

Ireland

"WHO FEARS TO SPEAK OF
NINETY-EIGHT?"

BY
WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

Reprinted from the "Contemporary Review" for
January, 1898.

Dublin:
SEALY, BRYERS AND WALKER,
MIDDLE ABBEY STREET.

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PREFACE

THE fury with which this paper was attacked in England is a comforting proof that it has effected its principal purpose, which was to teach England the intensity of the Ninety-eight feeling. It is reprinted in its present cheap form in the hope of setting our own countrymen thinking, while there is yet time, of the circumstances which produced the outbreak of Ninety-eight and of the causes which are at present discrediting and disorganizing the constitutional movement.

"WHO FEARS TO SPEAK OF NINETY-EIGHT?"

IT is one of the curiosities of literature that the only person nowadays who "fears to speak of '98" is the Trinity College Professor who, in hot youth, wrote the stirring ballad beginning as above. Dr. Ingram is a distinguished man of science, who, the report goes, is less flattered to be reminded of his revolutionary lyric than the Wordsworth of Grasmere would have been by compliments to Wordsworth the Girondist. Nevertheless, for generations after the political economist has been forgotten, the poet of '98 will be plagued with an assured immortality. Versifiers innumerable have spent their lives in turning out books which have brought them less lasting fame than the unwilling laureate of '98 has secured by the publication of six stanzas in a Dublin weekly newspaper. This year it will be with a reluctant England as it has been with the reluctant author. The fact that Ireland does not "fear to speak of '98" will be thundered into English ears through all the channels of expression that a race fifteen millions strong can command at home and abroad. The celebration of the centenary of the great insurrection will give easy-going Englishmen one of those awakenings as to the real state of Irish feeling which have usually to be administered, once in every generation at least, in the shape of some armed rising, Clerkenwell explosion, or Mitchelstown massacre. There is no better argument of the incapacity of Englishmen to understand a people they will persist in governing than their triumphant surprise that the Duke of York was not hooted through the country. When the Prince of Wales was received with a similar decent courtesy in Dublin, in

1885, the *Times* began a war-dance over the grave of conquered Irish nationality. The result was that, from that day forth until he quitted the country, no day passed that the unfortunate Prince was not forced to see black flags thrust in his face and armed policemen cracking the skulls of the crowds who assembled to set the readers of the *Times* right as to the truth about Ireland.

This time Earl Cadogan has more discreetly asked the gentlemen of the English press into his drawing-room to give them a gentle hint that there must be no bragging of the conquest of Ireland, because the poor Dublin jarveys do not refuse English fares, or because the touters for tourists hail the Duke as the cheapest and best of advertisements. Nevertheless, how many Englishmen are there who will not be shocked to hear that Princes' visits have no more influence upon any of the deeper currents of Irish feeling than a tourist's tips have upon the nationality of the German waiter who brings him his dinner, or of the *cocher* who drives him to the Jardin de Paris? Let who doubts it visit Ireland this year with the Irish-American pilgrims. There will be less glitter of scarlet and gold, and fewer flags out of the Castle tradesmen's windows; but upon any battlefield of the insurrection one with eyes to see will learn lessons as to the intensity of Irish disaffection which waltzers through viceregal ball-rooms will only learn after another Fenian conspiracy—perhaps after another "Races of Castlebar."

When Mr. Gladstone thundered against "the black-guardism and baseness" by which the Union was carried, probably most Englishmen who knew anything at all of what he was driving at took this to be only a lurid allusion to the fact that the votes by which the Union was carried were paid for. I remember the horror that overspread the Tory benches one night during the Home Rule debates, when, in the midst of a speech of Colonel Saunderson's, alleging that the rebellion of '98 was the only gratitude England received for giving the Irish Parliament its freedom,

Mr. Gladstone burst out, with the wrath of a prophet of old: "Mr. Pitt did it!" The Tory squires had not the remotest historical notion of his meaning, but they knew that one of the gravest personages in the history of England was being accused of deeds of guilt and bloodshed, compared with which the guilt of the insurgents who piked the prisoners in the barn of Scullabogue was but a scurvy scene-shifting incident in a five-act tragedy. These four words, however, comprise the whole history of the sanguinary rebellion of '98. It was Mr. Pitt who paved the way for it, it was Mr. Pitt who gave the signal for it, it was Mr. Pitt who turned all its horrors to account for the accomplishment of a Union which could never have been effected by fair means, nor even by the foul means of pecuniary corruption without it. Nothing is clearer now to the informed than that the English Parliament in unanimously passing their famous Act of Renunciation in 1782, enacting that "the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by laws enacted by his Majesty and the Parliament of that kingdom, is hereby declared to be established and ascertained for ever, and shall at no time hereafter be questioned or questionable," were not setting their seal to a sacred act of national reconciliation, but were enacting a living lie, with the firm intention of unsaying their words whenever their terror of the French and American arms should be abated, or the 80,000 muskets coaxed out of the hands of the Irish Volunteers. While the Bill repealing the Act of 6th Geo. I. was actually passing through the English Parliament, the Duke of Portland (who was then Lord-Lieutenant) wrote a secret despatch to Lord Shelburne, in which he said:

"I have the best reason to hope that I shall soon be enabled to transmit to you the sketch or outlines of an Act of Parliament to be adopted by the legislatures of the respective kingdoms, by which the superintending power and supremacy of Great Britain in all matters of State and general commerce will be virtually and effectually acknowledged."

This was the real temper of the Lord Lieutenant, who was all the time exciting the enthusiasm and gratitude of Grattan by declaring Irish independence "to be established and ascertained for ever"; and the reply of Lord Shelburne, who was the elder Pitt's closest confidant, is no less plain-spoken:

"The contents of your Grace's letter of the 6th instant are too important to hesitate about detaining the messenger whilst I assure your Grace of the satisfaction which I know your letter will give the King. I have lived in the most anxious expectation of some such measure offering itself; nothing prevented my pressing it in this despatch, except, having repeatedly stated the just expectations of this country I was apprehensive of giving that the air of demand which would be better left to a voluntary spirit of justice and foresight. No matter who has the merit, let the two kingdoms be one, which can only be by Ireland now acknowledging the superintending power and supremacy to be where nature has placed it in precise and unambiguous terms."

Fitzgibbon, who afterwards, as Lord Clare, was foremost in the work of bullying and bribing the country into the Union, tells us that the Bill whispered of in the secret despatches of the Duke of Portland and Lord Shelburne was actually drafted at the very moment when Grattan was going into transports over the final and complete acknowledgment of Irish independence just made by England. It would be curious to trace the subsequent history of the draft. What we know is that if the Duke of Portland had carried out the design of "now requesting Ireland to acknowledge the superintending power and supremacy of England," the answer would have been the seizing of himself and Dublin Castle by a citizen army, to which there was no English force in the kingdom capable of offering half an hour's resistance. Washington's army at its best was never equal in numbers, material, or armament to the Irish volunteer army of 1782; and in 1782 the power of England was at its lowest ebb, what with the surrenders of Burgoyne and Cornwallis, and her repeated humiliations even at sea, at the hands of D'Orvillers, D'Estaing, and the fleets of France and Spain. "To attempt it (that is to say, the

Union) in time of war would be insanity," Lord Harcourt had long ago concluded. His Grace of Portland himself was "convinced that the spirit of this country is raised so high that she would expose herself to any hazard rather than relinquish or retract any of the claims she has insisted on through her Parliament."

Accordingly, Lord Shelburne's "now" was put off to a more opportune time. "Though with the strongest and most poignant reluctance," the Duke of Portland played the hypocrite and pretended to rejoice in the Act of Renunciation which he detested and was plotting secretly to retract. Even Fitzgibbon was instructed to outbawl the patriots as a champion of Irish independence. English Ministers had the meanness to accept 20,000 sailors and immense subsidies in cash from the gratitude of an Irish Parliament for a solemn treaty of reconciliation which they were all the time waiting for the first favourable opportunity to repudiate. Grattan has been with justice blamed by his countrymen for dismissing the citizen army, at the points of whose bayonets he forced his Declaration of Independence upon an English Parliament, in which the very Whigs accepted it "with the strongest and most poignant reluctance." It ought to be a subject of shame to all honourable Englishmen that Grattan's only fault was that he trusted the solemn word and Act of the Parliament of England, and accepted as a genuine measure of national reconciliation a concession which was only made, under the pressure of military calculations, by men determined to cancel it as soon as Ireland should have thrown away her arms.

Grattan's chivalry effected what English arms would not have dared to attempt. The volunteer army was frowned down. When they insisted that the only condition on which a Parliament—of whose 300 members a majority were the paid creatures of Government, and all but sixty hired their seats, as they might hire a town house, at from £2,000 to £3,000 per Parliament—could continue to exist was to reform it, they were snubbed with rather toplofty denials

of the right of armed men to interfere in civic affairs. Grattan trusted the plighted troth of England with more of the magnanimity of the paladin than of the sagacity of the statesman. The result was that as soon as England had purchased peace by means of the men and money voted by the enthusiastic Irish Parliament, English statesmen no longer thought it "insanity" to work for the destruction of the Parliament that had confided in them.

Even the harshest critics cannot find in the conduct of the independent Irish Parliament any palliation for the treachery of England. The Irish side of the bargain was observed with splendid generosity. It was the 20,000 sailors voted by the Irish Parliament that enabled Lord Howe to relieve Gibraltar and induce France and Spain to agree to the Peace of Versailles.

"Nothing is more conspicuous in the history of the Irish Parliament," says Mr. Lecky, "than the discretion with which it abstained from all discussions on foreign policy, and the loyalty and zeal with which it invariably supported England in time of war. Pitt, in introducing the Union, in 1799, . . . acknowledged that the divergences in time of war between the two Parliaments, which he so gravely feared, had, in fact, never occurred."

Domestically the Parliament had proved itself a no less worthy dwelling-place for freedom. In its first independent session it went far to remove the most offensive disabilities of the Catholics, such as the registering of Catholic priests, the obligation of Catholics to pay Protestant watchmen and reimburse sufferers by the operations of foreign privateers, the incapacity to become schoolmasters or guardians of Catholic children, and so forth; while the Protestant Dissenters of Ireland were in this year relieved of grievances under which the Dissenters of England continued to groan until 1836. The movement for Parliamentary reform, which was the only crime chargeable against Irish public opinion, was at the same moment agitated strenuously in reference to the English Parliament by Pitt himself, as it had been agitated by his father.

On the other hand, the story of English statesmen's plots to escape from the engagements solemnly entered into with the Irish nation presents one of the blackest records in human history of duplicity and baseness unredeemed. The peace which was purchased by the Irish subsidies was employed to undermine Irish freedom. The healthy national movement for reforming the Parliament was turned into an engine for corrupting it more scandalously. The emancipation proposals, in which a generous statesman would have hailed the approaching disappearance of religious passions among Irishmen, only prompted Pitt and his satraps to create a new and more diabolical instrument of sectarian division by the invention of Orangeism. Plainly as Portland urged his colleagues to abandon the country altogether, rather than be true to their word, his successor, Lord Temple, "in the strictest confidence," was falser and more brutal still. "It is my unalterable opinion," he wrote secretly, while he was in public beslobbering the Patriots with his caresses, "that the concession is but the beginning of a scene which will close for ever the account between the two kingdoms." The task he avowedly set himself as Lord Lieutenant was to exasperate the differences between Grattan and Flood, and "to foment the spirit of disunion among the Volunteers, upon which alone I found my hopes of forming a Government." Grattan, indeed, had still to be half-smothered with roses in the Viceregal Court, and the radiant vision of Irish liberty worshipped by Black Jack Fitzgibbon in dithyrambs as impassioned as those of any patriot of them all. The grateful Parliament's vote of £100,000 to Grattan was capped by an offer of the Viceregal Lodge in the Phoenix Park from the admiring Viceroy. As we know now, the admiring Viceroy was "the more anxious" to make this splendid gift that the dilapidated palace would require "at least £10,000 to make it fit for the reception of any chief governor." Whether the real motive was the squalid one here suggested, or whether it was an attempt, with the brutal candour of the time, to buy

the illustrious Irishman, or whether it was a more cunning attempt to confirm him in his confidence that England really and truly meant its Act of Renunciation, what is certain is that the feigned civilities of the Court towards Grattan covered a deep-set and irrevocable design to betray his trustfulness and to assassinate the Parliament whose independence the Commons of England had just acknowledged by a unanimous vote. Is it surprising, if the study of such stories of *Punica fides*, repeated by English governors of Ireland in every generation, led tens of thousands of young Irishmen in our own day to suspect that the outcry against Mr. Parnell was less inspired by the desire to purify public life than by the opportunity of getting rid of an Irish leader less trustful than Grattan towards English statesmen? The suspicion in this instance was unjust, but it was, oh, how natural!

The first object of Pitt and his Irish creatures was to make Parliamentary reform impossible, and keep the Parliament corrupt in order to subsequently kill it by driving upright men from reform to revolutionary courses; in other words to terrorise the Parliament with a rebellion, as well as bribe it with gold. The quarrel between Grattan and Flood made Lord Temple's task of "fomenting the spirit of disunion among the Volunteers" an easy one. The country gentlemen who had begun to glory in the principles of religious freedom and to welcome their Catholic fellow-countrymen into their regiments were taught to embrace instead the spirit of sectarian devilry in the ranks of the Orange Society. Flood and his reformers were voted down by a mob of pensioners and placemen. The Volunteers withered away under Grattan's coldness and the Viceroy's secret intrigues. Flood's Irish nation was to be a nation of Irish Protestants only. Wolfe Tone's sharper eye saw that the only chance of forcing Reform on a Parliament of pensioners and bigots was by a movement taking in the Catholics and the Dissenters, now hot with the first enthusiasm of the French Revolution. One of the vital

facts in all this controversy is that the United Irishmen (the name was first used by Tone at a banquet in Belfast in 1792) were not founded for the purposes of an armed revolution, but professed precisely the same principles as Fox professed in England, and proposed to realise them by the same methods. Thomas Addis Emmet, Dr. McNevin, and Arthur O'Connor, representing eighty of the United Irish leaders, drew up a statement of their objects, when the rebellion was all over, in which they assure us that the question of separation was never once contemplated by the founders of the United Irishmen; that their object was to bring about Parliamentary Reform by a union of Catholics and Protestants; that it was not until convinced by years of experience of the hopelessness of expecting the Parliament to reform itself, that they most reluctantly began to dream of revolution and of foreign aid; and that until the dragonades and tortures by which the people were driven into insurrection were at their height the great majority of the Society would gladly have disarmed before any real policy of reform on the part of England. Mr. Lecky—even the latter-day Mr. Lecky of the Unionist platforms—admits "it is probable that this statement represents truly the opinions of the majority of the first leaders of the Society." In four words, if the reformers became revolutionists, "Mr. Pitt did it."

The current English impression that the United Irishmen rushed to invoke French aid is equally ill-informed. A recent book of M. Guillon* gives abundant proof from the French archives that the suggestion of a French invasion did not come from Ireland at all, but was made by Hoche to the Directory before he laid eyes on Tone or was even aware of the existence of the United Irish Society. It was not an envoy to France, but an envoy from France that first sought to pave the way for an invasion. The Rev.

*"La France et l'Irlande pendant la Révolution." Paris. 1888.

Mr. Jackson, who fell into the trap of a spy of Pitt's and poisoned himself in the dock, was the first emissary of Barras who reached Ireland. He was refused an interview by Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and Tone himself (the most revolutionary of the United Irish leaders) distrusted him and kept him at arm's length. And that was even after the Government had already put in force their policy of driving the United Irish Society under the surface by raiding their meeting-place in Taylor's Hall and seizing the papers in which they declared the object of their association to be "an equal and impartial representation of the people in Parliament."

It is probable that, under the influence of the reaction created in Ireland among the propertied men on the one hand, and among the Catholics on the other, by the enormities of the Septembriseurs, Pitt would have proceeded right away, in 1793, to make short work of the United Irish Society and carry the Union. If the French Republic had gone down before the apparently irresistible coalition of Austrian, Prussian, English, Dutch, Italian, and Spanish armies that were pouring down upon her by land and sea in that year, it is certain that the compact of 1782 with Ireland would have been instantly and unceremoniously broken by a Union. But instead of the Prince of Coburg and his Austrians swooping down upon Paris, or the English and the French traitors of La Vendée sweeping all before them, it so happened that the English were chased from Toulon, from Corsica, from Dunkerque, and from Vendée, and were beaten again and again by Pichegru's bare-footed *sans-culottes* at Courtrai, at Tourcoing, and, even in the snows and ice of winter, hunted from the Meuse to the Yssel, and from the Zuiderzee to the Ems. Accordingly, Lord Harcourt's apophthegm that "in time of war" any attempt at the Union would be "insanity" again became the governmental *mot d'ordre* in Ireland. Hot foot on the English reverses on the Continent came from the Viceroy's

pigeon-holes a considerable Catholic Emancipation Bill, giving the Catholics votes at Parliamentary elections, and opening to them the bar, the army, the navy, and the schools; and the Bill was, of course, passed into law without demur by his waged majority. The following year the chastening influence of defeat at home and abroad continued to exercise Mr. Pitt. The English *fiasco* at Quiberon, the rout of the Austrians in Italy and beyond the Rhine, the desertion of Prussia and Spain, hunger and dear bread at home, the breaking of Pitt's windows in Downing Street, the hooting of the King on his way through London, the knowledge that the Directory were turning over project after project for a descent upon Ireland, and, finally, the necessity of taking Portland and the patrician Whigs into his Cabinet, all seem to have decided Pitt, at least for a time, to try one honest effort to go back to the solemn bargain of 1782, to play Grattan fair, and to dish the pro-French party by a policy of unequivocating Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation.

The result was the Fitzwilliam Viceroyalty—the last gleam of honesty in England's relations with the Irish Parliament. The statements of the Duke of Portland and of Lord Fitzwilliam himself have now indisputably established the fact that the Whigs only coalesced with Pitt on the distinct bargain that their policy should have a free hand in Ireland. The kernel of that policy was honest dealing with Grattan, who had all but ruined his influence by insisting on Reform and Catholic Emancipation as sternly as he set his face against the republicanism of Ulster. Fitzwilliam and his friends had freely identified themselves with the hopes of the Catholics and Reformers. When Grattan was summoned over to London to talk over the Irish arrangements with Pitt and Portland and the new Viceroy, it was as a national plenipotentiary, to whom England's faith was once more sacredly pledged. But even in the honeymoon of the new espousals Pitt's ineradicable

hostility to Irish freedom peeped out. Sir John Parnell gave him a glowing picture of the union of Catholics and Protestants that would be the result of a generous policy. "Very true, sir," was Pitt's cold reply; "but the question is, whose will they be?" The unforgivable fault of the United Irishmen was, in fact, that very union of sects and effacement of bigotries; and the plotter of the Union always turned from those visions of union among Irishmen with relief to the diabolical arrangements of the Castle party for setting Catholic and Protestant at daggers drawn by the establishment and encouragement of the Orange Society. One of Grattan's principal suggestions for winning the confidence of Ireland was the dismissal of Fitzgibbon, the Chancellor, who nakedly and without shame championed the Castle system of government by corruption and religious strife. To this Pitt returned a point-blank refusal. Nevertheless, for a few splendid weeks, the Irish people, ignorant of the ugly secrets which the memoirs of English statesmen have since disclosed, hailed Fitzwilliam's arrival with transports which threw the pro-French party into despair. It looked as if Grattan's confidence in English honour were about to be at long last justified. Burke's great soul was filled with horror at the thought of throwing over Fitzwilliam and his policy of conciliation. "Ireland," he said, with a prophetic insight to which five subsequent years of horrors paid their lurid tribute, "will be a strong dyke to keep out Jacobinism, or a broken bank to let it in." Lord Fitzwilliam has declared himself that he "never would have undertaken the government," if he had not found the whole Cabinet, with Pitt at its head, consenting parties to his Irish policy. He only came, however, to find himself the victim of treachery in his subordinates and desertion by his colleagues. Fitzgibbon, who was already an active worker for the Union, rose up with all his Satanic might against any displacement of the Castle garrison of corruptionists and bigots. He impregnated Pitt's mind with all his own repugnance to

union among Irishmen. He warned him that the success of the policy of conciliation would be the deathblow of the policy of the Union, which was all this time the fixed background of Pitt's views about Ireland. The powers of darkness triumphed. Just when the mass of the Protestant population accepted and even called for complete emancipation of the Catholics; just when the Parliament, buoyant with hope, was celebrating the tremendous growth of Irish trade, even in the darkest moments of the war; just when Grattan was able to describe the French party as "inconsiderable and contemptible" in a country glowing with hopes of peaceful freedom—Fitzwilliam was dashed down from the Viceregal throne and called back to England, amidst the consternation of the country, the disgrace of Grattan, and the demoniacal glee of the Fitzgibbons and Beresfords, who trooped back to Dublin Castle to hasten on the Union by drenching the Parliament with corruption, feeding the flames of Orangeism, and goading all who said them nay into rebellion. Fitzwilliam once recalled, the United Irishmen had no choice but to collect in secret, bind themselves by oath, arm, and fix their eyes on France. "Mr. Pitt did it!" The French invasion of Bantry Bay, which nothing but an accident of the weather prevented from overrunning Ireland, was more truly the doing of the men who recalled Fitzwilliam than even of the indefatigable Tone, to whom it gave his first importance in Carnot's antechamber.

The first object of the Unionists was to make reform impossible. The next was to terrorise the country gentlemen by forcing an insurrection. In this work again Pitt and his Castle imps played a more important part than the drill-masters of the United Irish Society or the emissaries of France. The insurrection of 1798 was confined almost wholly to the provinces of Leinster and Connaught. A muster-roll of the United Irishmen, drawn up by Lord Edward Fitzgerald two months before the rising, proves that the Society had little or no strength in those parts of

Leinster which rose in arms, and had no existence at all in the province of Connaught. Here is the document:

	Men.		Men.
Ulster . . .	110,990	Queen's County .	11,619
Munster . . .	100,634	King's County .	3,600
Kildare . . .	10,863	Carlow . . .	9,414
Wicklow . . .	12,895	Kilkenny . . .	624
Dublin County .	3,010	Meath . . .	1,420
Dublin City .	2,177		

Kildare, Wicklow, and Carlow were the only counties of all these where any considerable rising took place. Wexford, which was the real seat of the insurrection of '98, and which for four weeks held army after army at bay, is not mentioned at all. At the meeting at Oliver Bond's, where the Leinster County Delegates were seized, Wexford was not represented, either among the delegates or in the documents of the conspiracy.

Let us see what were "the well-timed measures" by which Lord Castlereagh afterwards boasted he forced on the rebellion, and produced a bloody civil war, costing at least 30,000 lives, in a county where, three months before the rising, the United Irish organisation was shunned, wherever its existence was even known, by the peasantry. The "well-timed measures" aimed at two main objects of policy: 1st, to destroy the growing union of Catholics and Protestants, by deliberately kindling the flames of sectarian savagery through the lodges of the Orange Society; and 2nd, to inflame the terrors of the country gentlemen by fabricated rumours of a general massacre after the French fashion, and then let them loose, in all the unbridled fury of an Ascendancy party, armed with plenary powers to flog, torture, kill, violate, burn, as their terrors or their lusts might prompt them. The proofs of these enormities might be rested upon the testimony of Englishmen and Protestants alone. "It is a fact incontrovertible," says Lord Holland, "that the people were driven to resistance by free quarters and the excesses of the soldiery, which were such as are not permitted in civilised warfare, even in an

enemy's country." Lord Moria told the House of Lords that he had been himself the witness of tortures and brutalities exceeding the worst stories of the Spanish Inquisition, and that "in a part of the country as quiet and as free from disturbance as the city of London." Plowden estimates at 7,000 the number of men, women, and children murdered or driven from their homes within one year, in the small county of Armagh alone, by the new Orange banditti whom the plotters of the Union had conjured up to make the union of Catholics and Protestants impossible. It is probable that in this single county more defenceless Catholics were massacred, or burned out of their homes, than were immolated of French aristocrats in all the chateaux of France, or in all the *guillotinales* of the Place de la République. "Neither age nor sex," we are told by the very Governor of Armagh, Lord Gosford, "nor even acknowledged innocence as to any guilt, is sufficient to excite mercy, much less to afford protection. The only crime which the objects of this ruthless persecution are charged with is simply a profession of the Roman Catholic religion." The leaders of the Orange banditti were themselves magistrates, and Parliament, instead of repudiating their excesses, passed an Indemnity Bill, in 1796, giving them a wholesale absolution, if they had "apprehended suspected persons without due authority, sent suspected persons out of the kingdom, entered houses, or done divers other acts not justifiable by law." Fouquier de Tinville in his bloodiest hour had not more to answer for to humanity than the infamous Lord Carhampton in his dragonades in the north. Soldiery were let loose on the people's homes, at "free quarters," with unlimited license for extortion, rape, and torture; men who refused to tell where their arms were concealed (for the good reason, in most cases, that they had no arms to conceal) were held in agony on the bare soles of their feet on the sharpened points of pegs, or "pickets," had their heads covered with pitch-caps of boiling pitch,

till caps and pitch and scalp were dragged away by the torturers, or were again and again put through the agonies of strangulation by the ingenious device of half-hanging—until these atrocities wrung from the Commander-in-chief, Sir Ralph Abercromby, the indignant confession that "within these twelve months every crime, every cruelty that could be committed by Cossacks or Calmucks has been committed here"; and, later on, the famous rebuke that the army had sunk "into a state of licentiousness which would render them formidable to every one but the enemy." But Abercromby went down, as Fitzwilliam had gone down, before the howls of a triumphant Ascendancy. The great soldier was dismissed from his command as summarily as the enlightened Viceroy from the Castle. "Lord Camden," wrote the hero of Egypt, "has betrayed the situation of Commander-in-chief; he has thrown the army into the hands of a faction and made it a tool under their direction." And all this saturnalia of the Ascendancy was not the outburst of a panic-stricken hour, but the calculated development of a plan of campaign, the "well-timed measures" by which a "premature outbreak" was to be forced and the Union carried. Fox has pledged his credit as a King's Prime Minister to the statement that he had "documentary evidence to prove that the cruelties had not been resorted to on the spur of the moment, but had been deliberately resolved upon long before for a certain purpose." "Mr. Pitt did it," in as true a sense as if his own hand had pulled the ropes and heaved the pitch-caps.

The process by which the flourishing and peaceful county of Wexford was turned into the theatre of a war that proved a Frankenstein for its instigators is particularly worth studying. Miles Byrne, one of the insurgent leaders, and afterwards a gallant soldier of France, confesses that, until a few months before the rising, the United Irish Society had made little or no progress among the people of the county, and was sternly opposed by the priests; with what requital the following passage will tell:

"The priests did everything in their power to stop the progress of the Association of United Irishmen, particularly poor Father James Redmond, who refused to hear the confession of any of the United Irish and turned them away from his knees. He was ill requited afterwards for his great zeal and devotion to the enemies of his country; for after the insurrection was all over Earl Mountnorris brought him in a prisoner to the British camp at Gorey with a rope around his neck, hung him up to a tree, and fired a brace of bullets through his body. Lord Mountnorris availed himself of this opportunity to show his 'loyalty,' for he was rather suspected, on account of not being at the head of his corps when the insurrection broke out in his neighbourhood. Both Redmond and the parish priest, Father Frank Kavanagh, were on the best of terms with Lord Mountnorris, dining frequently with him at his seat, Camolin Park, which place Father Redmond prevented being plundered during the insurrection. This was the only part he had taken in the struggle."

But the case against the official instigators of the insurrection can be rested entirely upon the testimony of persons unconnected with the United Irish movement. The Rev. Mr. Gordon, a clergyman of the Established Church, who wrote a history of his own experiences in the bosom of the loyalist camp, came to the following conclusion as to the district within his own sphere of knowledge:

"Whether an insurrection, in the then existing state of the kingdom, would have taken place in the county of Wexford, or, in case of its eruption, how far less formidable and sanguinary it would have been, if no acts of severity had been committed by the soldiery, the yeomen, or their supplementary associates, without the direct authority of their superiors, or command of the magistrate, is a question which I am not able positively to answer. In the neighbourhood of Gorey, if I am not mistaken, the terror of the whippings was, in particular, so great that the people would have been extremely glad to renounce for ever all notions of opposition to the Government if they could have been assured of permission to remain in a state of quietness."

Some of those "acts of severity" are set forth with a particularity which ought to make Englishmen's cheeks burn when they criticise the morals of the Kurdish "loyalists" in Armenia, in the history of a loyalist country gentleman and landed proprietor, Mr. Edward Hay. Mr. Hay, like Lord Mountnorris, was suspected by the loyalist *enrages*, because he attempted to dissuade them from their barbarities. He was persecuted after the insurrection by the very men who had come to him trembling, and with

tears in their eyes, to invoke his intercession with the insurgents. The fact that he had saved the lives of many of these cowardly scoundrels at the constant risk of his own was actually made the chief and, indeed, only count in the indictment against him, the argument of those who owed their lives to his intrepidity being that the success of his entreaties proved his influence with the insurgents. Mr. Hay traces the beginning of the disturbance in Wexford to the arrival of a corps of Orange miscreants called the North Cork Militia, who marched into Wexford with the medals and ribbons of the Orange Society triumphantly displayed on their breasts. They spent their time seizing anybody pointed out to them as a "croppy," whipping them at a triangle, tearing off their scalps with caps of hot pitch, and then turning them into the streets with yells of delight when, the melted pitch trickling into the wretches' eyes, made them fall or dash their heads against some wall in their blindness and agony.

"A sergeant of the North Cork, nicknamed *Tom the Devil*, was most ingenious in devising new modes of torture: Moistened gunpowder was frequently rubbed into the hair cut close, and then set on fire; some, while shearing for this purpose, had the tips of their ears snipt off; sometimes an entire ear, and often both ears, were completely cut off; and many lost part of their noses during the like preparation."

Abdul the Damned might compose some pretty retorts upon his English lecturers out of the hints on good government furnished to his Majesty by Tom the Devil; yet not many years have passed since I myself spoke with people who witnessed the things Mr. Hay describes. The example of the North Cork soon turned the Orange yeomanry of every parish into a legion of Tom the Devils, who overran the country by night, scourging and torturing men and outraging women, with the result that the people, in their terror, forsook their houses in the night and lay concealed in the ditches.

"I had the good fortune," Mr. Hay himself tells us, "to succeed so far in my own neighbourhood as to induce the people to remain in their houses at night; and the trouble it gave me to effect so much

would seem incredible to anybody without actual experience of the terror among the people. I was much amazed to find that this notion [of the fear of midnight raids from the yeomanry] was so firmly entertained by some people of respectability that I believe myself to have been the only person that slept in a house wherein I was on a visit."

All this in a county where the most malignant partisanship cannot quote proof of any counter-atrocities of the same character on the part of the people, and where no attempt at a rising took place, even after the insurrection had broken out in the adjoining county of Kildare. On May 23, the magistrates issued a proclamation announcing that unless there was a general surrender of arms within fourteen days application would be made to the Government to distribute the army at free quarters among the people's homes. It was expected that at least those who obeyed the proclamation would have been honestly afforded protection. "Would to God," says Mr. Hay, "that even at this period the spirit of the proclamation had been adhered to; for, in such an event, it is very probable that the county of Wexford would have escaped the dreadful misfortune of open insurrection!" Instead of which the people who "continued to flock in to the different magistrates for protection," and actually purchased pike-heads, which they did not possess, in order to satisfy suspicion by surrendering them, were subjected to devilries, compared with which all that had gone before were only barrack-yard recreations. Mr. Hunter Gowan rode through Gorey with a croppy's finger on the point of his sword, and stirred his punch with the ghastly trophy and playfully dropped it into a lady's bosom. In the Enniscorthy neighbourhood Mr. Archibald Hamilton Jacob and his yeomen scoured the country "with a regular executioner completely appointed with his implements, a hanging-rope and cat-o'-nine tails." Mr. Perry, of Inch, a Protestant, and a man of property, while he was being dragged to jail, had his hair close-cropped and gunpowder rubbed into it and set on fire until his skull was a jelly of crisped flesh and bone. Mr. Bagenal Harvey, whom events subsequently forced into the position of commander-

in-chief of the Wexford insurgents, was a Protestant country gentleman, who had so little to do with the plans of the United Irishmen that on the very day of the night on which the rising broke out he brought into Wexford the arms which he had been at the pains of collecting from his own tenantry and surrendered them to the King's officers. It was so late when the business of registering the arms and receiving the protections for the peasants who had surrendered them was completed that he remained in the town for the night. As he was going to bed a body of yeomanry, under command of a Captain Boyd, raided his lodgings and carried him off in custody to the county jail, where, a day or two afterwards, the panic-stricken ruffians who had played him this scurvy trick came on their knees to beg his intercession with the rebels. This happened on May 26. On the previous day twenty-eight prisoners, confined on mere suspicion, were taken out of the Carnew Bridewell and, without the slightest form of trial, riddled with bullets in the ball-alley by a horde of yeomen and militia. On the day on which Mr. Bagenal Harvey had brought in the arms of his part of the country another magistrate, Mr. Turner, was receiving the arms of all who possessed them, or could buy them at Mr. Fitzgerald's mansion of Newpark. The whole day long the people flocked in either to surrender their pikes or to protest that they had none, and to beseech protection against the marauders that were making the midnight hellish with the smoke of burning houses and the agonies of tortured men. Mr. Turner went home at ten o'clock at night, "indulging the fond hope at parting" with his host, Mr. Fitzgerald, "that the county of Wexford would remain quiet from the disposition generally shown by the people." Before the night was over the doors of Newpark were burst open by a body of yeomanry, who dragged Mr. Fitzgerald out of bed and conveyed him to Wexford Jail. Before the night was over, also, the preternatural patience of the people had at length reached its limits, and by the dawn the murderous crew of house-

burners, torturers, and libertines were rushing with paper cheeks and trembling knees to their prisoners to save them from the insurrection into which they had at long last goaded the maddened people.

Only one disgrace remained to be added to the infamies of the official instigators of the rebellion of '98, and that was cowardice in the field even grosser than their ferocity before there were any pikes to be faced. There is nothing in the history of British arms more humiliating than the series of ignominious thrashings large bodies of troops received at the hands of leaderless and half-armed peasants in Wexford, unless it was the hesitation with which an army of 25,000 troops, including the Guards of England, hung for weeks on the flanks of a single French battalion subsequently in the west, before they plucked up courage to demand their surrender. Of course, the ignominy of the actual defeats in the field fell principally upon the Orange gentry and yeomanry. One night, while Colonel Saunderson was making one of his war-orations during the Home Rule debates, Mr. Gladstone made another of his brief contributions to history which may stand as a fit pendant to "Mr. Pitt did it." Colonel Saunderson was illustrating the dreadful and triumphant character of the war the Orange warriors undertook to wage against the Home Rule Parliament by bragging heaven-high how their fathers had thrashed the insurgents of '98. "You could not do it!" suddenly burst in Mr. Gladstone's voice, like a thunder-clap. "You had to call in England." That is the undeniable historical fact. The Colonel Saundersons of the county Wexford and their Orange levies were broken, hunted, walked over, and frightened out of their wits in battle after battle, until they could not be got to stand in sight of a corps of pikemen without a regiment of English regulars between them, and it was not until the Brigade of Guards was ordered across and the county ringed around with regiments of German mercenaries and English fencibles that the intrepid peasantry of this one not very large county,

without leaders, artillery, or even gunpowder, were got under. The first blow in the insurrection was struck by Father John Murphy, the priest of Boolavogue, who, like every other priest that took part in the rebellion, had exerted himself up to the last moment to induce the people to surrender their arms, and had preached in season and out of season against the United Irishmen and French principles. When he saw his chapel fired by the yeomanry and heard the shrieks of his scourged parishioners, he found that, owing to his own exertions for peace sake, there were no better weapons left to them than pitchforks to defend the people's lives. But the truth of the warning, "Beware the fury of a patient man!" was never more fiercely illustrated than by Father John. With their pitchforks, such as they were, he and his parishioners that very night fell upon the Camolin Yeoman Cavalry, as they were returning from one of their carnivals of house-burning and torture, and cut to pieces such of the miscreants as could not escape by the speed of their horses. The victory enabled the "croppies" to recover the pikes they had surrendered; and with these rough weapons, fitted to handles twelve feet long, they, two days afterwards, at Oulart Hill, sent flying a force of at least a thousand cavalry and infantry that were sent out from Wexford with the confident expectation of exterminating them. Among the heaviest sufferers at Oulart Hill, it is comforting to know, were the inventors of the pitch-cap and of the gunpowder torture, the Orange corps, known as the North Cork. The next day the insurgents, to whose standard now rushed in thousands the victims of the pitch-cap and the cat-o'-nine-tails, poured down upon the panic-stricken garrison of Enniscorthy, who, after a couple of hours' defence, fled helter-skelter to Wexford town, setting fire to the town they were flying from, and redeeming their military record by hanging and hacking to pieces such of the peasantry as they could find in their homes on their line of flight. In Wexford town the best thing the heroes of the Ascendancy could think of was to flock to the jail to beseech

the Protestant gentlemen whom they had cast into prison to go out to the insurgent camp at Enniscorthy and placate them with assurances that their prisoners were being most humanely treated. But the hour for trusting to the mercies of the Tom the Devils was gone. The pikemen, with the vigour of desperate men, beat back at the battle of the Three Rocks the advance-guard of the army General Fawcett was leading to the relief of Wexford, and without a day's delay swarmed to the gates of the town. The garrison hastened to assure the insurgents, almost on their knees, that they did not mean fight. Such of them as could run away did so promptly; and many of the yeomen who remained turned their red coats, hung out green flags, sneaked off to the priests to beg to be baptized as Catholics, and, in their zeal to be more rebellious than the rebels, took a principal part in the reprisals on the people's side that followed. In Gorey the panic of Colonel Saunderson's forebears was equally ignominious. Even after General Loftus had arrived with 1,500 regular troops and five pieces of artillery, the pikemen routed one of his divisions with great slaughter at Tubberneering, and dashed into Gorey, while "the loyal minority" were flying as fast as their horses' legs could carry them along the road to Arklow. Within a fortnight the rebels, without the help of a single military leader, had cleared the entire county of its immense horde of yeomanry and militia, with the exception of Ross. Here their attack was defeated, after they had twice captured the town and twice lost it in the liquor-shops. But this was the only instance in which they were worsted in open fight until, after three weeks' preparation, General Lake at last surrounded their camp at Vinegar Hill with an army 20,000 strong, and broke them, fighting stubbornly to the last, without gunpowder, without leaders, the women holding their ground in the midst of the shells and grapeshot as stoutly as the men.

The campaign against Humbert in the west was scarcely more glorious to the British arms. Six weeks after the

total suppression of the Wexford insurrection, and while the island was (according to the estimate of the sober Plowden) filled with 150,000 troops of all arms, a French detachment of 1,038 men all told landed at Killala and, for nearly three weeks, marched through a whole province, and kept this vast host in a state of perturbation. Humbert, an unlettered pedlar of rabbit-skins by profession, who had all the intrepidity, dash, and decision of character that were then making the French army the nursery of Napoleon's marshals, told the Directory (with two misspellings), in his despatch at parting from the Isle of Aix: "Whatever betides us, depend on it I will make the French arms respected." And he kept his word with a brilliancy worthy of the best traditions of French soldiership. Here, once more, the Ascendancy swashbucklers "couldn't do it." Every time they came in contact with this handful of Frenchmen—at Killala, at Ballina, at Castlebar, at Colooney, and at Drumshambo—they fled before Humbert's face, and left behind them the only artillery he possessed. At Castlebar, the King's troops numbered between 5,000 and 6,000, under the fire-eating and torture-loving General Lake, and their flight was a *saufve qui peut* so ignominious that the day has been known ever since as "The Races of Castlebar."

"The troops, in their panic, reached Tuam that night, thirty-eight miles from the field of battle. After having refreshed themselves for a moment, they pursued their way to Athlone. One officer of carabineers arrived there at one o'clock the next day with sixty men. They had made eighty miles in twenty-seven hours. One does not know where their flight would have stopped," adds the disgusted historian, Gordon, "if the arrival of Cornwallis at Athlone had not stopped them."

The amusing thing about the panic is that there was not a single horseman among the French force to pursue them! Lord Cornwallis called up the Brigade of Guards and surrounded the French battalion and their battalion of Irish allies with two great armies, at the least twenty times as numerous, and still judged it prudent to hover and

hesitate day after day before provoking an encounter. It was not until Humbert's little band had marched more than half their way to Dublin, in the hope of raising the country, that they at last—844 men being their total muster—capitulated, at Ballinamuck, to the host that encompassed them. The only blot on the glory of Humbert's exploit was that he made no stipulation for his unfortunate Irish auxiliaries, although in his proclamation establishing the Provisional Government, at Castlebar, he had expressly authorised them to enrol 9,600 native infantry and 2,400 cavalry, on the same footing as if they were French levies. While the Frenchmen were carried off to Dublin as prisoners of war, accordingly, 500 of their unfortunate native allies were massacred on the field, like as many pigeons in a trap, and the way of the royalist fugitives back to Castlebar was marked at every mile with triumphal gibbets.

It is probable that what the average Englishman knows best (if he even knows anything beside) about the insurrection of '98 is Cruikshank's pictures of loyalist women and babies spitted on rebel pikes at Scullabogue. They were exhibited during the late anti-Home Rule crusade throughout England as the all-sufficient summary of the history of those times. I have, perhaps, sufficiently shown that the insurrection was wholly of official making; that it was characterised by extraordinary intrepidity on the part of the peasantry, when they were forced to set their backs to the wall, and by disgraceful poltroonery on the part of those whose burnings and scourgings had provoked the storm. Three abominable crimes were unquestionably committed on the insurgent side—some drunken runaways from the battle of Ross set fire to a barn at Scullabogue, in which eighty prisoners (sixteen of them Catholics) perished; when the insurgents first burst into Enniscorthy, which the flying yeomanry had just set fire to, at least twenty loyalists were massacred in the streets; and, in a moment of despairing rage, a number of prisoners, whom Mr. Hay from personal observation estimates at thirty-six, were piked

and thrown over the bridge at Wexford. These atrocities were committed, not only without the authority of the rebel leaders, but in spite of protests which almost led to their own inclusion in the slaughter; and no candid student of the time will fail to see how small a space these three crimes, barbarous as they were, are entitled to occupy in the ghastly balance-sheet, on the other side of which is the burning of thousands of humble homes, the flogging, torturing, and half-hanging of tens of thousands of peasants, the innumerable outrages on women and children, and the orgy of murderous deeds which drenched the county with blood after the suppression of the insurrection, and called forth the despairing protests of the very Viceroy. Respect for women is one of the best tests of comparative humanity in a campaign. Let me, on this point, place side by side, without comment, the statements of two historians, both of them loyalists:

MR. HAY.

"During the whole period of the insurrection in the county of Wexford, it is a fact no less surprising than true, that the fair sex was respected even by those who did not hesitate to rob or murder; no one instance existing of a female being injured or violated, including the wives, sisters, and daughters of those denominated the greatest enemies of the people."

MR. PLOWDEN.

"As to this species of outrage, it is universally allowed to have been on the side of the military. . . . It has been boasted of by officers of rank that, within certain large districts, a woman had not been left undefiled; and upon observation in answer that the sex must have been very complying, the reply was that the bayonet removed all squeamishness."

The Protestant Bishop of Killala, Dr. Stock, records of the Connaught campaign: "It is a circumstance worthy of remark that during the whole time of this revolt there was not a drop of blood shed by the Irish except on the field of battle." But no sooner did the valiant horsemen who fled eighty miles from the field of Castlebar return under the shelter of the English Guards and the German dragoons than the unhappy peasantry, to whom the Bishop of Killala pays this striking compliment, were butchered mercilessly by the hundred, and their priests hung in the very towns

in which they had inveighed against French principles and besought their people to have nothing to do with the invaders. No description that could be penned of the savagery of the Orange terrorists could be as telling as Lord Cornwallis' familiar despatches about the state of things he found around him after the suppression of the Wexford insurrection. Two or three out of the many passages with which the Cornwallis correspondence is laden must suffice here: "I am very much afraid that any man in a brown coat who is found within several miles of the field of action is butchered without discrimination." "There is no enemy in the field to oppose our troops. We are engaged in a war of plunder and massacre." "There is no law in town or country but martial law. . . . But all this is trifling compared to the numberless murders that are hourly committed by our people without any process or examination whatever." "The conversation even at my table, where you will suppose I do all I can to prevent it, always turns on hanging, shooting, burning, &c., &c.; and if a priest has been put to death the greater joy is expressed by the whole company." And when Lord Cornwallis attempts to moderate the zeal of the Ascendancy he becomes almost as detestable in their eyes as a Papish priest, and is nick-named "Croppy Corny" because "I put a stop to the burning of houses and murder of inhabitants by the yeomen or any other persons who delighted in that amusement, to flogging for the purpose of extorting confession, and free quarters which comprehended universal rape and robbery throughout the whole country." But were the Orange terrorists, who had been wiled into Orangeism and detestation of their own countrymen by Mr. Pitt for his own purposes, so illogical in receiving with scorn the lectures on leniency and humanity that Mr. Pitt thought fit to administer to them, as soon as his own purpose had been sufficiently served?

It is not, perhaps, too much to assume that the reader of the foregoing pages will begin to understand the use of the terms "blackguardism and baseness" in reference to the

preliminary arrangements for carrying the Union. When, in addition to all these tens of thousands of calculated murders, and all this pandemonium of religious strife deliberately organised between creeds that were beginning to come together only too unitedly, the reader proceeds to the subsequent steps by which a majority against the Union in 1799 was, before the end of the following Session, turned into a majority of 118 against 75 in favour of the Union by means of the expenditure of £1,200,000 in the meantime he will have some notion of the intensity of the passions that will thrill the entire Irish race this year, and will understand how colossal is the absurdity of the good people who think it can all be conjured down by the visit of a Prince or the hiring of a royal residence. Even in the present distracted state of Irish parties, this year's centenary will mark as memorable a date in the history of the Irish race as last year's Jubilee did in the history of the Anglo-Saxon. We have had in our own time, as in 1782, an Act of Renunciation by the British House of Commons that was elected in 1892 to remit to an Irish Parliament the government of Ireland. We have had our recall of Fitzwilliam in the Tory reaction that reversed the policy of Mr. Gladstone and dashed the cup of conciliation from the lips of Ireland. Are we about to have a further repetition of a woful history by the discrediting of those in Ireland who paid any heed to the assurances of voluntary conciliation on the part of England, and by the vindication of those who argued that nothing was ever won from England unless through her difficulties and her fears? Grattan was driven out of the Irish Parliament between the hammer of Pitt's treacheries and the revolutionary anvil of Wolfe Tone's vigour. We may be nearer to another such calamity than the silly people who prattle of a royal residence suspect. It depends, I am afraid, chiefly upon whether there happens to be another Wolfe Tone biding his time somewhere among the ardent youths whom every year brings to manhood among a race fifteen millions strong-

A second Wolfe Tone has not turned up yet, but Ireland is a country of surprises. I have no desire to exaggerate the danger of Parliamentary agitation losing its hold upon the Irish masses. Nobody with any experience of the corruption in Parliament and desperation in the country which followed the collapse of the Tenant Right party of 1851, can contemplate the bare possibility of a new breakdown of Parliamentaryism without the deepest anxiety for the fate of the generation of young men who may live to see it. The sense and patriotism of the race is still anchored firmly to the belief in a peaceful arrangement between the two countries and in our power of obtaining it by fearless and disciplined Parliamentary action. But it would be living in a fool's paradise to affect not to see that the popular confidence in the effectiveness of constitutional agitation is being seriously shaken, and that not merely by the strength of the anti-Home Rule prejudice in England, or the dubious attitude of some of the minor Liberal wire-pullers, but by still more serious influences in Ireland which—for what reasons, or with what objects, men will ask themselves hereafter with stupefaction—seem to be lending themselves, consciously or unconsciously, to the work of paralysing the Irish party in Westminster, and making any open organisation in the country impossible. The patriotic excitement which will prevail in Ireland during the year '98 will supply just the atmosphere in which hot-blooded young Irishmen and even a good many cool-headed ones might well begin to reconsider their opinions as to the efficiency of Parliamentary methods in the present circumstances of Ireland. There are rather fewer Irish in Ireland than there were in '98, but there are at least ten millions more of Irish in countries where they can be more dangerous to England. Those who comfort themselves with thinking that there is no longer a revolutionary France at hand with its Bantry Bay expeditions to encourage daring spirits forget that France is replaced by a power far more formidable in the eyes of England in a troubled hour, and a power with which

Ireland is represented, not by one unauthorised emissary like Tone, but by a permanent population of many millions, yearly growing more potent in its government and in the dictation of its policy. The influences that wrecked the Arbitration Treaty at Washington are of more real concern to England than a French or Russian squadron off Bantry Bay. And the knowledge that these influences would have worked more ardently still for the ratification of the Treaty had Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy been honestly accepted and enforced by England may well moderate the scorn with which superior persons in Printing House Square will observe the shiploads of Irish American exiles who are coming across to celebrate the heroic popular memories and governmental crimes of '98.

