggested by Peel were, on the 1st of June, accepted by Russell, subject to the reservation that the franchise in the smaller towns should be fixed at a 5*l.* instead of 10*l.* ratable value. This reservation Peel would not agree to, and, Russell refusing further to give way, the Tory leader divided the House on the franchise question, on the 11th of June, with the following results :—

In favour of the 5 <i>l.</i> franchise for the smaller towns	286
Against	266
	<hr/>
Majority for Ministers	20 <sup>2</sup>

On the 25th of June, Russell moved the third reading, which was carried by 169 to 134 votes.<sup>3</sup>

In the Lords, as in the Commons, the chief struggle was upon the miserable question whether the franchise in the smaller towns should be fixed at 10*l.* or 5*l.* and Lord Lyndhurst, without much difficulty, persuaded the House to accept the former figure.

The bill was returned to the Commons on the 2nd of August, when Lord John Russell protested against the franchise being “dribbled out to the Irish towns in

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xliii. p. 652.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 1070.



little bits ;” but, nevertheless, to conciliate the Tories, he proposed an 8*l.* franchise for the smaller towns. The Tories, however, were not to be conciliated. Peel opposed the 8*l.* as he had opposed the 5*l.* franchise, but the Commons declared in favour of Russell’s amendment by 169 to 154 votes.<sup>4</sup>

On the 7th of August, the bill was sent back to the Lords, where Russell’s amendment was struck out by a majority of 144 to 67,<sup>5</sup> Lyndhurst warning the House that the government of Ireland should not be handed over to “Mr. O’Connell, and Mr. Secretary Drummond.” The bill was then dropped.

In 1839, the proceedings of the previous session with reference to the Irish corporations were repeated. Another bill, similar to that of 1838, was brought forward by Lord Morpeth, passed through the Commons, recast in the Lords, and abandoned.<sup>6</sup>

The days of the Melbourne ministry were now numbered, and numbered chiefly because that ministry had persistently and manfully sought to do full and complete justice to the Irish people. So unpopular had the Government become in England on account of their “alliance” with O’Connell, and such was the difficulty they experienced in their Irish legislation, that, at the beginning of the year 1840, Lord John Russell became convinced of the necessity of yielding further than he hitherto had done to the pressure of the Lords with reference to the question of the corporations. Accordingly, early in the session, the Irish Secretary

<sup>4</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. xlv. p. 922.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 1038.

<sup>6</sup> By the new bill the franchise in the smaller towns was fixed at 8*l.* The Lords insisted on raising it to 10*l.* The Lords also rejected a clause transferring to the new municipalities the powers hitherto exercised by grand juries of levying money. The Speaker held that the amendment was inconsistent with the Commons’ privileges, and Lord John Russell moved that the House “disagree with it.” The motion was agreed to, and ultimately the consideration of the other amendments was postponed for three months. See Walpole’s “England,” vol. iii. p. 483 n. ; Hansard, Third Series, vol. i. pp. 3, 196.

introduced a measure of Municipal Reform, based substantially on the lines which he himself had laid down after the alterations made in the bill of 1836 by the Lords, and of which Peel and Lyndhurst had practically, though reluctantly, approved in 1838.

By the new bill it was proposed—

1. That the eleven<sup>7</sup> largest towns already enumerated,<sup>8</sup> should be vested with corporate rights, the franchise in them to be fixed at 10*l.* rating.

2. That the majority of the inhabitants, who were rated at 8*l.*, in the smaller towns, where the corporate property was worth 100*l.* a year, should be allowed to apply to the Lord-Lieutenant for a charter, and, that, pending the application, the affairs of these towns should be managed by Commissioners appointed under the Act of George IV.<sup>9</sup>

3. That the affairs of the towns where the corporate property was valued under 100*l.* a year, should be managed by the Poor-Law guardians.<sup>1</sup>

On the 14th of February, Lord Morpeth moved the second reading of this bill, which was carried, against an amendment of Sir R. Inglis for its rejection, by a majority of 149 to 14 votes. Upon this occasion, Sir Robert Peel delivered a speech which was partly a reply to the speeches he had delivered on the subject of Irish municipal reform in 1835, 1836, and 1837, and partly an apology to the Tories for his complete change of front. He reminded his followers that he had done his best to abolish the Irish corporations. “I proposed,” he said, “that the existing corporations should be abolished in Ireland, and further that no similar bodies should be established in lieu of them.

<sup>7</sup> Ultimately reduced to ten, viz. Belfast, Clonmel, Cork, Drogheda, Dublin, Kilkenny, Limerick, Londonderry, Sligo, Waterford. See 3 and 4 Vic. cap. 1, sec. 10 (Schedule A).

<sup>8</sup> Ante, p. 634.

<sup>9</sup> Entitled “An Act to make provision for the lighting, cleansing, and watching of cities, and towns corporate, and market-towns in Ireland.”

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. li. p. 641.



. . . We tried that principle [of abolition] when we were in a powerful minority, within twenty or twenty-five of the Government ; and on a motion for the abolition of the corporations in 1836 we were in a minority of sixty-four. We repeated it in 1837, and we were then in a minority of eighty." In these circumstances the Tory leader doubted whether it would be for the Protestant interests, "seeing that the public mind in Ireland and England was against the abolition of the corporations," to continue the struggle any longer. On the contrary, he thought Protestant interests would be better served "by depriving those who wished to agitate of a topic of agitation." Neither did Sir Robert now feel certain that "the establishment of Municipal Corporations" would "add much to the political influence of the Catholics ;" and, indeed, he was generally anxious to support the Government measure "in order that a great body, whom I am desirous to look upon in the light of a great body of my fellow-countrymen, may not feel a sense of degradation at having withheld from them this concession."<sup>2</sup>

I shall offer no comment on this speech of Sir Robert Peel, beyond saying, that, it was a public recantation of principles which he had previously enunciated—an express denial of assertions which he had previously made.

The House went into committee on the 24th of February, when Mr. Shaw moved that the franchise in the smaller towns should be fixed at 10*l.* instead of 8*l.* as proposed by Ministers. The Government resisted the amendment, which was supported by Peel, but defeated by a majority of 130 to 85. On the 9th of March, Lord Morpeth moved the third reading, which was carried, against an amendment of Sir George Sinclair proposing its postponement, by a majority of 182 to 34, Sir Robert Peel voting in the majority.

On the 4th of May, the bill was read a second time in the Lords by a majority of 131 to 32, the Earl of

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. lii. pp. 266—271.

Winchelsea leading the opposition to it, and the Duke of Wellington supporting Ministers.

In committee the measure encountered the most hostile criticisms, Lyndhurst and the Marquess of Londonderry leading the attacks upon it. Lyndhurst insisted on various amendments preserving the rights of freemen, and succeeded in carrying, by a majority of 92 to 50 votes, a motion for raising the franchise in the smaller towns from 8*l.* to 10*l.* rating; and with these and other amendments, the bill at last passed.<sup>3</sup>

So terminated the struggle for Irish Municipal Reform.

Reviewing the chief incidents of that struggle, Mr. Spencer Walpole, in one of the most impartial and honest of histories, says:—

The most intolerant Protestant might have reflected with shame on the narrow measure of justice which had been meted out to Ireland. An English bishop,<sup>4</sup> on the contrary, had the bigotry to protest against the measure to the last, “because by this wilful and deliberate abandonment of the cause of true religion . . . we have provoked the justice of Almighty God, and have given too much reason to apprehend the visitation of Divine vengeance for this presumptuous act of national disobedience.”<sup>5</sup> The warlike bishop who entered this protest on the journals of the Lords did not, it may charitably be hoped, realize the blasphemy of which he was guilty. And yet, what blasphemy can be so great as to impute to the Deity a desire to perpetuate a system founded on monopoly, corruption, and sectarianism. If the religion of the bishop be indeed dependent on corruption and abuse, if the Deity of the bishop inflicts his vengeance on those who try to enfranchise the poor, it is time for every honest man to inquire whether the God of the bishop is the God of the Gospel, or whether the great founder of Christianity, who on this earth advocated the rights of the needy, ever expressed the opinions which his mitred, titled, and wealthy worshippers have the presumption to ascribe to him.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Spencer Walpole, “History of England,” vol. iii. p. 513; and Hansard, Third Series, vol. lv. pp. 183—191.

<sup>4</sup> Philpotts, Bishop of Exeter.

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, Third Series, vol. lv. p. 1177.

<sup>6</sup> “History of England,” vol. iii. p. 513.



As a set-off to the views of the Bishop of Exeter, I may, perhaps, state the popular opinion in Ireland respecting the Government measure, as expressed by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy in a recent work:—

There were sixty-eight elected corporations in the hands of the Protestant minority, and with respect to fifty-eight<sup>7</sup> of them, the new law stripped them of their privileges and their property—where any property had escaped—plundered and extinguished them, rather than let them fall into the hands of the majority of the nation. In the English Act, on the other hand, every chartered town had been preserved. The ten

<sup>7</sup> The disfranchised towns were:—

1 Ardee	25 Longford	48 Duleek
2 Armagh	26 Maryborough	49 Hillsborough
3 Athlone	27 Monaghan	50 Mistioge (query In-
4 Athy	28 Naas	istogue). The word
5 Bandon	29 Navan	in the Schedule of
6 Boyle	30 New Ross	the Act of Parlia-
7 Callan	31 Portarlington	ment is "Mis-
8 Carlow	32 Strabane	tioge," but I do
9 Carrickfergus	33 Tralee	not recollect such
10 Cashel	34 Trim	a name among the
11 Charleville	35 Tuam	list of corporate
12 Cloghnakilty	36 Wexford	towns given by
13 Coleraine	37 Wicklow	the Commissioners
14 Dingle	38 Youghal	on Irish Corpora-
15 Dundalk	39 Ardfert	tions.
16 Dungannon	40 Athenry	51 Kilbeggan
17 Ennis	41 Baltinglass	52 Kildare
18 Enniscorthy	42 Bangor	53 Killileagh
19 Enniskillen	43 Belturbet	54 Kilmallock
20 Feathard	44 Carlingford	55 Lifford
21 Galway	45 Castlemartyr	56 Newtownards
22 Gorey	46 Cavan	57 Middleton
23 Kells	47 Charlemont	58 Thomastown
24 Kinsale		

See 3 and 4 Vic. cap. 108, schedules B and I.

Of the above corporations the following possessed property exceeding the annual value of 100*l.*: Ardee, Athlone, Athy, Carlow, Carrickfergus, Cashel, Cloghnakilty, Coleraine, Kells, Kinsale, Naas, New Ross, Strabane, Tralee, Trim, Tuam, Wexford, Wicklow, Youghal.

The property of the following Corporations was under the annual value of 100*l.*: Armagh, Bandon, Boyle, Callan, Charleville, Dingle, Dundalk, Dungannon, Ennis, Enniscorthy, Enniskillen, Feathard, Gorey, Longford, Maryborough, Monaghan, Navan, Portarlington. See ante, p. 636, and 3 and 4 Vic. cap. 108, schedules G and H.

corporations which were not destroyed were effectually maimed. The treatment of Dublin will sufficiently illustrate the system pursued. In England every ratepayer was a burgess, though he only paid a shilling; in Ireland he must inhabit a house rated at 10*l.* under the Poor-Law, to attain this right. In England the payment of a single tax qualified a man to be on the burgess-roll; in Dublin it was necessary to have paid twelve local taxes, and in some districts more than twelve. The new corporation created under this restricted and Conservative system, was deliberately shorn of some of the most important privileges which the old dishonest corporation enjoyed. The appointment of the Recorder, the Sheriffs, and the resident magistrates, and the control of the police, were taken from the municipality and transferred to the Government. It was not empowered to light, cleanse, beautify, or keep in order, the streets of the city, or to control its ports or its public buildings. Its functions consisted in managing the water-supply, making regulations for markets, and imposing a rate on the citizens to pay a heavy debt inherited from the old corporation, and to compensate its superannuated officers. This was a boon for which ungrateful Ireland did not fall into ecstasies of gratitude. It must be confessed that she even clamoured for more, which is an awkward practice of claimants who are put off with less than their due.<sup>s</sup>

<sup>s</sup> "Young Ireland," p. 189.

With reference to the state of the municipal franchise in Ireland at present, I shall quote the following extract from one of Mr. Harvey's admirable leaflets on Irish questions :—

#### "THE MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE.

"In England every person, *male or female*, who has occupied for twelve months any house rated to the poor, is entitled to the Municipal Franchise.

"In Ireland, in all towns except Dublin, every *man* only, who has occupied a house rated at *the Government value* of 10*l.* (equal to a rental of 17*l.* in Ireland, or, say, 22*l.* in England), is entitled to the Municipal Franchise. In Dublin, though the suffrage is ostensibly household, yet the necessity of three years' residence, and the rating of landlords, instead of occupiers, together with the non-rating of quarterly tenants, annihilates the household Franchise.

"As a consequence, English towns have from *four to nine times* as



I shall in conclusion quote the opinion of Sir Erskine May, as that of a thoroughly impartial observer :—

The tedious controversy [on the Irish corporations] of six years was at length closed ; but the measure virtually amounted to a scheme of municipal disfranchisement.<sup>9</sup>

Twelve months after the passing of the Irish Municipal Reform Act the Melbourne ministry fell, and Sir Robert Peel, at the head of a powerful Tory administration, succeeded to power.

Here for the present, I pause.

The fall of the Melbourne ministry marks an important epoch in Irish history. During its tenure of office, an honest and a sustained effort was, for the time, made by England to govern Ireland according to the wishes of the Irish people.

When Lord Melbourne became Prime Minister, he found that the Catholic Relief Act of 1829 had been allowed to remain a dead letter, and he devoted himself with persistent earnestness to make it a reality. The enemies of the people, who, despite Catholic Emancipation, had continued to occupy all the “foremost places,”<sup>1</sup> were driven from power, and their friends elevated to positions of trust and influence. A popular Lord-Lieutenant, a popular Chief Secretary, and an Under-Secretary of whom it may be truly said that his love for Ireland was as great as even that of Thomas Davis, were sent to rule the country. An Attorney-General, and a Solicitor-General, practically of O’Connell’s own choice, were appointed. Rampant Orangemen were removed from the commission of the peace, and the sources of local justice were purified. The hated policy of Coercion was abandoned, and con-

many voters, for Municipal purposes, as Irish towns.”—Harvey, “English and Irish Franchises.”

Mr. Harvey is a member of the Society of Friends, and has, in an unostentatious way, done good work for his country.

<sup>9</sup> “History of England,” vol. iii. p. 295.

<sup>1</sup> Lecky, “Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland.”

stitutional government established throughout the country. O'Connell, finding in power a ministry resolved on doing complete justice to Ireland, lent his great aid to the support of the Executive, suspending the cry for Repeal, and uniting his efforts to those of the Government in its endeavours to bring about the incorporation of the two countries. One result of the combination so formed between O'Connell and the English Minister was, that, during the Melbourne *régime*, a stronger disposition than had ever been shown before, or than has been shown since, was evinced by the Irish people to become reconciled to the maintenance of British authority in the island.

But with the fall of the Melbourne ministry all was changed.

On the accession of Peel to power, the people once more beheld their enemies in the "foremost places." The policy of Lord Melbourne was, as I have said, to govern Ireland according to Irish ideas. But Peel returned to the old lines of governing Ireland according to the ideas of a faction who believed that it was as natural for an Irishman to be a slave as for a negro to be black. Orangeism came once more into the ascendant. The views of the Clares, the Duigenans, the Ogles, and the Boyle Roches; the Rodens, the Shaws, the Gordons, the Winchelseas, and the Bishops of Exeter, once more prevailed. For the second time, the Minister, and the Party who granted Catholic Emancipation, set themselves vigorously to work to make Catholic Emancipation a dead letter.

With the change in the system of Government, came a change in the conduct of O'Connell.

During the Melbourne Administration the great Agitator had used his influence to attach the Irish people to the English connexion, and to reconcile them to the Union. But, from 1841 to the time of his death, he never ceased to declare that complete justice to Ireland could only be done by an Irish Parliament,



fairly representing the voice of the nation, and sitting in College Green.

O'Connell died on the 15th of May, 1847. On the 29th of July, 1848, the Young Ireland movement (which had sprung out of the Repeal agitation of 1842-46, and which was led by as self-sacrificing a body of patriots as any country ever produced) was for the time being crushed at Ballingarry.

Almost simultaneously with the secession of the Young Irelanders from O'Connell, a terrible famine swept over the land, decimating whole districts; and close upon the famine followed the concession of the Encumbered Estates Act.

The history of that concession, with an account of the system of land-tenure in Ireland, from the battle of Limerick downwards, will form the opening subject of the ensuing volume.

END OF VOL. I.





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