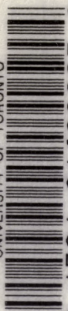


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ENGLAND'S DEALINGS WITH IRELAND.

BY

DR. SPENCE WATSON.

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ENGLAND'S DEALINGS WITH IRELAND.

IN considering the present position of the Irish question, it is the fashion to speak and write as though the history of England's dealings with Ireland before 1800 was of little consequence. A respected statesman, whose age and position make such words doubly dangerous, has said that, in this matter, Englishmen must reject experience, and must turn a deaf ear to the teachings of that past without a knowledge of which the present must ever be a confused and confusing phantasmagory. This strange doctrine has been preached by speakers and newspapers of all shades of political belief; the most recent and the ablest attack upon Home Rule repeats it; and the dense ignorance of how Irish affairs have become the thorny problem which we find them, the dense ignorance of the history which has permitted them to become so thorny and such a problem, bids fair to be perpetuated. And yet the man who finds himself in an awkward place can sometimes get out of it most readily by bestowing a little thought upon the way by which he got into it. The advice to avoid the consideration of historical facts is suspiciously like the advice to keep silence from one who, in the act of giving it, deals a mischievous verbal slap at those whom he counsels to keep quiet. "There's none ever feared that the truth should be heard save those whom the truth would indict." It is with no idea that the English of to-day are directly responsible for the misdeeds of the English of one, two, or three centuries gone by, but in the belief that the questions of to-day have their roots in the far past, that our teeth are set on edge by the sour grapes our fathers ate; that we can only understand the present by knowing the past; that the new problems of to-day are but re-statements of the old problems, and the arguments of the "union" party when best stated only those which have been refuted by the logic of historical facts; in the belief that the whole truth should be heard, and that when the truth has been fully heard the English people will soon come to

ENGLAND'S DEALINGS WITH IRELAND.

a sound conclusion upon the Irish question, that I have asked the permission of the editor of the *Newcastle Daily Leader* to contribute a few sketches of the historical aspects of the case as they have presented themselves to my mind.

NATIVE IRISH AND ENGLISH IRISH.

There are one or two preliminary observations which I must make. In the consideration of any part of Irish history the peculiar relationship of the two countries, England and Ireland, must be kept clearly in mind. Ireland was not conquered by England until the end of the 16th century, nor was there any serious attempt to colonise it. Such of the English invaders as settled in the more distant parts of the island were speedily absorbed by the native population, and that population was governed by its own laws and customs, and was constantly at war with the little English colony governed by English laws and customs, and settled within the pale on the east of the island. There is thus apt to be some confusion of ideas when we speak of Irish and English as opposed to each other. That opposition has indeed always existed, but there has also generally been the more particular opposition of the native Irish and the English Irish. Frequently, but not always, in more recent times, those terms almost correspond to Catholic and Protestant; but, of course, no such correspondence extends backwards beyond the middle of the sixteenth century.

THE CELTIC THEORY.

I must also give a preliminary word of warning against the belief prevalent in some circles that much of the present difficulty is accounted for by the supposed fact that the Irishman of to-day is a Celt. We know the good-humoured, open, but rather comical physiognomy which passes as the type of the Irish countenance. Yet children, born in Ireland of English parents who have no drop of Celtic blood in their veins, will possess this typical countenance in the fullest perfection. When we remember the constant admixture of races which has been taking place in that country for the past fourteen centuries; that Scandinavians, Scotch, Spanish, French, German, and English people have in greater or less numbers, in turn or out of turn, been absorbed by the native Irish race—that the aboriginal Irish were hunted down and killed like wild animals in the wars of those long centuries; that on several occasions they were deliberately exterminated by fire, famine, and sword in the districts where they most did congregate; that vast numbers were from time to time driven into exile or sold into slavery; we can readily believe that it would be difficult to find in the most typical Irishman of to-day, be he O' or Mac, the pure Celtic blood in sufficient quantity for the most experienced physiologist to swear to. Even in 1612 Sir John Davis said, "There have been so many

English colonies planted in Ireland that, if the people were numbered at this day, such as were descended of English race would be found more in number than the ancient natives," and Professor Huxley has stated that "it is quite possible, and I think probable, that Ireland as a whole contains less Teutonic blood than the eastern half of England, and more than the western half."

THE OLD ENEMY UNDER A NEW FACE.

The present contest between the Liberals and the Conservatives about the government of Ireland is only the survival of the old strife in a new form. During the controversy which has raged so fiercely throughout the country and in Parliament this fact has been made abundantly clear. The ruling idea of the Tories and their allies is not that of union. All parties are alike agreed upon union, though they differ upon the actual definition of the term, and upon the means by which it is to be attained. There may be, and there probably are, separatists, just as "there be gods many and lords many," but there is no separatist party. The battle cries of the new Tory alliance are the old ones of "English supremacy" and "Protestant ascendancy"; the spirit which animates them is the spirit of true Jingoism and religious intolerance. Boil down all the speeches of Tory, Whig, and Radical, mis-called Unionists, and extract their essence, and it will be found to be composed of those two dogmas in equal proportions. The despot and the bigot—these are the gods we Englishmen of this last quarter of the nineteenth century are called upon to worship. But despotism is detestable even though a Social Democrat plead for it; bigotry is hateful whether it be preached from Hatfield, Chatsworth, or Birmingham. The divine right of a people to continue in wrong-doing is as monstrous a doctrine as the divine right of an individual, and the more eloquent its advocate the worse the theme.

But there may be some confusion about these preachings if they are regarded only through the smoke and dust of actual conflict. There can be none if we step back into the calm academic groves of history, and trace their detested features as handed down from generation to generation, through the far dim centuries to the light of modern day. Let us see for ourselves what the past does really tell us about the relations of the two lands, England and Ireland, and how far that past leads us to acquiesce in the wisdom or justice of the claim that Ireland shall continue to be the Cinderella of the sister nations.

ENGLAND'S DEALINGS WITH IRISH GOVERNMENT.

I propose in these papers briefly to examine the story of England's dealings with Ireland under the four heads—government, religion, commerce, and land, and to show how the difficult questions of to-day have their roots in the far past. And in speaking first of

the government of Ireland, let us clearly understand how it comes to pass that England has, and has had, anything whatever to do with the government of Ireland at all. They are, to all intents and purposes, two separate and distinct countries—as separate and distinct as England and France. In the far-off days, before Britain had become England, and when the English were conquering this island, the only thing that Ireland had to do with it was that she sent her missionaries over here to convert our forefathers to Christianity. After England had been conquered by the Normans attempts were made from time to time to conquer Ireland, but four centuries did not see the work complete. Indeed, if by conquest we mean more than the temporary beating of the people into silence, it is not complete yet. The war which began before Strongbow landed in Ireland is that which, in a different form and with other weapons, we are waging now. Then it was a war against the invader, who sought, in the supposed interests of England, to impose his mode of government upon an independent people; that old question of government it is which is still in the forefront of the battle.

Ireland then stands, so far as the origin of her relationship goes, in relation to England precisely in the position of Canada, the Cape of Good Hope, India, or the greater part of the colonies and dependencies forming, with the mother country, the British Empire. She became a portion of that empire by violence, by the law of superior might, by conquest. Until the year 1800 the rule which now obtains in other parts of the empire which are separated from the island of Britain by the sea, which have been colonised, and have a considerable population, was the rule in the case of Ireland. She had her own form of government. Not that which the people of Ireland wished; not representative of the Irish people, but of the English colony; the English Parliament frequently claiming and generally exercising concurrent legislative power; the Crown generally exercising the right of initiating legislation, and always maintaining a veto; the Legislative Assembly often shamelessly but shamefully corrupt; like the English House of Commons before 1832, representing only a small dominant section of the dwellers in the land; still, let it be as bad as it might, let it be bond or free, the fact remains that, for six out of the seven centuries which have elapsed since England claimed the lordship of Ireland, that island was legislated for by a Parliament which was not the Parliament of England, but was more or less independent of it.

PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT.

The Parliament of England is, indeed, at all times the supreme and ultimate arbiter for every part of the British Empire. That is of the very essence of its being, and of that it can in no way divest itself. But, as a matter of fact, it leaves undisputed control of their own domestic affairs to the numerous representative bodies by which

the different portions of the empire are immediately governed. This idea of popular representative government has, in late years, been lauded by all parties when it did not come too closely home to them. We have gloried in its gradual spreading over the Continent of Europe. Our own possessions have taken to it as a matter of course, since we ceased grandmotherly interference with them, and have, as our Australasian colonies recently showed, at the same time grown much nearer to us in sentiment. It is slowly but surely making way in our vast Indian dependency. We urged it upon the Turks, and inflicted it upon the Egyptians. But because, instead of improving it and widening its borders, we have forced Ireland to do without it altogether for eighty-six years, and that which we have substituted for it has proved, in the face of the civilised world, a disastrous failure, we refuse to retrace our steps, we insist upon perpetuating our mistake, we forget or ignore the fate of "the men who proudly clung to their first fault, and withered in their pride."

But let me be clearly understood. I do not wish any one of my readers to suppose that Ireland possessed that which we now mean by a Parliament for the whole of the six centuries prior to 1800 or for any part of them. Most certainly she did not, nor did either England or Scotland. Our Parliaments and her Parliaments alike were, at first, only councils of notables summoned at the discretion of the ruling power, and the representative feature of both alike was introduced slowly, and perfect representation has yet to be won even for our own land.

IRISH PARLIAMENTS.

In Ireland Parliaments were summoned at times for special objects, and the early view undoubtedly was that they should represent English interests only, and do what they could to keep down the native element. The Kilkenny Parliament, in 1367, forbade the English settlers to intermarry with the Irish, to adopt their names, or to use their speech or dress. In fact, the reign of Edward III. was a bad reign for Ireland, and the great object then seemed to be to accentuate the differences not only between the native Irish and the English, but also between the descendants of the older English settlers, who had rapidly been won over by the peculiar fascination of the Irish people, and the adventurers who, unable to succeed in England, or dreading the hand of justice, crowded over to unhappy Ireland.

Yes, unhappy Ireland even then. Then, as now, Englishmen insisted that Irish affairs should be ordered in English ways, and in the supposed interests of England. Then, as now, Englishmen professed the strange belief that that which was thought to be good for England must be good for everybody, and insisted upon their standard being that by which all things were measured. Then, as now, when Englishmen were the invaders, the people who rose to defend their hearths and homes were rebels. And yet, in 1369, a

law was passed by the Irish Parliament by which the estates of absentees who did not return within a given time were declared to be forfeited to the Crown—a law which, indeed, was not enforced, but which shows how early Ireland was afflicted by that curse under which she has so long and so grievously laboured; and Richard II., who visited the country and spake what he knew, said in words which sound strangely modern, “In our land of Ireland there are three kinds of people—wild Irish our enemies, Irish rebels, and obedient English. To us and our Council it appears that the Irish rebels have rebelled in consequence of the injustice and grievances practised towards them, for which they have been afforded no redress, and that, if not wisely treated and given hope of grace, they will most likely ally themselves with our enemies.”

SLOW CONQUEST.

Words which sound strangely modern, and yet wise words. The English were in Ireland as conquerors, but they had conquered little of it in three centuries. There was no idea of union, and even at the end of the fifteenth century little land had been really won from the Irish people. We had resolved (as we always have done in similar circumstances) that our laws were much better for them than their own, and had proclaimed that those who wished for the protection of English law must live within the small district known as the English Pale. That district comprised parts of the county of Dublin and of three adjoining counties, and got its name from being enclosed by a strong wall. The people who dwelt outside of this were held to be outside of the law. No communication was to be had with them. Every obedient Englishman had the privilege of killing known thieves (he himself being the judge of knowledge and thievery), and of receiving a reward for each man murdered. It became a common saying that it was no murder to kill an Irishman. And yet the Irish were not cured of their evil ways. They did not quietly acquiesce in the smiting which their invaders tried to give them. They did not leave off the bad habit of fighting among themselves—not even when they beheld the brilliant example of their would-be mentors, who were, in England, busily occupied in the great civil wars known to history as the Wars of the Roses. Nay, many of the English who had gone to Ireland had previously joined the Irish, and were also outside the Pale. Such Parliament as there then was represented no one but the handful of “English folk, more oppressed and more miserable than any others in the whole country”: “none in any part of the known world were so evil to be seen in town and field, so brutish, so trod underfoot, and with so wretched a life”; and it was this very Parliament, this Parliament of 1494, which passed the Acts known as “Poynning’s Laws.”

POYNING'S LAWS.

It is not amiss to bear this fact in mind, for not a little argument has been founded upon these laws which were passed by perhaps the least representative Parliament even Ireland has ever had.

By them English statutes were declared to be of force in Ireland, and the Irish Parliament was thenceforward to pass no measures but such as were sent to it by the King of England and his Council. For three hundred years these laws were unrepealed. We need not trace the history of the Irish Parliament through these three centuries. It was never truly the Parliament of Ireland. The English of the Pale kicked at times against the pricks of the home Government's interference in domestic matters quite beyond its ken ; but the Irish Parliament was almost always, during those centuries, the Parliament of the minority. At first that minority consisted of the English colonists, whom it supported against the Irish inhabitants, and afterwards of Protestants, whom it supported against the Catholics.

But the day of reckoning came. You do not kill national life by repressive legislation. Towards the middle of last century Ireland began once more to assert herself. It was, no doubt, very foolish of her not to be contented with things as they were. They had not changed much for a long time, and the doctrine of the so-called Unionist party nowadays seems to be that wrongs persisted in for a sufficiently lengthened period become rights. Dean Swift held no such nonsensical views. He it was who gave the earliest and strongest impulse towards legislative independence. He, roused to indignation by the gift of the right of coining copper for Ireland to King George I.'s German mistress, poured out pamphlet after pamphlet and letter after letter of fierce and fiery invective, until the national spirit was thoroughly aroused. He boldly declared that Ireland depended upon England in no other sense than that in which England depended upon Ireland ; that government without the consent of the governed was the very essence of slavery ; and that, by the laws of God, of nature, of nations, and of their own country, they were and ought to be as free a people as their brethren in England. It is very possible that Swift was thinking in all of this much more of the English settlers than of the native Irish, but the teaching was true, and "sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose."

AWAKENING TO NATIONAL LIFE.

Indeed dependence upon England did worse than nothing for Ireland. There was constant misery throughout the land. The great majority of the people had neither proper lodging, clothing, nor food, and cold, famine, and fever were continually present amongst them. The payment of tithe, a hateful demand when the Catholic had thus to support the faith he disowned, was a cruel and constant grievance, and many a rising and many a secret conspiracy

may be traced directly to this cause. As for the Parliament, it was practically powerless, even its right to dispose of a surplus of income over expenditure being disputed. Nothing shows more forcibly what a farce it had become than the fact that the Parliament which met at the accession of George II. sat for the whole of his reign, from 1727 to 1760! But the point of deepest interest and most importance at this period of the history of the Irish Parliament is that the movement for reform, for legislative independence, did not spring from the old Irish party, the Catholic party, but from the Protestant Parliament themselves. It was the English party in Ireland which found English interference in Irish domestic affairs intolerable, and it was that party which fought, and ultimately, in 1782, won the battle of legislative independence. Not until 1778 did the Catholics take active steps to aid the demand for Parliamentary freedom. Why this was so will appear by-and-by.

The freedom which at first was refused to justice was at last granted to fear. That which we now know as the Jingo spirit has been and still is at the bottom of most of our Irish difficulties. We brag, bluster, and bully, until our enemy shows his teeth, and then give way in a panic. That is the course of Tory or Jingo foreign policy. We do not ask what is right, but how much we can grab, and we are really tremendous conquerors of the weak folk of the earth. This Jingo patriotism is the vilest, shoddiest simulacrum God's earth has yet been troubled with. Truly it has found its appropriate saint and ritual! It has been the curse of England; it has made England the curse of Ireland and of other countries; and, as it was in the beginning, it is now, and ever will be.

"Denied to justice: granted to fear." In the year 1778 Ireland was in a strange position. For more than six centuries she had been the helot of England. England had conquered her and governed her, or claimed to have done so. But now England's hands were full. She was fighting by sea and by land in America, in India, in Spain, and against all the other maritime Powers of the world. The Irishmen her injustice had driven into exile were the stoutest and sternest of her foes in the grand War of Independence across the Atlantic. She needed her soldiers for distant lands, and Ireland would have been practically defenceless if her people had not volunteered to take her defence upon themselves. Forty thousand men were rapidly enrolled, and their numbers soon increased to nearly 80,000, although the movement was purely Protestant and the Catholics were permitted to take no active part in it openly. They were, however, allowed to subscribe towards the expenses; and these rebel Irish, these disloyal Separatists, did come forward nobly and aid the movement by their contributions. In four years this volunteer movement bore fruit in the legislative independence of Ireland.

So long as England could hold the conquered land down she did so. How selfish and cruel her rule was I shall show only too clearly. But when that rule had borne its due fruits, and the wind sown in

Ireland had given the sower a bitter whirlwind to reap in the American colonies, and Ireland had a patriot army at her back, and a people united in the demand for legislative independence, that demand could not be denied.

GRATTAN'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

We hear much about the famous Declaration of Independence which Grattan tried in vain to carry in 1780—but it is a plain and simple declaration enough, short and businesslike, and anything but revolutionary. It contained three resolutions—"1st. That His Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the consent of the Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to enact laws to bind Ireland; 2nd. That the Crown of Ireland is and ought to be inseparably annexed to the Crown of Great Britain; and 3rd. That Great Britain and Ireland are inseparably united under one Sovereign, under the common and indissoluble ties of interest, loyalty, and freedom."

THE CONVENTION OF DUNGANNON.

But these moderate resolutions would have repealed Poyning's famous law, and the Act of 1720, which confirmed that law, and they were rejected. Other attempts to obtain legislative independence for Ireland were alike unsuccessful, and in February, 1782, the famous Convention of Dungannon was held. And who were the men attending it? Why, the Protestant leaders of the Ulster Volunteers, and they it was who, after long and earnest debate, resolved that the claim of any body of men other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland to make laws to bind that kingdom was unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance. But they went further than this, those Ulster men, a century ago; they resolved again "That we hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion, to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves; that we rejoice in the relaxation of the penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects; and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland."

This Convention it was which settled that Ireland should be independent. Grattan again moved and lost his Declaration of Independence, but he had not long to wait, for, at the third time of asking, in April of that very year, he carried the day, and the Parliament of Ireland (such as it was) was free and independent.

PARLIAMENTARY INDEPENDENCE AND SEPARATION.

It was freer and more independent than the Parliament which Mr. Gladstone's Bill would have given to Ireland. Its legislative functions were unlimited, but the exclusive functions were retained

in the hands of the Crown, and thus difficulties were made certain from the first. Laws could indeed be passed, but the men who were to carry them into execution were men who hated the idea of a separate Parliament, who were the Unionists of that day, and who were resolved to make the independent Parliament impossible and ridiculous. Such an Assembly was foredoomed to failure.

But Ireland had now obtained a free and independent Parliament. Then, according to sound Unionist doctrine, she should have proceeded at once to sever all connection with England. Her power of doing so was perfect, compared with her power of doing so to-day. Then we had practically no army in Ireland, and Ireland had her own army of volunteers. Now Ireland has no volunteers and we have an enormous army quartered in the country. But what did really happen? Did anyone think of separation? Nothing of the kind. In the following year, and as though to commemorate the very fact of the independence, the most illustrious Order of St. Patrick was founded with the motto, "Quis separabit."

Yes, who shall separate us if England does what is fair and right? If she abandons once and for ever the fatal Jingo doctrine that she must be supreme, and is content to be equal: if she sees that to manage her own affairs rightly demands all her energies, and that equality, justice, and common sense alike demand that Ireland should be left free to manage her own affairs in her own way.

But do not fall into the error of believing that Ireland had gained what she wanted or needed when the English shackles had been removed. The Parliament which had been freed was a poor and imperfect body after all. It was purely Protestant, whilst four-fifths of the Irish people were Catholic, but it did not properly represent even the Protestants. Nearly the whole of the borough representatives were elected by individual patrons. Fifty-three peers nominated 123 out of the 300 members of the House of Commons. Indeed the marvel is not that that House was for the most part pliant, unconscientious, and corruptible, but that even upon the most stirring occasions it should have shown any independence whatever. The one clear view of the English Government was that every man had his price, and the corruption was patent, above board, and gross; but do not forget that the men who were bought by England were representatives, not of the Irish nation, but of the English colony.

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION AND REFORM.

Two great measures, it will be seen, were certain to force themselves to the front in this freshly independent Parliament:—they were Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform. But the executive in Ireland was English, and had no friendly feeling towards the independent Parliament. Independence was worthless,

and did not, indeed, exist, unless these two great measures were carried. The word of promise had been only kept to the ear, but was cruelly broken to the hope. And yet not only was the Act of 1720 repealed in 1782, but, in the following year, the British Parliament expressly renounced its power to control the Parliament of Ireland. There were those behind the scenes who had decreed the destruction of the Irish Parliament—its control might readily be renounced. They would not allow it to become truly the Parliament of Ireland. Every attempt at any reform which would make it such was opposed and defeated, excepting that which at length, in 1793, incidentally permitted Catholics to vote for Protestant representatives. George III. had been petitioned to permit the complete enfranchisement of his Catholic subjects, and he had graciously undertaken to recommend their cause to the Dublin Parliament, but he cared as little for his promise as most royal personages, and refused to countenance Catholic Emancipation. I shall have to speak of this in fuller detail hereafter, but it is necessary to allude to it here as this miserable double-dealing brought about the state of things which ended in the so-called Union of 1800.

It would be wrong not to mention that the inconvenience which might arise from the sister countries having separate legislation with co-ordinate powers had been felt when, in 1789, the poor old King lost his reason for a time. The Irish Parliament sided with Fox, who wished to make the Prince regent with full powers, against Pitt, who wished to limit his powers. It was thus made clear that, under similar circumstances, two regents might be appointed, one in England and the other in Ireland, and much practical inconvenience might ensue. But that troubles may result at times from a reformed condition of affairs is no argument against the reform, at all events where the old condition is so bad that any change must be for the better. Proper care must be taken to minimise the probability of such a result.

But the treatment of the Catholics was not the only thing which the Irish had to complain of. The Catholics, indeed, had been so long down-trodden and oppressed that they were unable to do or say much. Strange to say, it was the Presbyterians of Belfast who spoke for them. Belfast was the birth-place of the United Irishmen, and that society, formed to agitate for reform and Catholic Emancipation, welcomed Catholics to its membership. Never were reforms more needed. The English Executive was resolved to have its own way in the Legislative Assembly. It was resolved that that Assembly should be unsuccessful, and simply bought its majorities in the Lords and Commons in hard cash. The men who oppose the granting to Ireland of liberty to manage her own affairs, point to this miserable corruption as proof of the unfitness of the Irish people for self-government. But they forget that they have already pleaded that this Parliament was the Parliament of the English Protestants in Ireland, not that of Ireland, and even Unionists of the first distinction must scarcely blow hot and cold at the same time.

England, the corruptor, must still be the governor of those whom she did not corrupt in the interests of the descendants of the corrupted and of them alone. And even if the Irish people had themselves succumbed to the wiles of the English Lords Lieutenant and the charms of English gold, the receiver of stolen goods is only *worse* than the thief when the thief is the reluctant party.

THE UNITED IRISHMEN.

The United Irishmen were harassed and annoyed, and became a secret society. They adopted the Republican sentiments so common amongst the Irish Presbyterians. As they had welcomed the Catholics and contemplated the union of all Irishmen, the wilder spirits of the dominant church, who had been known as Peep o' Day Boys, took the name of Orangemen, and formed lodges with the avowed object of opposing the United Irishmen. Then began a time of violence and excess. The French expedition to Bantry Bay, the seizure of arms in certain districts by the peasantry, and the rapid enrolment of members in the secret society, roused the passions of those who called themselves Loyalists in that day. In the North of Ireland brutal and cruel oppression made the very name of government detestable. Those who remember the massacre of Peterloo can picture what the state of a country given up to the rule of yeomanry officers would be like. Lord Cornwallis himself described that force as "contemptible before the enemy when any serious resistance is made to them, but ferocious and cruel in the extreme when any poor wretches, either with or without arms, come within their power."

And then the Government seized the leaders of the United Irishmen, and sent out the troops to dispel an insurrection seven weeks before, according to their own information, it was to break out. The army which Sir Ralph Abercrombie commanded was, he said, "in a state of licentiousness which must render it formidable to everyone but the enemy." The people rose in insurrection and in places committed frightful excesses, but they were without ammunition or leaders, and were speedily subdued, and then began a horrible revenge. Lord Cornwallis himself spoke of "the ferocity of our troops who delight in murder." He says "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.," and he tells how the free quarters of the soldiery "comprehended rape and robbery throughout the whole country."

And this is not a century ago. In that brief struggle it is calculated that 20,000 soldiers and loyalists and 50,000 peasantry perished. And when Ireland had been crushed and beaten into peace, and the bloody revenge was at length at an end, the way was cleared for the great fraud which gives its name to a new English political party in the year of grace 1886.

THE FALSE UNION.

The union was brought about (in the words of Mr. John Bright) "by proceedings disgraceful and corrupt to the last degree." It was perhaps the most shameful epoch of English or Irish history. It was simply a union purchased by bribery and place-giving. No one pretends that it was a union with the Irish people. They were never consulted. The demand that they should be consulted was scouted. The union was opposed by the Whigs in England, by many of the greatest statesmen our country has known, by the only men who represented the people in Ireland, or rather by the only men with popular sympathies, for the people had no representatives. It was carried by the shameful and wholesale purchase of the petty oligarchy. The so-called union was simply another act of conquest so far as the people of Ireland were concerned. In 1849 Mr. John Bright said, "We have had a union with Ulster, but there has been no union with the whole people of Ireland," and this is the union which he has in 1886 done more to bolster up for a little longer than all the Tory party and the rest of the Dissident Liberals put together. That which was unjust then is unjust still. There is no difference in this point at all events.

THE TRUE UNION.

What is it that we really want? What is it that alone can be of value, can be worth risking something, nay everything, to bring about and to perpetuate? A union between people who have everything to gain from such union, and everything to lose from isolation. But such a union is not purchased; it is not to be valued in pounds sterling, is not created by Acts of Parliament. The marriage in the church is a senseless ceremony unless the hearts of those married have been united. The marriage of the altar alone ends naturally in the divorce court—

Love gives itself; and if not given,
 No genius, beauty, state, or wit,
 No gold of earth, no gem of heaven,
 Can ever hope to purchase it.

You call us Separatists. It is you who make separation a possibility. You who exalt the law above the spirit, who worship the dead form instead of the living idea which has burst it and escaped. Some of us believe (and such belief once really held is unchangeable) that the only government worthy of the name is that which is consented to by the governed; the government of all by all; that "the laws of a country must be the expression of the universal aspiration, and promote the universal good."

To say that to allow the Irish people to manage the affairs of Ireland in their own way is the first step towards separation has no

terror for us. They have the right to do so, and there is no question of allowing. It is wrong to prevent them.

Why? Unless might means right it is wrong. We only prevent them because we are stronger than they, and can force them to do that which they do not wish. We compel them to adopt our view of what is good for them. We take away their right of judgment. We deny in their case the rights which our patriots and martyrs have won for us by their lives. We make the most serious step on the road which leads direct to slavery. If their wills and minds are to be ours why not their bodies also?

Is this your grand plan of avoiding separation? Why separation is at one end of the road you are blindly following and slavery at the other, and you can't stand still because the descent in either case is too steep.

Why not consider our plan? The ends of our road are separation and union, but our separation, if it came, would not be like yours. Yours would be separation by force or from utter weariness and vexation of spirit, and you would be divided into two hostile nations, the one hateful and the other hating.

But our separation would be the parting of two peoples by free choice and mutual consent. The hatred would, at all events, be avoided.

And our separation would never come to pass. We would make it impossible. We would do unto Ireland as we wish that Ireland should do unto us. We would freely and fully acknowledge that she had the same right as all other peoples to choose her form of government for herself, and she would see with us that in union is strength, in the free union of free men, in the union of hearts and minds, a union founded upon respect and cemented by affection, a union of sympathies, aims, aspirations, and achievements.

RELIGION.

I shall not dwell upon the dealings of England with Ireland since the union at present. That will come. We shall see what the Unionists promised, and how their promises have been performed, by-and-by. Now I shall pass on to consider the religious aspect of the question, and shall touch upon the period of the miscalled union when I have dealt also with the commercial and territorial aspects.

"I assert that the Protestant Church in Ireland is at the root of the evils of that country." That was Mr. John Bright's view in 1849. Let us see how the Protestant Church got into Ireland and what it did when it got there.

I have already alluded to the fact that in the far-off days, before Rome sent her missionaries to this island, the Irish missionaries had been at work in our Northern regions at all events. But it is needless to speak of the religious history of Ireland before the English Reformation, for, however constant the domestic quarrels, and how-

ever bitter the perpetual war between the natives and their English invaders in that unhappy country, the contending parties up to that time were of the same religious faith.

The Act of Supremacy was passed by the Irish Parliament in the year 1537, and the Church lands were speedily confiscated. In Edward VI.'s short reign there was some religious strife between the Catholics and the Protestants, but, during Mary's reign, when the Catholics got the upper hand, to their honour be it said that the savage persecution which raged in England had no counterpart in Ireland. Not a single Protestant suffered for his faith in that country where Protestants have yet to learn religious toleration !

THE REFORMATION.

But Elizabeth was a resolute monarch, and, when she had made up her mind to be a Protestant herself, she expected her subjects to follow her example. She was a fair type of the so-called Loyalist of to-day, only he has learned that he cannot have it all his own way, and must be satisfied with Protestant ascendancy. The Irish people were to be Protestant, and they were to change their faith simply at the word of command. No attempt was made to convert them ; the Bible was not even translated into Irish ; the English Church service was to be read in English or in Latin to people who understood neither ; but the Mass was prohibited, and those people who did not go to church, and, as they believed, imperil their salvation, were punished by fine and imprisonment.

But I will not give my own view of this matter. I will call as witness the English historian who can be the least suspected of partiality to the Irish or the Catholics, Mr. J. A. Froude. He has written a book in three volumes entitled "The English in Ireland," which is not simply a bitter indictment of the Irish people and of the religion of Rome, but is a fierce attack upon the principles of civil and religious liberty. It is no part of my business to enter into a criticism of a work the execution of which I believe to be as inaccurate as the spirit is ungenerous. But I turn to his own History of England to see how he speaks of the treatment of Ireland by Elizabeth.

He has said that "the English Government had added largely to their difficulties by attempting to force the Reformation upon Ireland while its political and social condition was still unsettled." He has explained the project for the extinction of the Irish people known as the "colonisation scheme," and the way in which it was partially carried into execution, and then says, "It cannot be said that England deserved to keep a country which it mismanaged so disastrously. 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."

It is not easy to say, in speaking of the dealings of England

with Ireland in Elizabeth's reign, what portion of the atrocities committed must be set down to the discredit of land-hunger, and what portion to religion. But Mr. Froude himself says:—"The suppression of the Catholic services, enforced wherever the English had power, and hanging before the people as a calamity sure to follow as the limits of that power were extended, created a weight of animosity which no other measure could have produced, and alone made the problem of Irish administration hopelessly insoluble." And again, he says:—"Before the Government attempted to force a religion upon them that had not a single honest advocate in the whole nation, there was no incurable disloyalty. If they were left with their own lands, their own laws, and their own creed, the chiefs were willing to acknowledge the English Sovereign."

SHORT WORK WITH UNBELIEVERS.

But the English Sovereign would not leave them with any one of the three. Time after time the evils of new government or the restless ambition of some native chief made the Irish people rise in rebellion, and time after time these rebellions were ruthlessly crushed. The details of the English successes are too sickening to be dwelt upon. They dealt with the Irish people as mercilessly as they would have dealt with wolves or other wild beasts. Even the great English nobles condescended to the basest treachery. The leading men of large tribes were invited to banquets and massacred in cold blood, Essex himself setting the example by his slaughter of Sir Brian MacPhelim O'Neil and his wife, and 200 of their followers, at a feast to which he had invited them. The sanctuaries to which women and children had retreated were ruthlessly invaded and every one put to the sword. Ormonde boasted that he had killed 6,000 persons. Men were stripped naked and thrown alive into bogs. The blind, feeble, and sick, idiots and old persons, were killed without mercy. Women were forced into barns, which were then set on fire, and those who tried to escape were shot or stabbed; babies were whirled about on the points of spears, and women were hung upon trees, whilst the babes at their breasts were strangled with their mothers' hair. Well may Mr. Froude say: "The English nation was shuddering over the atrocities of the Duke of Alva. The children in the nurseries were being inflamed to patriotic rage and madness by tales of Spanish tyranny. Yet Alva's bloody sword never touched the young, the defenceless, or those whose sex even dogs can recognise and respect."

Massacre! massacre! massacre! That is the history of the dealings of England with Ireland in Queen Elizabeth's reign. But the English were not content with slaying by fire and sword. Year after year, with calm and calculating cruelty, the young crops were systematically destroyed, until the poet, Edmund Spenser, tells how the people, "out of every corner of the woods and glens, came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them.

They looked like anatomies of death ; they spoke like ghosts crying out of their graves ; they did eat the dead carrion, happy when they could find them ; yea, and one another soon after, inasmuch as the very carcases they spared not to scrape out of their graves." The land was indeed left desolate. The people were reduced to cannibalism. Old women decoyed children by lighting fires, and then killed and devoured them ; and Sir Arthur Chichester saw three little ones, the eldest not ten years of age, feeding upon the flesh of their mother, who had died of starvation.

And yet the Irish clung to their faith, and the Irish difficulty remained unsolved.

Unionists, who demand a few years of sufficiently strong government, have you ever studied in all its frightful details the history of this government by force ? Was that kind of government not tried then to the uttermost and found wanting ? No man amongst you dare say that it should be carried further still. But the very idea of government by force is "thorough." If you begin with it you must be prepared to go through with it—through to the bitter end. "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." And the world is nearly three centuries older, and the people of England hold the political power of England in their hands. "Force is no remedy."

It is no remedy, and it is worse than none, for it is a sure begetter of force. We are so fond of giving names to things and imagining that we have thereby settled something ; we attach great importance to what we call the practical, and look upon it as alone being real, tangible, worthy of consideration. We forget that the intangible, the ideal, the sentimental, is just as real and must equally be considered ; that a sentiment is just as actual a fact as an Armstrong gun, and happily much more powerful. We blind our eyes to the truth that in abstract matters also it is true that like begets like : that truth and trust breed truth and trust, and violence begetteth violence, just as surely as vines bring forth grapes and briars thorns.

And Ireland was crushed and quiet for the time. The English had made a desolation and called it peace, but they had either carried their policy of murder too far or not far enough. The embers of revenge smouldered. The whole fire had not been stamped out. Charles I. agreed to sell certain religious and other privileges to his Irish subjects for hard cash, and actually received part of the purchase-money, but he was by no means particular about keeping his promises. His representative, Wentworth, held as one of the corner-stones of his policy "thorough" the suppression of all religions excepting that established by law. He had indeed postponed the execution of his design until a more convenient season, and his own execution intervened to prevent it altogether. But the strife between Puritanism and Romanism had become acute in England. The Roman Catholic officers were turned out of the army, and the Catholic priests imprisoned. In Ireland the wildest rumours of the

final blow which was to be shortly dealt to the national religion were everywhere current. And then the hour seemed to come, and the Irish rose in the rebellion of 1641. What length they went, and how far they were guilty of the great atrocities which have been laid to their charge, it is difficult to say. The evidence is strangely conflicting, but it seems to me that whilst there was no organised massacre, and whilst the leaders of the rebellion were entirely opposed to anything of the kind, as the revolt grew and the oppressed peasantry gained the upper hand they took a terrible revenge upon their oppressors, and possibly, very possibly, "the villainy we taught them they executed, and bettered our instruction."

THE REBELLION OF 1641.

The English were to be driven out of Ireland, or, rather, within the Pale, and they were turned, men, women, and children, out of their homes without pity or remorse, and left to make their way as best they might with their bare lives. The rebellion broke out on October 22nd, 1641, but for some time it was practically confined to Ulster. Then the English House of Commons, in December of the same year, deliberately resolved to destroy the Catholic religion in Ireland, and the rebellion became universal, and atrocities were committed of the most barbarous kind. That there was a deliberate and carefully-planned massacre there is not a tittle of evidence, but that a people which had suffered as the Irish people had suffered should not, in the moment of triumph, exercise a terrible revenge is incredible. That there has been gross exaggeration in the number slain is certain. Sir John Temple declared that in two years above 300,000 Protestants were murdered in cold blood, or destroyed in some other way, or expelled from their houses. But, in the first place, this is a general and inaccurate form of expression, as he made no attempt to distinguish between murder and expulsion; in the second place he derived his information from depositions which generally bear no date, were frequently made upon the merest hearsay, are full of contradictions, and place the principal massacres at the outbreak of the rebellion, when all evidence shows there was scarcely anything of the kind; and, in the third place, his number of 300,000 is at least five times the total number of Protestants living in the country (that is, outside of walled towns), where alone massacres took place. More careful and trustworthy calculations place the number of Protestants slain at about 12,000 persons.

But this is a point upon which it is absolutely impossible to arrive at any certain conclusion. There can be no question that the Irish, under whatever provocations, did massacre, and often under circumstances of much atrocity, a great number of English. There can be no question either that the English were not slow to retaliate. The war assumed the character of a war of extermination. No quarter was given to the Irish who went to England to aid King

Charles; even their wives and children were slain, eighty being drowned in one day in Scotland for the crime of being married to or the offspring of Irish soldiers. In Ireland itself no quarter was shown. Neither age nor sex was spared, and their little children were barbarously murdered with the cruel jest, "Nits will be lice." The orders given were to put man, woman, and child to the sword, and to burn and destroy all places, towns, and houses where rebels had been relieved or harboured, with all the hay and corn therein. The leading Catholic gentry were tortured by rack or roasting. But I will not go further. The deeds of diabolical cruelty, which the perpetrators reported to the English authorities with pride and for which they were rewarded, are not surpassed in the history of any land—civilised or savage. One officer, Sir William Cole, sums up one item of the accomplished deeds of his regiment in Ulster, thus—"Starved and famished of the vulgar sort, whose goods were seized on by this regiment, 7,000."

CROMWELL IN IRELAND.

Then in August, 1649, Oliver Cromwell landed in Ireland. He is a strange god for Radicals to worship. A man who lived in the fear of God, and to do the will of God as he conceived it; a man of pure and noble character, strong and stern, whose real greatness becomes gigantic as we see him, among a long line of *de jure* monarchs, the only king *de facto*. But he was a despot of despots. A man who believes himself the chosen instrument of the Supreme must be, but it is an awful position for man or nation to assume, and leads inevitably to terrible results. Cromwell put Ireland to the sword. In three short years, during which he and his generals had waged a war as stern and pitiless as those of the Jews against the Philistines, the whole land was crushed. The fertile field had become a desert; wolves flourished and increased where corn and cattle had erst been found; and more than one-third of the entire population, 600,000 men, women, and children, had perished.

"But I say unto you, love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

Nothing in the strange sad story of man upon earth is stranger and sadder than the chapters which relate to what he calls his religion. How wars are waged, and men are tortured, and people live in foolish and abject terror, and valuable time is wasted, in strife about the shape and colour and label of the bottle,—the liquor inside it—the one thing worthy of consideration—receiving none. What lip service we render to Him whom we call Master—how ridiculous we esteem the suggestion that we should obey His commands; and yet, in the sight of the All-Father, we are wont to declare that there is "neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision, uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." To Him we all alike kneel, though in different rooms and ways. Before Him

our little controversies sink into nothingness. In His sight words and deeds are alike valued at their worth, for

He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring its various bias.

But loud, familiar, unmeaning words will not take the place of honest deeds—will remain “as the sounding brass or the tinkling cymbal.”

JAMES II. IN IRELAND.

There is little further to record in the religious history of Ireland until James II. was king, and everywhere the Roman Catholics began to have strong hopes of obtaining the upper hand. And when the revolution came, and James had to flee, it was small marvel that he was received with open arms in Ireland. There, for a brief period, the hopes were realised ; and, whilst the Act of Attainder was unjust, and the repeal of the Act of Settlement impolitic, the Roman Catholic Parliament, the House of Commons in which but six Protestants were to be found, found time to pass a measure by which it established perfect religious equality. But in recalling the vices and virtues of this short-lived Parliament we must remember that it sat during a time of fierce excitement ; that the men who composed it were filled with wild hope of redemption from the misery and despair which for nearly half a century had been their portion ; and that they were summoned when their chosen king was a fugitive from his native land, and a civil war was raging. In Ireland it was a war of religion, and its memory is still green in the hearts of the more violent of each faith. And indeed it would be a poor party which did not remember—the nation itself cannot afford to forget—the sublimely heroic defence of Londonderry, or the vain but desperate daring which won for the Irish at Aughrim the praise of their fiercest opponents.

THE TREATY OF LIMERICK.

But it was the war of a standing army against volunteers, so far as the Irish themselves were concerned, and, with the fall of Limerick, it ended in the complete but honourable defeat of the Roman Catholic party. The gallant Sarsfield and his soldiers marched out with all the honours of war, and, with but small exception, transferred their services to the French monarch, and England met some of them again upon the bloody and disastrous field of Fontenoy. But a solemn treaty had, in the first place, been entered into between Baron Ginkel, the general of the English army, and General Sarsfield, whereby, in consideration of their surrender, it was agreed “that the Roman Catholics of this kingdom shall enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland, or as they did enjoy in the

reign of King Charles the Second. And their majesties, as soon as their affairs will permit them to summon a Parliament in this kingdom, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such further security in this particular as may preserve them from any disturbance on account of their said religion." The treaty, of which this was the first article, was signed on the 1st October, 1791, by the Lords Justices who had the direction of the Civil Government in King William's absence, as well as by the generals of the respective forces. There was no hurry or mistake about it. The terms were discussed for several days, and those granted were much less favourable to the Irish than those demanded by them. If ever a treaty was carefully and solemnly entered into it was this treaty of Limerick.

And how was it kept? It is hard to answer with the moderation which a writer should observe who desires to state facts which cannot be gainsaid. Not five years had passed from the signing of that treaty before it was deliberately and ruthlessly broken, nay torn to shreds; and torn to shreds in favour of the sternest and cruellest religious legislation which ever disgraced the statute book of a nation professing to be civilised.

Let there be no mistake about this matter. There was religious tyranny as cruel as that of the English to the Irish in many a Roman Catholic country at this very time, but the tyranny was that of the overwhelming majority against a small minority. In Ireland the tyranny was that of the small minority, aided and abetted by the power of England, against the overwhelming majority. All tyranny is hateful, but there is certainly an added bitterness when little Master Squeers kicks poor helpless Snike's shins.

THE PENAL LAWS.

In 1696 the English Parliament, by requiring the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, and a declaration against Transubstantiation from all members of Parliament, and all persons holding civil, military, or religious offices, excluded the Catholics in Ireland from all positions of trust or influence, and began those penal laws which Hallam says have scarcely a parallel in European History.

I shall not go through these iniquitous laws in detail. For forty years one was passed after another, each driving the iron deeper into the soul of the Roman Catholics. They were forbidden to intermarry with Protestants where either party possessed any estate in Ireland, and the children, if either parent were Protestant, might be taken from the other and brought up in that faith. No Catholic could be guardian to any child, but the Court of Chancery might appoint a guardian to bring up the ward in the Protestant faith. Catholics might not send their children abroad for education, and at home must send them to Protestant schools. They must not even have tutors of their own faith to teach their own children in their own houses. If the eldest son of a Catholic became a Protestant he

might secure his own inheritance by turning his father's fee-simple estate into a tenancy for life; but the Catholic heirs of a Catholic must share the land equally between them as they became subject to the law of gavelkind, and, even then, they must conform within six months, or the lands descended to the next Protestant heirs. No Catholic was to purchase, or even to hold a mortgage on, land. He might not inherit an estate without changing his faith. All bishops and other ecclesiastics, excepting parish priests, were to leave the country, and to be hung, drawn, and quartered if they returned. The parish priests were to be registered, and to give security for their good behaviour. Pilgrims to holy places were to be fined or whipped. No Catholic might be a solicitor, or might vote at Parliamentary or municipal elections, or keep a horse of a greater value than £5, or might bear arms. In short, the ingenuity of Protestant statesmen was exerted to the uttermost to reduce the entire Catholic population, two-thirds of the entire population of the country, to a state of serfdom.

Edmund Burke described this penal code as "well digested and well disposed in all its parts; a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."

How strangely to him who has really studied and weighed the dealings of Protestant England with the Irish Roman Catholics sounds Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's appeal to the Welsh Dissenters not to hand over the Protestants of Ulster to the Roman Catholics!

But you cannot kill religious belief by brutal persecution. The Catholics were crushed down to the very dust. Dean Swift, indeed, said, in 1738, that they were "as inconsiderable as the women and children," mere "hewers of wood and drawers of water," "out of all capacity of doing any mischief, if they were ever so well inclined." He said that "the English should be ashamed of their reproaches of Irish dulness, ignorance, and cowardice. Those defects were the product of slavery." But persecution has ever been the food of religious belief. The tyrant's power fails to reach the soul:

The oppressor holds
His body bound, but knows not what a range
His spirit takes, unconscious of the chain.

And so the Irish peasant possessed his soul in patience. Those men who could afford it, and who could not live in slavery, left their native land to seek in more friendly countries the fame and fortune denied them at home. But the peasantry grew only more devoted to the Catholic Church as persecution waxed fiercer, and the same fatal policy which made the land mean more to the Irishman than to any other person on the earth made the faith which it aimed at destroying more powerful than in any other country.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN IRELAND.

The Church of England indeed in that 18th century in Ireland shows admirably how evil a thing a dominant State Church is. It existed, not for the land in which it was placed, but for the convenience and profit of dignitaries from England. Even the English colony in Ireland was neglected. Every primate during the century was an Englishman, and so were the great majority of the archbishops and bishops. Swift likened Ireland to a hospital, where, whilst the poor for whom it is built are almost starving, all the house officials grow rich. Many of the livings were poor enough, but the good ones all went to the strangers. And the strangers who got good appointments often remained strange to the land which they were paid for serving. In many cases it was perhaps fortunate that they did so. Bishops there were who never once entered their dioceses, even when they held them for twenty years, but lived at home in England, selling their benefices when they became vacant. Those who dwelt in Ireland were (with a few noble exceptions) not careful to "forswear sack and live cleanly," but were great local potentates who kept open house, were fond of conviviality, and gave horse-races to amuse the people. Archbishop Bolton (who knew) said that "a true Irish bishop has nothing more to do than to eat, drink, grow fat, rich, and die." Dean Swift, however, explains, with his usual felicity, how the whole matter comes about. He says, "Excellent and moral men have been selected on every occasion of vacancy. But it unfortunately has uniformly happened that as these worthy divines crossed Hounslow Heath on their way to Ireland to take possession of their bishoprics, they have been regularly robbed and murdered by the highwaymen frequenting that common, who seize upon their robes and patents, come over to Ireland, and are consecrated bishops in their stead."

THE CHURCH AND DISSENT.

But whoever he might be, Irish-English or English-English Churchman, upon two points he was resolved—the first to keep the Catholics down, and the second to show no toleration to Dissenters. He probably hated the Dissenters more than the Catholics, for he had crushed the Catholics by the aid of the Dissenters. Nearly all of the Dissenters at this time were Presbyterians, and were settled in the North of Ireland. I shall speak by-and-bye of the plantation of Ulster, in the reign of James I., when the Scotch first began in considerable numbers to emigrate to Ireland. Here I need only point out that, although Ireland is seventy miles from England, it is, at the nearest point, only fourteen miles from Scotland, and not twice that distance from a well-peopled part of Scotland. After William III.'s victories the flow of settlers from Scotland into Ulster greatly increased, and the Presbyterians were said, in the reign of Queen

Anne, greatly to outnumber the Episcopalians in Ulster, and to equal them in the rest of Ireland.

They had, however, no legal position. They had scarcely any representation in either of the Houses of Parliament. They had no Toleration Act. The *Regium Donum*, amounting to but a paltry £2,000 a-year, was indeed of paramount importance, for it was the only official recognition of any kind which they possessed. But against this indirect acknowledgment must be placed the fact that, in 1704, the English Government inserted the principle of the Test Act in a bill for the repression of Popery, and the Irish Parliament accepted it, and for seventy years maintained it with the greatest vigour. All persons holding any office, civil or military, must take the oath of supremacy, must subscribe a declaration against Transubstantiation, and publicly receive the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England. And thus a great gulf was fixed between Presbyterians and Episcopalians, which has only in our day been bridged over in favour of the ascendancy of Protestantism.

How little did the poor fishermen and tax-gatherers, sitting at supper with the carpenter's son who had led them in a revolt against the wealthy and learned classes of the day, in an obscure room in a far-off Eastern city, dream that the simple friendly act of breaking bread and drinking wine together in memory of their companionship should become in the fulness of days a political instrument of social torture to be applied, in the Master's name, by pampered ecclesiastics who, in their lordly castles, somehow or another conceived that they were followers of Him Who knew not where to lay His head!

Thus then, to Catholics and Nonconformists alike, all chance of a career in their native country, or the country of their adoption, was entirely closed. We shall see hereafter how other injustice worked with this to produce results greatly to the detriment of the land which knew no mercy in its hour of triumph.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The penal laws to some extent worked their own cure. They were so savage that only at certain times and in certain parts of the country could men be found base and brutal enough to enforce them to the letter. The first half of the eighteenth century, too, was a time of great preparation for mighty events. The bitter fury of the penal laws was itself a sign of weakness, of uncertainty, of the fear which is always cruel. In the unmeaning refinements of literature, the grotesque formality of society, the vapid sentimentalism of religion so-called; in the gross corruption of statesmen, and the heartless profligacy of courtiers and kings, we see signs that the social state is worn out, and the end of many things is at hand. The people are about to be politically born amidst throes which shake the world. Thinkers in France, who dwell for brief

periods in England, and who give to us even more than they gain from us, are questioning and scoffing. What we now call natural science is making great strides—putting forward pretensions which, monstrous as they seem, time proves to have been far less than their due, and preparing the way for the democracy. “God’s fruits of justice ripen slow,” and this very strife for self-government for Ireland shows that they are not even yet fully ripe; but although the penal laws still cast their baneful shade over the lives of the vast majority of the nation, they were less and less enforced, and in 1756, the Catholics ventured to form an association, and three years afterwards to address the Government when a Jacobite invasion was threatened. And thus they at length indirectly gained official recognition.

I shall not speak now of the difficulties which arose at this period in connection with compelling the peasantry to pay tithes for the support of an alien and, to them, heretic Church. This matter will be more readily and appropriately treated when I come to England’s dealings with Irish land. I will only note that, as our difficulties abroad increased, we became more tolerant at home. In 1778 the Irish Parliament relaxed the penal laws so as to permit of Catholics disposing of their lands and acquiring long leaseholds, and, when the English colony had at last won the long battle for the freedom of the Irish Parliament, the question of Catholic Emancipation at once came to the front. The Ulster volunteers at the great Convention of Dungannon stoutly declared for the sacred right of private judgment in matters of religion. Without it, and without a sweeping measure of Parliamentary reform, legislative independence was seen at once to be a “mockery, a delusion, and a snare.” Again and again did the Protestants renew the struggle, but when the true teachings of the French Revolution (as yet unstained by cruel crime) began to be learned in Ireland; when the stirrings of the breath of freedom caused there as elsewhere the dead bones to live; when the Presbyterian contempt for monarchical institutions showed itself somewhat unmistakably, when mad and bad men in high authority to gain a temporary triumph condescended to pander to the worst instincts of religious passion and prejudice, there was once again a gulf fixed between the majority of the Protestants and the Catholic community. History repeats itself. A rag of the mantle of “Black Jack Fitzgibbon,” the man of vast ability and undoubted courage, but the curse and curser of his unhappy country, has descended upon Lord Randolph Churchill, although he is as much too petty for the special work which Lord Clare delighted in as Lord Clare himself was fully adequate to it.

BROKEN PROMISES.

In December, 1792, a Catholic Convention, to which representatives came from all parts of the country, met in Dublin, and petitioned the Crown for enfranchisement. A deputation bore the petition to London, and presented it to the King, who accepted it graciously,

and his Ministers promised that the Catholic claims should be recommended to Parliament from the Throne. The petitioners had clearly explained that they would not be satisfied with anything less than complete emancipation.

But the hopes raised by the success of the deputation were doomed to disappointment. At first all went well. In 1793 Catholics obtained the Parliamentary franchise, although they were not allowed to become members of Parliament. In 1794 Lord Fitzwilliam was appointed Lord-Lieutenant, and he was well known to be an ardent supporter of Catholic Emancipation. He urged the Government in strong and wise language to let him take his own course upon it. "Equality is already granted in the Act of '93. It remains to be considered whether the symbol of it shall be granted or withheld. The peace, tranquillity, and harmony of the country may now be sealed and secured for ever. . . . Mr. Grattan's plan is a short and simple one. First, a general repeal of all restrictive and qualifying laws; that done, to alter the oaths, that the people may be made one Christian people, binding themselves by one civil oath in a common cause. You will ask do I mean to carry the principle to the full extent of a general capacity for every office? I certainly do, for all not regal or ecclesiastical. These I reserve, and these only. I would not reserve the highest office in the State—not the Seals nor the Bench. To make a reservation would be to leave a splinter in the wound."

But Lord Fitzwilliam was far in advance of his times. The King, who had pretended, and the Ministers, who had promised, did not mean to do anything but gain time; the man who could and would have done much to close the breach between the two countries was recalled, and the rebellion of 1798, with its cruel repression, was the result. Once again was the policy of promising that which was not to be fulfilled successfully practised. When Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh were busily at work buying the Union they let the Roman Catholic leaders understand that their support would be rewarded by emancipation. Lord Castlereagh, when in England in the autumn of 1799, attended by request the meetings of the Cabinet on the Catholic question. He heard no difference of opinion on the merits of the question, and he was empowered to write to the Lord-Lieutenant that he need not hesitate in calling forth the Catholic support to the projected union.

The Catholics held the key to the position, and, trusting to the honour of English Ministers, they gave support to the union or remained neutral. Twenty-nine years elapsed before they received their promised reward.

Let me repeat here that I do not wish it to be inferred that in any of the matters with which I deal English statesmen acted deliberately against the light that was in them. Looking back, indeed, we see that sadly often the light that was in them was darkness, but it would not be difficult to show that the plans they from time to time adopted were those which were in accordance with the

prevailing ideas in civilised Europe, and were adopted with the best intentions. It is not for nothing, though, that hell is paved with good intentions. If the deed is evil and brings forth bad fruit, for all practical purposes it matters little with what intention it was done. Again and again let it be borne in mind that it is the children's teeth which are set on edge when the fathers elect to prefer sour grapes.

COBDEN AND IRISH COMMERCE.

In her dealings with the commerce of Ireland England surpassed herself in short-sighted selfishness. In 1835 Richard Cobden truly said, "there can be no doubt that England has, during the last two centuries, by discouraging the commerce of Ireland—thus striking at the very root of civilisation—rendered herself responsible for much of the barbarism that at the present day afflicts it. However much the conduct of England towards the sister island, in this particular, may have been dwelt upon for party purposes, it is so bad as scarcely to admit of exaggeration."

This is a part of my subject which is really of paramount importance. The Unionists so-called are fond of speaking of the Irish question as an agrarian difficulty. There is no doubt that the dealing with the land of Ireland and the present position of the people of Ireland in relation to the land form two of the most serious indictments against the English government of Ireland. They cannot be understood unless the history of those dealings is made clear, and unless we know how the present position of the Irish people in those respects has been brought about.

TRADE IN CATTLE AND DAIRY PRODUCE AND SHIPBUILDING DESTROYED.

From the reign of Charles II. until Grattan won an independent Parliament the commerce of Ireland was checked, thwarted, often destroyed, openly and avowedly in the supposed interests of England. When Charles II. began to reign there was good hope for the commercial prosperity of Ireland. The settlers of Cromwell's time were resolute and energetic men, who had the power and habit of working. Much of the land was abundantly fertile when properly cultivated, and the pasture land was pre-eminently rich. The English colony made the most of their opportunities. They raised large numbers of splendid cattle, which they exported to England, but the English landowners soon took fright and complained that the competition of Irish cattle-farmers reduced their rents, and in the year known to law as the 15th Charles II. an Act was passed in the English Parliament to restrict the importation of cattle. This Act further provided that the colonies should only receive cattle conveyed in English-built ships; and thus aimed a blow at another branch of Irish industry. But this was not enough, and in the

18th Charles II. an Act was passed (again by the English Parliament), forbidding the importation of either lean or fat cattle, dead or alive, sheep or swine, or beef, pork, or bacon. The English colony had begun to kill their cattle, and to send over the carcasses, but the English Parliament declared such importation to be "very destructive to the welfare of this country," and "a publick and common nuisance." Fourteen years later a further Act was passed, which is entitled "An Act prohibiting the importation of cattle from Ireland," and it begins by stating that the former legislation "had been found to be very beneficial to this kingdom!" What effect it had had upon Ireland it does not condescend to state, but the fact is that, unable to sell their cattle, sheep, or swine, the Irish farmers had begun to send over their dairy produce. Now this was to be forbidden. The former Act had omitted, whether by accident or design is not apparent, to specify the carcasses of sheep as "very destructive to the welfare of England." This new Act is thorough. It forbids the importation of mutton and lamb, butter, and cheese, and thus the Irish grazing industry was deliberately ruined to satisfy the supposed welfare of England.

There can be no mistake about this matter. The arguments which were used show not only the quiet selfishness of our policy, but the total want of recognition of any possible rights of the people in Ireland, whether English or Irish. It was plainly said that even though we were to look upon Ireland as part of our dominions, yet we ought not to allow them to encroach on one branch of trade. We must take care to keep them under the yoke.

THE TRADE IN WOOL AND WOOLLEN MANUFACTURE DESTROYED.

The broad Atlantic, which has become more truly the great highway of the nations of Europe than even the Mediterranean was in the middle ages, washes the western coast of Ireland, and, in the noble words of John Bright, "when the Irish peasant asks for food, and freedom, and blessing, his eye follows the setting sun; the aspirations of his heart reach beyond the wide Atlantic, and in spirit he grasps hands with the great Republic of the West." That great Republic was only partially colonised by Englishmen at the time of which I now write (the seventeenth century), but of all lands Ireland was the most fitted by geographical position to carry on trade successfully with our American colonies and with the West Indies. We had taken from her the power to trade with the colonies at all. We had destroyed her carrying trade, her cattle trade, and her trade in dairy produce, but her pasture lands were still free, and her farmers had access to European ports (she was nearer than Great Britain to the west coast of France, Spain, and Portugal and the Mediterranean ports), and found a ready market for their wool, which was accounted the best in Europe. I have read that fleece wool, which could be purchased in Ireland at fivepence per pound, brought half-a-crown per pound

in France. But in the first year of Charles II.'s reign (known to law as the twelfth) this trade in wool was seriously interfered with. By the 12 Car. II., c. 32, it was decreed that wool should not be exported from Ireland to any country but England, and six Irish ports alone were allowed to export it, and seven English ports to receive it. But even yet in her manufactures there was a ray of hope for the trade of Ireland. Forbidden to sell her raw wool, she began to manufacture it, or, more correctly, her woollen industries, which had been steadily growing, received a great impetus. From the Low Countries, as well as from England and Scotland, manufacturers settled in Ireland, and everywhere was there evidence that at last the way to success in peaceful industry had been really attained. As early as 1641 there were not fewer than 30,000 woollen workers and their wives in Ireland. And then England again grew frightened. Her manufacturing supremacy was threatened. Her helot dared to become her rival in one branch of business. In 1696 Ireland was forbidden to trade with the colonies at all, and in 1699 an Act was passed to prohibit the exportation of woollen goods from Ireland to any country whatever, and a noble and thriving industry was deliberately destroyed; thousands of manufacturers emigrated to the Continent, and so many workers left the Western and Southern districts of Ireland for America that they were almost deserted. Everywhere manufacture was crushed. The land alone remained.

Is this not a terrible story? Does it not throw light upon the unfortunate position which what we now mockingly call our sister country holds in this matter of manufacture? Trade depends greatly upon confidence, and confidence is a plant of slow growth. The great manufacturing nations have become such through their geographical position, through their superior natural resources, and through the gradual development and patient formation of the industrial character in their people. Ireland had the position; we refused to allow her to take advantage of it. She had the natural resources; we made them worthless. She began the formation of industrial habits in her people; we ruthlessly stopped the process. We drove the Irish people on to the land at the very time that we forbade them to hold it legally. We made them serfs, and this day we feel in every phase and point of the Irish question the natural effect of the mischievous commercial legislation of two centuries ago.

HATRED OF LAW PROMOTED.

I need not go into further detail upon this point. Smaller industries shared the fate of the larger ones. Whenever an attempt was made to strike out a new line of manufacture, it was successfully frustrated, until the people of the land were beggared, and those who could leave it did so, and all of the most enterprising of the English colony made their way to America, and carried with

them small love for the unnatural mother country. And there was another result which was but little looked for, but which was far-reaching in its consequences. Unjust legislation, like unjust taxation, awakens a lawless spirit. The laws which are universally felt to be unfair are not likely to be obeyed. Smuggling sprang up and flourished greatly, and hatred of the law became the habitual state of mind of Irishman and English colonist alike.

THE LINEN TRADE.

One trade indeed was not on the whole part discouraged. The French Protestant emigrants, who had settled for the most part in the north of Ireland, had introduced the manufacture of linen. It was of small dimensions, and was permitted (as an Act of Queen Anne's reign expressly declares) for the support of the Protestant interest of Ireland, and, in the course of time, it was actually encouraged by small bounties. One department indeed—that of sail-cloth—was destroyed in the 23rd year of George II.'s reign by a prohibitive tax because it competed too successfully with English manufacture, but the Irish linen industry still flourishes. In 1880 there were more operatives employed in it in Ireland than in England and Scotland put together, and the value of the linen produced in Ireland very nearly equalled that of both of the other lands. When in the Oetzthal, a remote valley of Austrian Tyrol, in September of 1886, I found everywhere the steeping of flax going briskly forward, and I was informed that the greater part of it was sent to Ireland. If we had but acted justly to Ireland in this matter of manufacture, if we had legislated for her as we did for our own country, or as her legislature would have done had she possessed one truly representative and with full power to decree and carry into execution such measures as she knew were needed for her domestic welfare, we should have had no Irish question to-day.

FREE TRADE.

It is said, indeed, that when Ireland had a separate Parliament the effect upon her commerce was disastrous, and figures are quoted to prove the statement. But we have seen how poor and corrupt a thing that Parliament was. How its destruction was determined upon from its very inception. How it represented nothing but its miserable self. How the carrying out of its decrees was entrusted to a hostile power. And yet, if we are to believe the testimony of those who must have known, the faint glimmer of hope which it gave wrought a marvellous change in the industrial condition of the country. The statistics which I have seen appear to me, like the modern ballet-dancer's dress, to begin too late and leave off too soon. To be of any value they must show the course of trade from 1750 to 1800; and even then the question of free trade which the volunteers had won in 1779, and the years of political disturbance

must be given full weight to. The marvel is rather that anyone should have thought that there was any commercial growth than that there should have been little or none.

THE OPINION OF MERCHANTS AS TO GROWTH OF COMMERCE.

But who are the most likely to know the real facts of the case? Surely the people to whom those facts were of the most vital importance; the people who live by buying and selling; who are not much influenced for the most part save by practical arguments; who know the value of money and the meaning of increased commerce and improved manufactures. Well, the Guild of Merchants in Dublin passed, in 1799, the following resolution:—"That the commerce of Ireland has increased and her manufactures improved beyond example since the independence of this kingdom was restored," and the English manufacturers held a somewhat similar belief, for, in 1785, they complained that "Ireland would in process of time beat them in their own markets."

THE OPINION OF STATESMEN.

Lord Grenville said in 1797 that "the Irish had created a commerce with which they were before unacquainted, and had extended their manufactures, and, what they esteemed still more valuable, had obtained a free constitution." Lord Clare was certainly not prejudiced in favour of his "damnable country," and yet he declared, "There is not a nation on the face of the habitable globe which has advanced in cultivation, in agriculture, in manufacture, with the same rapidity in the same period as Ireland."

Mr. Plunket spoke of Ireland in 1798 as "a little island with a population of 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 people, hardy, gallant, and enthusiastic; possessed of all the means of civilisation; agriculture and commerce well pursued and understood; laws well arranged and administered; a constitution fully recognised and established; her revenues, her trade, her manufactures beyond the hope or example of any other country of her extent." That was, indeed, the opinion of an Irishman, but our own Mr. Grey (afterwards the first Earl Grey) said that "there was nothing in the advancement of England to parallel the progress of Ireland," and Lord Sheffield confirmed him in the words, "Perhaps the improvement of Ireland is as rapid as any country ever experienced." And the leading Liberals who opposed the union are not to be set aside as men whose opinions were worthless, and whose words were rash and unweighed. Now less than ever can this be the case, for now we see how wise and right they were in their bitter opposition to the biggest blunder ever made by English statesmen.

THE DISUNITING UNION.

But it was all in vain. In vain did Fox declare in words eternally just and true, "The more Ireland is under Irish government the more she will be bound to English interests." In vain the ancestors of the noble Unionists (so-called) of to-day urged that the true way of dealing with complaints was to redress the grievances complained of, not to punish the complainers. In vain did they point out that Ireland's need was true self-government, not more foreign rule; and that the Irish had risen against the oppression of a tyrannical faction, not against the parent land. The fiat had gone forth. The poor Parliament Ireland possessed had been thoroughly corrupted; the Englishmen who pleaded for her were wise and eloquent, but few; her hopes had never sprung but to be blighted; and the dark and base deed called in mockery "the union" was to be accomplished.

The union! In English country towns, when a boy, I have seen gaunt, desolate-looking houses, at the doors of which sat worn, weary, and hopeless men, women who had lost their gentleness, and children who had never known the hope and joy of youth. This, I was told, was "the Union!"

All hope abandon, ye who enter here!

is the one legend which can be inscribed truthfully over unions which unite nothing, which sever those whom God has joined together, which exist only in the mockery of a name.

THE IRISH LAND QUESTION.

As I have traced in faint outline the dealings of England with Ireland in the matters of government, religion, and commerce, I have had, from time to time, to point out how there was one question which each of these matters affected, and which affected them all in its turn. The land question is said to lie at the root of our difficulties with Ireland, but that is not saying much. It has lain at the root of all of the difficulties which we have ever had there. It is the one question which has been in dispute during the whole period of the connection of the two countries. We can scarcely be said to have made any pretence of governing Ireland before Queen Elizabeth's reign, and until there were Protestants there could be little religious difficulty. England only began to deal harshly with Irish commerce a little more than two centuries ago. But twice as many centuries before Elizabeth mounted the throne the land difficulty began in Ireland, and it is perhaps as great a difficulty now, when 700 years of strife and tumult, of injustice and violence, of high-handed English policy, have passed away, as it was in the 12th, 16th, or any other century. Some of our Unionist friends seem to think that twenty years of doubtful or tardy concessions should obliterate the memory of thirty-five scores of years of bitter wrong. It is no doubt hard upon the generous Englishman, who

has dared to speak out what he thinks right to an unsympathetic audience, and who has even been able to confer boons upon a suffering people, when he finds that people, proud though suffering, thank him for his benevolence, but express their strong but firm preference for having their own way, governing instead of being governed, doing good to themselves after their own manner rather than being done good unto after his. But it is, after all, not strange, as men go, that memories should be longer lived, and those who argue that four-score years and six have conferred a mysterious perpetuity upon a fictitious union are hardly the men who should complain that those who have been injured more cruelly and persistently than men ever were elsewhere should go back even further than that beginning of all modern history, the year 1800, to know how the land wrongs they now suffer under became what they are.

CONFLICT OF LAND SYSTEMS.

Let us not forget that the English had nothing to do with Ireland when they first resolved to conquer it. It was a deliberate resolve to steal land, neither more nor less, that took them there at all. But the English people had been themselves conquered by the Normans, and it was their successful conquerors who wanted to add to their possessions. The Normans and the Irish held very different views upon the tenure of land. The Normans held their land from the Crown; they had introduced the feudal system into England—"A complete organisation of society through the medium of land tenure, in which, from the King down to the lowest landowner, all are bound together by obligation of service and defence: the lord to protect his vassal, the vassal to do service to his lord; the defence and service being based on and regulated by the nature and extent of land held by the one of the other." The custom of primogeniture had become absolute in England by the thirteenth century, and the eldest born son had the exclusive right to succeed to his father's estates. The Irish had quite another system of land tenure. The island was divided into five provincial kingdoms, one of whose sovereigns was elected King of Ireland, but the constitution was federal, and there was little tie between the constituent parts. The land was divided amongst different septs or clans or families, each of which was governed by a chief, and the chieftainship descended to the eldest and most worthy of the same blood. His successor was frequently elected during the life of the chief and was called a *tanist* (the Gaelic word for lord), the law of succession being the law of *tanistry*.

Chief and sept bore the same name, and, when a member of the sept died, the chief divided the lands of the clan afresh amongst the remaining members, the heirs of the deceased also receiving a share. The judges who administered laws in each sept were known as *Brehons*, and the law itself as *Brehon Law*. It was the common law of the country, the immemorial usage handed down from *Brehon* to

Brehon through long generations, and but little of it certainly survives. The land customs were not only similar to those of other Celtic countries, but to those which have prevailed over the greater part of the globe where men have settled down. Our system is exceptional ; the Irish system was not exceptional.

I do not discuss whether the Irish or the English system was the better. It is evident that both the method of succession to the chieftaincy and that of constant subdivision of land must have opened the door to countless disputes, and they did, in fact, do so. But one people has surely no inherent right to force land reforms upon another. The Irish might well say to their English invaders : " We know our business best, mind your own." Unfortunately the habit of insisting upon every affair of life being looked at through English spectacles, of believing that what is good for us must be best for everyone else, and of acting upon that belief, has grown upon us all through the seven centuries which divide Henry II.'s reign from that of Victoria. The English have certainly the courage of their convictions, even when most unreasonable.

The question is not, " Was the Irish land system that which an English conveyancer would regard as more ideally perfect than the English land system?" Some of us think that the time has come when the English land system should receive Radical treatment. Land even in feudal countries begins to be looked at from a practical and common-sense point of view ; it is no longer bowed down to and worshipped as a fetish of which the landowner is priest and prophet. The question is by what right, excepting that of might (which rational people are very jealous of allowing to be any right at all), we insisted and insist that our views of what is a good system for another country should be accepted in preference to those of the people of that country.

LAND CONQUEST IN IRELAND.

Let us glance at the history of land conquest in Ireland, and see how, from the beginning, we carefully sowed the evil seed which does not bring forth good fruit to-day.

Henry II., who reigned over England from 1154 to 1189, had but little to do with the actual work of English conquest in Ireland, although in his reign it began to take definite form. Certain English barons, sometimes at the instance of Irish nobles driven from their native land because of unwonted crime or intolerable oppression, sometimes simply as adventurers, succeeded in establishing military settlements in certain parts of the land. Henry had obtained a bull from Pope Hadrian IV. permitting him to enter Ireland " to enlarge the bounds of the Church, to restrain the progress of vices, to correct the manners of its people, and to plant virtue among them, and to increase the Christian religion," and he did actually visit the country, and in a peaceful way. He received the homage of many chiefs, and entered into amicable relations and agreements with

several of them, but he speedily broke faith with them, and divided out their territories amongst the English barons. No thought whatever was given to any claims of the common people. Any existing land system was simply ignored. The lands allotted were to be held of the King of England as Lord of Ireland, as feudal superior. The feudal system was to cover up the tribal system. To use a homely illustration, it was like putting a new paper upon the papered walls of an old room, but when that is done, unless the old paper is first completely removed, the seeds of disease are apt to be covered carefully up, to sprout forth at unexpected and inconvenient times.

Ireland was allotted to certain English Barons, who were to have the right of conquering their estates. This was a more certain way of insuring constant war and of preventing the possibility of central government than even the tribal system had been. For the tribal system was not destroyed. It existed below, or by the side of, this attempt at a feudal settlement. And the feudal settlement took no real or general hold of the country. Those of the English who settled upon the lands granted to them, and who succeeded in obtaining possession of a portion of them, soon became more Irish than the Irish themselves. They intermarried with them, they adopted their speech, dress, and customs. They speedily forgot the land from which they had sprung, and the land of their adoption became their fatherland.

And the English possessions in Ireland soon diminished, partly by this absorption of the English settlers in the more remote parts of the island, and partly by reconquest. The old Brehon law, and with it the tribal occupation of land, became again the rule throughout the country, excepting in that small part of it which the colonists succeeded in holding and governing according to English ideas, and which, as I have already explained, was known as the English Pale. But during the fierce fights for petty power waged with little intermission for two centuries, although the whole country had suffered, the parts most grievously affected were Leinster, Munster, and Connaught. There the poor natives were simply crushed, whilst their chiefs and the invaders fought for their land. The Pope had no more right to give Ireland to Henry than Henry had to divide it amongst his barons, but the Irish people, driven from the open country into the marsh or mountain land, by way of correcting their manners and increasing the Christian religion, were as little considered as the Soudanese, the Zulus, or the Burmese are considered to-day when English commerce and the Christian religion demand increase !

LAND IN IRELAND UP TO THE 16TH CENTURY.

Let us consider the position of the land question in Ireland when Henry II. and his immediate successors had done what they could, and let us bear in mind that in a few short lines we are summarising the course of more than two centuries. It is as though we were to

bring together the story of Irish land from the latter days of Charles II.'s reign to the present time. It is important that this should be remembered, because some men say whatever have Henry II. and his successors to do with the Irish land question of to-day? I answer that, in a very true sense, they have everything to do with it. But for the line of policy they pursued and the way in which they pursued it, we should not to-day have the question to solve, at all events in its present aggravated form: even the difficulties are greatest to-day where the greatest wrongs were perpetrated then.

When Henry II. entered Ireland the tribal system actually prevailed universally. When he left it the feudal system nominally prevailed universally. During the two centuries which followed neither system got absolutely the victory, but over the greater part of the land the tribal system prevailed. By the close of those centuries England's interest in Ireland had dwindled down to the Pale, or the districts surrounding the great towns of Drogheda, Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, and Cork. These towns had been peopled to a great extent by the Norsemen, and had always been more or less in conflict with the peoples of the neighbouring country, and, from the first, they had accepted the English rule. Even the invaders or colonists of the Pale, lawless, fierce, and brutal, waging a ferocious and constant war with the native Irish, a war in which quarter was unknown, had almost thrown off allegiance to England. It was that war which alone bound them to the mother country, that war which Henry's land measures had compelled, a war between invaded and invaders, a conflict of two systems, a struggle between two peoples, which has never ceased.

We must again pass over the story of two centuries, during which bad became no better. In Henry VIII.'s reign an earnest attempt was made to conquer the island, and to bring it under English law. That was the one idea of the King and his counsellors. They knew nothing and cared nothing for the old laws and customs of the native people; if they ever gave a thought to the subject, it was as to the speediest means to destroy them. They knew nothing and cared nothing for tribal rights. They did not understand that every member of a sept was a co-proprietor in the land of the sept with the chief himself. The chief, and the chief alone, was taken into counsel and consideration. He was to have his land, or rather all the sept's land, confirmed to him upon condition of the payment of a fixed tribute and service in war-time to the Crown—upon his acceptance, in short, of the feudal land system. And thus the chiefs obtained a great and iniquitous benefit at the cost of their clansmen, and English blindness to all plans but their own added another difficulty to the ever-difficult land question.

THE IRISH POINT OF VIEW OVERLOOKED.

This blind disregard of the Irish point of view, which soon gave place to a persistent determination to compel the adoption of our own,

has caused more of the settled agrarian discontent which has made itself so severely felt in Ireland than anything else. We took land which belonged to the people and gave it to their chief. We had no right to take it, and he had no right to receive it. On our part it was a blind transaction; on his it was base. But the knowledge that according to their own law, and if every man had his rights, this land of Ireland is the people's in no theoretical but a very practical sense, and that the only plea which can be urged against its restoration to them is that three centuries have elapsed since it was stolen from them, has a certain and very definite bearing upon the view they take of many landlord and tenant questions. And this is the more the case because, whilst the land has been taken from them for all advantageous purposes, the old sept system has continued to flourish where it could be applied to their prejudice. And thus, as we shall see, the Irish tenant does everything to the soil and the landlord nothing. The landlord, the chief of the sept, has forcibly taken all its land, and the tenant, the member of the sept, has to pay rent for land which is his own, and more rent to the man who has dispossessed him for every improvement he makes in his own land.

THE CENTRAL POINT OF THE IRISH LAND QUESTION.

This point is one which it is necessary to dwell upon because it rules the whole Irish land question. It is quite outside of questions of good or bad landlords, fertile or sterile land, or the like. The position of the land in the greater part of Ireland is one contrary to the most ordinary dictates of common sense. It is according to the law, and we are so used to it that its want of reason and honesty is not so patent to us as it would be did not

Custom lie upon us with a weight
Heavy as frost and deep almost as life.

If we heard of it for the first time, if we were told that in one of the islands of the Southern Seas lived in luxury and idleness men to whom was sent regularly the entire produce of the greater part of another of the islands, save only the irreducible minimum necessary to keep life and the power of work in the miserable raisers of the produce, whose whole exertions were devoted to providing for the luxurious and idle inhabitants of the other island; if we were further told that the capacity of the soil of the subject island for any production at all was given to it by the expenditure of the capital and lives, not of those who were reaping all the benefits, but of those who were at infinite toil and trouble to confer the benefits upon them; and yet that the latter class held their very right to existence at the will of the former, and could be turned away from the soil in which all their lives and capital were invested directly their strength failed them, we should say that it was too monstrous to be true, and that the first European people who put a stop to such an iniquitous state of affairs was exercising beneficially the undoubted right of big

peoples to insist on little ones behaving themselves properly. We should say further that, if any question of right were raised it must be that of the right of the producers to restitution of the produce unfairly exacted of them by the persons who had held them in thrall. But because the island is not in the Southern Seas but close to us, and because we insist that we can manage the business of its inhabitants much better than they themselves can, we look upon an identical state of affairs as lawful and right, and one which it is treachery and rank blasphemy to question in the slightest degree.

ELIZABETH'S WAY.

The chiefs who got the sept lands, and amongst whom the Church lands which had been confiscated were divided, made Henry VIII. King of Ireland, but land customs are tenacious beyond most customs, and centuries are scarcely sufficient to destroy them. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that the first Irish difficulty which Elizabeth had to contend with arose from the clashing of the feudal and tribal systems. The Earl of Tyrone, Con O'Neil, had accepted the English system, but, when he died, the Clan O'Neil cared little for hereditary succession, and chose their own chief. It is not for a sketch such as this to depict the wars which he waged in the cause of the liberty of his people, nor the shameful means adopted by the English Sovereign to overcome him. He was a brave, rough man, great of stature, of vast bodily strength, and proud of speech. The Queen, after failing in her attempt to kill him, entered into alliance with him, but it was short-lived, and he died fighting for Ulster, where his possessions were. Then his lands (which were not his, but those of his sept) were declared to be forfeited to the Crown, and more than one abortive attempt was made to colonise them. These, like the quickly succeeding endeavours to plant English residents in Munster, failed because the adventurers who received gifts of land did not dream, for the most part, of becoming resident at all. They let their lands to the men to whom those lands really belonged, and thus they simply increased the old and constant curse of absenteeism, whilst the dispossessed proprietors nursed their wrath and kept it warm.

But Elizabeth and her advisers had made up their minds that the only remedy for the Irish difficulties was force, and they were determined to carry the thing through at all costs. They encouraged the local wars of different clans; they confiscated great tracts of land, giving it to English holders; they even forbade the employment of the native Irish as tenants. The Irish land system and the rights of the tribesmen, which had been enjoyed for centuries, were altogether ignored. In Connaught, thanks to Sir John Perrot, the people were, in many instances, properly considered; the chiefs became feudal tenants, holding their estates by patents from the Crown upon stipulated conditions, and the clansmen also became tenants, holding direct from the Crown. But in Leinster, as in Munster, pure and simple confiscation was the rule.

JAMES I. AND LAND LEGISLATION.

Ulster speedily followed suit. James I. had scarcely mounted the throne when the tribal system of landholding was formally declared to be illegal by a decision of the King's Bench, and thus the people of Ireland were juggled out of their rights as part proprietors of the soil of Ireland. You say that it is useless to speak of the events of three centuries ago; that they should be forgotten and, will you say? forgiven, because of the lapse of years. As though great national crimes were to have the benefit of some unwritten statute of limitations unknown to private offences! How long had Alsace or Lorraine been torn away from Germany, and what was the cost of their reconquest, cost in men as well as money? The memory of a people is capricious, but it does not readily let slip the recollection of deliberate wrong.

And deliberate wrong it assuredly was. The Irish chiefs surrendered their estates to the Crown and received them back as feudal tenants, and the clansmen sometimes, as I have already pointed out, were, upon paper, fairly dealt with. And then the English Government on a slight pretext of rebellion confiscated the whole of Ulster, and planted it with English and Scotch settlers. And such settlers, "the scum of both nations," men of the worst lives, fleeing from justice or from creditors, or mere reckless adventurers. The Presbyterianism such men introduced into their new land would not be likely to bring forth much in the way of "gentleness or patient entreaty," but would scarcely lack forcible and bitter theological vigour. There are preachers of Christ and slaughter in Ulster of to-day who are not unworthy descendants of the early planters. And these early planters adequately represented the English misunderstanding of the whole matter. Two Earls, Tyrone and Tyrconnel, had been attainted, and their lands had been confiscated to the Crown. But the representatives of the Crown assumed that, by this attainder, the whole of six counties of Ulster had passed to the Crown, and they proceeded to divide it without the slightest regard to thousands of clansmen, each of whom had, *pari passu*, as much interest in the confiscated lands as the attainted Earls themselves.

But the worst feature of James the First's land legislation for Ireland was its direct encouragement of shameless fraud. The King gave certain persons called Discoverers commissions of inquiry into the titles by which the Irish owners held their estates, and, as these discoverers were rewarded by gifts of land for themselves, they speedily became expert in the art of finding flaws. The Irish were called upon to prove their titles to their lands as though they had always been held under English, instead of Irish, law. They did not even understand the nature of the proceedings. They had simply the right of immemorial possession. They had held their lands, in some cases, for twice the number of centuries the oldest existing proprietor could point to, but all that was of no avail. Out

they must go. A grant made five centuries before, and never acted upon, was sufficient to dispossess an Irishman. Eager lawyers devoted themselves to finding points which unscrupulous judges enthusiastically upheld. There was a period of poor, paltry, base trickery, unworthy in every way of people pretending to any civilisation, and the unsettlement, the anxiety, the cruelty of the process had no small share in preparing the way for the rebellion of 1641.

And in this wretched pettifogging manner large parts of Leinster and Connaught came within the power of the Crown, and a feeling of universal unsettlement, of doubt and anxiety, and a burning sense of cruel injustice, were universally found throughout the land.

CROMWELL'S SETTLEMENT.

Then came the rebellion of 1641, and Cromwell's fierce invasion of Ireland, and the whole country was at length subdued, and lay, bleeding and helpless, at the foot of the English conqueror. And now a new settlement was planned. The English colonists were to hold the three fertile provinces of Ulster, Leinster, and Munster, and the Irish were to be driven into the sterile land of Connaught, every man, woman, and child who was outside of that place of exile after May 1st, 1654, being doomed to death. Before this decree more than 34,000 of the flower of the race had joined the armies of foreign nations, and, to our disgrace be it spoken, we had sold many thousands of women and children into cruel and hopeless slavery. Only two centuries ago the English ruler calmly and deliberately sold, as so many head of cattle, thousands of women and girls—aye, many of them young girls of gentle family—to the West Indies to be worked as beasts of burden, or for a more hideous fate. And those men who refused to leave their fair and fertile homesteads for the bare and bleak Connaught hills were simply hanged out of hand *pour encourager les autres*.

But the Irish still clung to the land, and the great agrarian question was no whit the nearer solution.

The rebellion broke out in October, 1641, and, as I have already mentioned, the English Parliament at once proscribed the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland. In February, 1642, it proceeded to offer the lands of the insurgents to those Englishmen who would provide money to carry on the war, and 2,500,000 acres of good land, as well as bogs, woods, and mountains, were set aside for this purpose. Debentures payable in Irish land were given to the lenders of the needful funds. And, when Cromwell and his followers had made the desolation which they called peace; when one-third part of the entire population had perished; when the men had fled to swell the armies of the Continent, and the women and children had been sold into slavery; the work of confiscation was consummated. The English adventurers and the Commonwealth soldiers received reward and pay in the three more fertile provinces of Ireland, which were simply taken from their lawful proprietors; the Catholics who

had not borne arms against the English were to be allowed two-thirds of the value of their confiscated estates paid in land in Connaught; all landowners who had not borne arms against Parliament were to have one-third of such value in like land; whilst all who had taken part in the rebellion before November, 1642, lost their estates and lives. It was, in fact, the confiscation of the land of the whole nation, and the forcible displacement of the whole of the people, excepting the labourers, who were necessary for the cultivation of the confiscated lands. In 1641 the Protestants held one-third and the Catholics two-thirds of the cultivated land of Ireland; in 1672 the Catholics held but one-fifth of the whole land, fertile or barren. There was no question raised of guilt or innocence. All of the Catholics, and many of the old Protestants who had stood by the King, were banished into Connaught.

Ulster contains an area of 5,321,580 acres of land, Leinster 4,838,261 acres, Munster 5,934,684 acres, and Connaught 4,392,085, acres. Connaught was naturally sterile, and had been laid waste by famine. There were parts of it in which "there was not wood enough to hang, water enough to drown, or earth enough to bury, a man." And the wretched people, driven from their homes into this wilderness, were cheated, harassed, and cruelly ill-treated by the officials whose duty it was to carry out their settlement in the land of their exile. Little marvel that numbers of them took refuge in the hills and became a terror by night to those who had dispossessed them. They were called Tories, and the Government set a price upon their heads, as upon the heads of wolves. Once more, by English law it was no murder to kill an Irishman. Major Morgan, the member for Wicklow County, said, in 1657—"We have three beasts to destroy that lay burthens upon us. The first is the wolf . . . the second beast is a priest . . . the third beast is a Tory."

CHARLES II. AND BROKEN HOPES.

There was a momentary hope that Charles II. would not permit loyalty to his father to be imputed as a crime even to the Irish, and he himself gave strength to the hope. But the undertakers or English settlers were stronger than he, and, although commissioners were appointed to investigate the cases of innocent Catholics, and 4,000 claims were sent in to them, an Act was soon passed to declare that those claims which had not been already decided upon should be treated as abandoned. More than 3,000 claimants were thus excluded even from a trial of their causes, and lost their lands for ever.

And thus we have traced the English dealings with Irish land until, speaking generally, we have got it into the position which it now holds. The tribal system, which was the national system, has been destroyed. No longer is the land of Ireland held by the people of Ireland. Even in those exceptional instances in which the people held as tenants at quit rents, the nominal quit rents speedily

were converted into rack rents. But the people, having lost all beneficial interest for the most part, were still under the tribal system so far as burdens were concerned. The land had been rudely torn from the men of each clan and given to their chief, but they still had to do everything for it as if it were still their own, and to pay the chief for the right of doing everything for it. This was bad enough when their chief had become their landlord, but it was infinitely worse when, the land having been forced from the chief, the payment had to be made to an alien in blood and faith. We have driven the Irish into the smallest and worst part of Ireland. We have destroyed their manufactures in the interests of England. Even the Cromwell settlers, who in many parts speedily became more Irish than the Irish themselves, have been driven to the land and the land alone, and we have thus succeeded in bringing about the condition of things under which, whilst, in England, only one person in ten is employed in agricultural pursuits, in Ireland eight persons out of ten have no other avocation.

Much condemnation has been bestowed upon the abortive attempt made by the Irish Parliament summoned by James II., and sitting for two months, to reverse the settlement which Cromwell had brought about. Two Acts were passed by it with this object. The first repealed the Act of Settlement passed twenty-four years earlier, and restored the confiscated lands to their rightful owners, and the second forfeited to the Crown the lands of all who did not acknowledge King James as their rightful sovereign. Whether these Acts were politic or not may be a fair question; that they were natural, at a time of much political excitement, and after what had gone before, is certain. The clauses dealing with absentees, and declaring them guilty of high treason until they proved themselves to be innocent, were certainly too severe, and nearly as unjust as the measures which had directly led up to them.

THE EFFECT OF THE PENAL LAWS UPON LAND.

But these laws were of no practical moment, and the next point which was really substantial was the passing of the penal laws. By their operation the interest of every Irishman, who was not simply a peasant, ceased. He could not buy or mortgage land; he could not take it upon a long lease; he was liable to all sorts of forfeitures; he simply ceased to have any actual interest in Irish land. The men who would have been farmers became cottiers, debased, degraded, and enslaved. The cottier was the clansman or tribesman of an earlier period, but he had retained only his disabilities; no rights were allowed him. He might build, on land which was by right his own, houses or barns, but he must pay rent for the privilege. He had neither an interest in the land nor a lease of it; he was without fixity of tenure. It is not easy to find any country which ever produced a class so hopeless and debarred from hope. But we must add to this the fact that the rents were

farmed by middlemen, and that the old curse of absenteeism made itself felt perhaps more cruelly than at any preceding time. So early as the middle of the fourteenth century Acts had been passed against men who drew their income from Ireland, but habitually spent it elsewhere. In the beginning of the eighteenth century at least a third of the entire rental of the country was expended in England. Ireland was to the absentee landlord simply a milch cow, from which he drained everything in his power, whilst he did nothing for it. Nothing, and worse than nothing, for he let his estates to a middleman, who lived upon the difference between the rent he paid the landlord and the rent he screwed out of the tenant. He needed nothing but cupidity and want of conscience, as the cottier whom he plundered needed only the land, and was willing so long as he was allowed to live on it, to labour, to starve, to provide all that was required, and to pay usurious interest on that which he himself provided. The competition for land to live on alone made such a state of things possible.

The penal laws filled up to the dregs the cup of bitterness which the Irish agriculturist had to drink. The Catholic had no motive left him for endeavour. All land was lessened in value because Protestants only could compete for it. The Catholics could not borrow upon security of land, and any Protestant who could prove that the profits of a Catholic farmer had exceeded a third of his rent might take his farm. How carefully we ensured that the Irish people should have no possible motive for exertion! How, when they have accepted the position which we created for them, we revile them for accepting it!

THE COTTIER.

Indeed, the position of the cottier was one unknown to other lands than Ireland, and as miserable as wrong and might combined could make it. A slave has at least a certain security, but he had none. The land for which he did everything he had no assured interest in; for every improvement he made he had to pay higher rent—often to a landlord whom he had never seen. The curse of absenteeism is one from which Ireland has always suffered more than most other countries. Its proximity to England has aggravated the evil. The land from time to time fell into the hands of men who had business or pleasure to detain them in England, and, though laws were enacted with the vain object of reducing the evil, it was never cured. In 1735 a worse curse even than this was inflicted upon the poor cottier. No more aggravating payment can be imagined than that of tithes from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant clergyman, but in that year the Irish House of Commons took the burden of tithes from the pasture land held by large farmers, whilst leaving it in all its full heaviness upon the small cottier holdings. These cottiers had to support absentee landlords, middlemen, clergymen of an alien faith, and priests of their own. Work as they might,

toil and slave from morning to night, they could scarcely get potatoes to eat and rags to cover them. All their earnings were swallowed up by the laird and the Church; and once fall back, from accident or ill-health or misfortune, and the houses they had built were taken from them, and they were driven out as strangers from the land which had once been their own, and which their toil, and their toil alone, had made of any worth.

What marvel that there were constant risings against so cruel a state of things. The Whiteboys at the end of 1761, the Oakboys in 1762, the Steelboys in 1768, were the natural fruit of the corrupt tree of misgovernment. They kept the land unquiet; they protested against the systematic turning of arable into pasture land by houghing cattle; they were ruthlessly repressed. But they were only the outward and visible signs of an inward and abiding disaffection—a disaffection which was righteous and inevitable. Some slight remedial measures were introduced. A tax upon absentees was talked of, but England would not hear of it. In 1778 the Catholics were, at length, allowed to hold and to inherit land. But the great evils were untouched, and the Nemesis which hovered over the legislative union of 1800 handed to the English Parliament, as its most fatal bequest, the Irish land question.

THE PAPER UNION.

We have thus traced the history of England's dealings with Ireland from her first attempt to conquer that island until her passing the Act of Union, which is spoken of to-day by that party which calls itself Unionist with a reverence which it is not easy to understand. The long debates in the English Parliament upon the subject, both before and upon the passing of the Act, are worthy of attentive study, because from them we learn what was in the minds (or upon the lips) of the men who supported or opposed the measure. The debates in the Irish Parliament are of less importance, for, though Grattan's splendid eloquence, and his energy which overcame great bodily infirmity, were exerted to the uttermost, and he was aided by good men and true, the English Executive, by unparalleled and systematic corruption of the basest kind, purchased the betrayal of the country from those who were bound by every principle of honour to maintain their own integrity and uphold her independence. I think that it was in 1797 that Fox—after ridiculing those who, like the so-called Unionists of to-day, "mistake paper regulations and theoretical privileges for practical government"—gave sound advice upon the only true policy to be pursued towards Ireland. Despotism, he said, was where the executive power is everything and the rights of the people nothing. He went on, "I would concede, and if I found I had not conceded enough I would concede more. I know no way of governing mankind but by conciliating them; and, according to the forcible way the Irish have of expressing their meaning, I know of no way of governing the people but by letting

them have their own way. . . . I would have the whole Irish Government regulated by Irish notions and Irish prejudices; and I firmly believe the more she is under Irish Government the more will she be bound to English interests."

Sheridan fought fiercely against the project at every stage of its progress, and never was that glowing eloquence—

As rapid, as deep, and as brilliant a tide
As ever bore freedom aloft on its wave—

more nobly put forth. In 1799 he declared that "a union at present, without the unequivocal voice of the Irish people in its favour, a union affected by fraud, by intrigue, by corruption, by intimidation, would ultimately tend to endanger the connection between the two countries." But no man gave the measure more persistent and strenuous opposition than Mr. Grey, afterwards the great Earl Grey, and no man showed more clearly how this so-called union was a miserable sham, a fraud, a contract entered into with parties who were, in any true and honourable sense, absolutely incapable to make it. He said, in the debate on the King's Message respecting the union on the 21st April, 1800, "Though there were 707,000 who had signed petitions against the measure, the total number of those who declared themselves in favour of it did not exceed 3,000; and many of these only prayed that the measure might be discussed. If the facts I state are true, and I challenge any man to falsify them, could a nation in more direct terms express its disapprobation of a political measure than Ireland has of a legislative union with Great Britain? In fact, the nation is nearly unanimous, and this great majority is composed, not of fanatics, bigots, or Jacobins, but of the most respectable in every class of the community. I by no means say that the Parliament of Ireland is either disrespectful or dependent; but when I look upon these facts, and consider the majority who voted with the Minister, I must say that, if left to itself, uninterrupted, unawed, unintimidated, it would without hesitation have rejected the resolutions. There are 300 members in all, and 120 of these strenuously opposed the measure, among whom were two-thirds of the county members, the representatives of the city of Dublin and almost all the towns which it is proposed shall send members to the Imperial Parliament; 162 voted in favour of the Union; of these 116 were placemen, some of them English generals on the staff, without a foot of ground in Ireland, and completely dependent upon Government. . . . But this is not all: let us reflect upon the arts which have been used since the last Session of the Irish Parliament to pack a majority in the House of Commons. All persons holding offices under Government, even the most intimate friends of the Minister, if they hesitated to vote as directed, were stripped of their employments. Even this step was found ineffectual, and other arts were had recourse to, which, though I cannot name in this place, all will easily conjecture. A bill framed for preserving the purity of Parliament was likewise abused, and no

less than sixty-three seats were vacated by their holders having received nominal offices."

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A REAL UNION.

I dwell upon this matter because the case of the opponents of the principle of Mr. Gladstone's Government of Ireland Bill rests upon the need for the preservation of this union—"a crime of the deepest turpitude—a crime which, by imposing, with every circumstance of infamy, a new form of government on a reluctant and protesting nation, has vitiated the whole course of Irish opinion." I assert that there has never been a union between England and Ireland, that no such union could be come to without the consent of both parties to it, and that the consent of the Irish people has never been given; that all contracts purchased by fraud are *ipso facto* null and void; that the so-called union was an act as base, as false, as detestable as any of the defiances of the rights of free peoples which we lay with condemnation at the doors of Russia, Germany, or Austria.

Time, prescription, cannot be appealed to in a matter of this kind. Eighty-six years of persistence in a vice do not make it a virtue. Union is the act of joining two so as to make them one. There can be no union without mutual consent. There is a true union when two men agree to carry on business together in partnership, when a man and woman freely agree to become one in the bond of matrimony; but we do not call it a union when a big policeman lays hold of an innocent bystander by the collar and hales him before the superintendent of his division: still less do we call it a union when the binding question is asked before the altar, and the gentleman answers "I will" but the lady "I won't."

THE WORKING OF THE PAPER UNION.

And the working of this violent abduction of the Irish Parliament, which some English politicians look upon as so vital to English interests, shows how absurd it is to apply the name "union" to it at all. Union implies unity—unity demands concord. What concord has existed between the two peoples during the eighty-six years which have elapsed since the consummation of this crime? In twenty-two of the first thirty years the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, and eighteen Coercion and Insurrection Acts, or Acts of a similar character, were passed, and that is a fair sample of what has gone on since. The years in which there has not been exceptional repressive legislation for Ireland may be counted upon the fingers of one hand. The great Imperial Parliament of this bastard union passed five Coercion Acts in its first session, one of them of exceptional severity. Both political parties have alike sinned in this matter, and sinned grievously. Both political parties have been deluded by the magic of words. They have dreamed that you explained a thing when you only called it a name.

But if the Radical party sins again in this matter of coercion it will "sin against the light."

The fact is that we were simply carrying out the old English policy of insisting that Ireland should conform to English views of what was good for it. We had called that a bargain to which we alone were the consenting parties, and we visited every infraction of it upon the Irish people, as though they had really entered into it and were guilty of breach of promise. There is a great truth in the *Punch* cartoon at the end of 1844, which depicts Queen Victoria and the Czar Nicholas in conversation. The maps of Poland and of Ireland hang above them, and the Queen, pointing to that of Ireland, says: "Brother, brother, we're both in the wrong!"

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION PROMISED.

During the debates upon the so-called union the idea was constantly put forward by the Ministers of the Crown that the claims of the Catholics to emancipation could only be properly dealt with by a united Parliament. The point which the Unionists of 1800 felt to be of the first importance was that the great body of Irish Catholics should avoid active opposition to the scheme, and, with the object of ensuring this, they were given to understand that legislation upon Catholic Emancipation and the question of tithes should be at once proceeded with if the union were accomplished. The device succeeded, but the Speech from the Throne, when the new Parliament assembled for the first time on February 2nd, 1801, gave no hint of the performance of the promise; and Mr. Cornwallis, the seconder of the Address in the House of Commons, desired that in future measures to give full effect to the union "nothing consistent with the full security of the Protestant religion in Ireland should be omitted." He said nothing about the Catholics; and Mr. Grey, in following him, felt "some suspicion that those measures of liberality and justice towards the Catholics of Ireland, which were expected as the fruits of a legislative union, are yet far from being realised."

A suspicion which events abundantly justified. In reply, Mr. Pitt never mentioned Ireland at all, but the question was raised again the next day when the Address was reported to the House. Mr. Jones "had heard that a division existed in the Cabinet upon the subject of the emancipation of the Catholics." Mr. Nicholls "expressed great concern at hearing something as if the Catholics of Ireland were not to have those advantages from the union a prospect of which had been held out. . . . From a hope that so great a benefit would be the result of it, he had cast a veil over the enormities and corruption by which it had been accomplished."

The Ministry made no sign. On the 10th February, in the House of Lords, the Earl of Carlisle said that "the faith of Government had, to some measure, been pledged" to Catholic Emancipation. "A hope was held out by the late Administration that something

would be done for the Catholics of Ireland. To that the national honour had been pledged ; and if that hope was now suddenly to be extinguished what could ensue but all the mischiefs to which men could be instigated by complete despair ?”

What *was* done was to pass coercive measures of great severity to punish the despairing men !

If the union had been that which it was not, a contract deliberately entered into between the two peoples, the first step taken by one of the contracting parties was deliberately to break one of the fundamental conditions of the contract, and thus to render it null and void.

On that 10th February, Lord Granville, who was at the head of the Foreign Department, explained that he, in conjunction with Lord Spencer, Lord Chatham, and several of his Majesty's servants in the House of Commons, had resigned office because they were not allowed to bring forward the removal of the disabilities under which a great portion of the people of Ireland laboured. On the 16th of the same month, Mr. Pitt explained in the House of Commons that, having met with circumstances which rendered it impossible for them to propose Catholic Emancipation, he and his colleagues felt it inconsistent with their duty and their honour to remain in the Government.

The weak old man then upon the English throne wrote wild letters upon the subject to his Prime Minister. “ This principle of duty must prevent me from discussing any proposition tending to destroy this groundwork of our happy constitution ” (the Established Church!) “ and much more so that now mentioned by Mr. Pitt, which is no less than the complete overthrow of the whole fabric.” Truly

No mortal ever heard
Any good of George the Third.

Pitt allowed Lord Cornwallis to circulate among the heads of the Catholic faith in Ireland a paper drawn up to allay the disappointment of the Irish people, and in this to state that they should “ be sensible of the benefit they possess by having so many characters of eminence pledged not to embark in the service of Government except on the terms of the Catholic privileges being obtained.” Yet on May 6th, 1804, he humbly promised his august master, who proposed again to employ him, “ to abstain from again pressing that measure upon your Majesty's consideration.” One obstinate old man he would attend to though in so doing he broke his pledge to the people of Ireland. His conduct has well been stigmatised as “ selfish and dishonest,” but it was typical of the conduct of too many English statesmen towards Ireland.

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION CARRIED.

In 1795 the Peep-of-Day Boys, who had come into existence to harass and annoy the Catholics, developed into Orangemen, who have certainly never forgotten the pit from which they were digged.

They carried things with a high hand, and were supported by a strong English feeling in favour of Protestant ascendancy. After the union they were allowed to bear arms and to use them cruelly and wantonly, with scarcely an attempt at punishment. The encouragement in wrong doing which they received from the authorities has led to the not unnatural supposition that there was a deliberate intention to foster ill-feeling and disunion amongst the Irish people in order to preserve the legislative union with England. But the Reform party fought on steadily. Grattan spent his last days in pleading the cause of religious equality, and Daniel O'Connell took up the work when it fell from his hands. It was up-hill work such as few men have the power, the courage, the will to perform. Year after year he was defeated; year after year his great relief organisation grew and was perfected. He was threatened with the vengeance of the law; he was derided; and shameful accusations were made against him; but in 1829 he triumphed. The country was roused as it had never been roused before. As many as two thousand meetings were held in a single day. He was returned without a poll for County Clare in 1828, and, when the House held that he was ineligible, he was returned again. Ireland was upon the eve of a great rebellion, and the Lord Lieutenant saw that it was certain of success if allowed to break out. "You may put to death thousands; you may suppress it; but it will only be to put off the day of compromise, and in the meantime the country is still more impoverished, and the minds of the people are, if possible, still more alienated." The Duke of Wellington, then Prime Minister, saw and said that if he had not brought forward the measure for Catholic Emancipation civil war must have been the result; and so after twenty-nine years of waiting and working the prospect held out to the Irish Catholics in 1800 was at length attained.

LESSONS FROM THIS HISTORY.

Is there no lesson in this for those Conservative politicians who look forward to a Parliament in Dublin as to the end of all things? They may be resolute and determined, but not more so than

He who fought a hundred fights,
Yet never lost an English gun,

and yet he quailed before the prospect of civil war. They may be prudent and cautious, but not more so than Sir Robert Peel, who "had for years attempted to maintain the exclusion of Roman Catholics from Parliament and the high offices of the State," and yet he resigned the struggle because convinced that it could no longer be advantageously maintained. Is there no lesson for them in such declarations as Lord Eldon's that "if a Roman Catholic were ever admitted to form part of the Legislature, or to hold any of the great offices of State, from that moment the sun of Great Britain was set for ever"?

And may not we, when confronted with the religious difficulty as a stumbling block in the way of the settlement of the question of self-government, the Irish question of to-day, take upon our lips (*mutatis mutandis*) Dr. Arnold's noble words :—"It is the direct duty of every Englishman to support the claims of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, even at the hazard of injuring the Protestant Establishment; because those claims cannot be rejected without great injustice; and it is a want of faith in God and an unholy zeal to think that He can be served by injustice, or to guard against contingent evil by committing certain sin."

After twenty-nine years of troublous and incessant agitation, and when we had brought Ireland to the very brink of the most dreadful of all catastrophes—a civil war—we thought it wise to redeem our promise to her. But not unconditionally. We made her pay for the redemption of our promise. The Catholics had voted for thirty-six years—at least all 40s. freeholders had—but now the 40s. was raised to £10 so as to reduce their number, and thus 156,000 men who had supported O'Connell against the landlords were punished at the very time that their victory was won. How admirably this illustrates the Tory idea of union!

TITHES.

But although the question of Catholic Emancipation, which a real Irish Parliament would have settled in a session, had, in spite of Ministerial promises, taken twenty-nine years, the question of tithes still remained. And that was a very burning question—one of much more importance than even the Welsh dissenters (to whom Mr. Joseph Chamberlain appeals in the divine name of Protestant ascendancy) can quite realise from personal experience. Its history is one of cruel oppression, disorder, and bloodshed. It may be remembered that, in 1735, tithes from pasture lands were abolished to discourage Popery and infidelity. This had the effect of improving the position of those who needed it least, and injuring the position of those who most needed improvement. To him that had was given, that he might have more abundance; whilst from him that had not was taken away even that which he seemed to have. And so the whole burden of tithes to support the priests of an alien faith fell upon the rack-rented Irish cottier, and must be paid by him out of the little store of potatoes left for him and his family after he had paid his rent to some miserable middleman who lived upon the misery of his fellow-men. And so the land was more and more turned into pasture, and more and more the condition of the Irish cottier became terrible. He lived absolutely from hand to mouth, and the least eccentricity in the seasons brought him face to face with starvation. He was not sybaritic in his tastes. Ten pounds a year would support him and his family, but, however small his pittance, out of it he had to pay this accursed tithe.

Did any clergyman who sent his bailiffs into the poor cottier's

potato-plot to levy this shameful tax ever preach from or even read the text about those who grind the faces of the poor?

What a strange thing this religion we talk so much about really is! If we refer to Scripture we find in olden times that it meant "to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and to keep thyself unspotted from the world." If we ask the Founder of the Christian faith Himself He says that it means whole-hearted love to God and loving your neighbour as yourself. Eight hundred thousand Protestants in Ireland had in 1835 seven millions of Catholics as their neighbours. Their love showed itself in an equivocal form. They insisted upon their neighbours paying for the religion they did not believe in, as well as for that in which they did believe. This burden of tithes was a heavy and bitter one. Sydney Smith said that, "in all probability, about one million of lives may have been sacrificed to it in Ireland." The tithe was frequently farmed out to a tithe proctor, who could only recoup himself by the fiercest rapacity. It is difficult to imagine any tax more intrinsically odious than this wrung out of a starving peasantry by servants of the Prince of Peace—at whose birth the angels sang of good-will to men—by the aid of police batons and military bayonets, and at the cost of grievous cruelty and frequent shedding of blood.

TITHES COMMUTED.

Daniel O'Connell had won the battle of Catholic Emancipation against tremendous odds. In 1838 the tithe question was at length settled in opposition to his wish. He urged that tithes should be altogether abolished, but instead of that a land tax was substituted for them, a land tax which was payable by the landlords in the first instance, but which too often came back upon the tenants. And thus, in an imperfect and exasperating way, was a great difficulty got rid of. The payment of tithes had been enforced at an enormous cost to the English people. Every pound wrung out of the Irish peasant cost the nation more than twice as much. In 1833 the arrears of tithes amounted to a million and a quarter, and then a general strike against them was organised, and they had to be given up. But it was in appearance only. The landlord who paid them frequently raised the tenant's rent proportionally, and the hateful rent became more detestable, because it now included the hateful tithe.

REFORMS OF THIRTY-NINE YEARS OF UNION.

We have now got to the thirty-ninth year of the much-vaunted Union, and two important measures promised at the time it was manufactured have been passed into law—two measures which the leaders of both political parties had believed to be just and right for the whole of the time which elapsed before they were carried. In each case the Irish people had to win them by long and weary work,

and it was not until the passions of the country had been heated to white-heat that the English authorities gave way.

So hard it was for the Irish to obtain from this united Parliament even that which had been promised to them; so soon were falsified the predictions that "Ireland might on every question calculate on the most liberal policy from England, whose generosity was characteristic; the most sanguine anticipation could not anticipate the extent of riches and power to which, under these auspices, she would speedily rise." But the "most liberal policy" had included exceptional repressive legislation, often of the savagest description, in thirty-one of the thirty-nine years, and no fewer than six Acts, each more cruel than its predecessor, to facilitate evictions; and the riches and power were still reserved for the representatives of the old English colony, and the people of Ireland were infinitely worse off in every way.

LOSS TO IRELAND BY THE UNION.

The union encouraged absenteeism; it encouraged and almost necessitated the encumbering of many estates. In our own day we have seen the effect of the removal of the seat of Government exemplified in Italy, when the capital was removed first to Florence and then to Rome. All the people connected in any way with the Court, or the Parliament, and all who like the importance and convenience of living near the fountain-head, flock together at the seat of Government. Florence was suddenly enriched. Her grand old walls bound her round too tightly, and were swept away. She spread in all directions. Great new roads, lined with costly villas, sprang into existence. But when Rome was made the capital of united Italy all was changed. The villas were without inhabitants. The city was too poor to keep the new roads in proper repair. There was even a proposal to permit M. Blanc to open tables in the city of Dante, he undertaking to expend upon the city a given sum annually which should relieve the rates, and "beautify" (!) the most beautiful of dwelling-places. And thus from Ireland there was after the union a great rush of the landlord class over to England, and the extravagant habits which could be indulged without serious difficulty in the one country simply meant constant debt and ruinous loans in the other in which living was so much more costly. But the interest on the loans which supported the borrowed grandeur of the landlord had to be screwed out of the poor tenant at home, already overburdened.

INQUIRIES AND THEIR RESULTS.

And all the time those favourite devices of lazy statesmen, official inquiries, were being made into the state of Ireland, and a strange state of things did they reveal. "Misery and suffering which no language can properly describe," said the report of one

committee in 1824. "It would be impossible to describe adequately the sufferings and privations which the cottiers and labourers and their families in most parts of the country endure," said the Devon Commission in 1842, and the commissioners added to their report, "We cannot forbear expressing our strong sense of the patient endurance which the labouring classes have generally exhibited under sufferings greater, we believe, than the people of any other country in Europe have to sustain." I need not quote further. This united Parliament had the miserable condition of the Irish people for long years brought before its eyes. It was told by its own committees that the cause of the misery was the system of land tenure, and it replied by putting more and more power into the hands of the landlord, and by rejecting every one of the many bills brought in to alleviate the condition of the tenant.

And the natural result followed. We took from the people every inducement to labour, every chance of receiving increased benefit from increased exertions, and, when they did not work with exceptional vigour, we abused them as idle. When they complained we punished them. When they cut down two or three trees we subjected them to transportation for seven years. We forbade them, under heavy penalties, to be out of their houses from one hour before sunset to one hour before sunrise. We flogged them in some cases nearly to death. In short we tied up the safety valve, and a terrible explosion was the result. In the autumn of 1845 potato disease showed itself in Ireland, and in 1846 "in a single night, and throughout the whole country, the entire crop was destroyed, almost to the last potato."

THE FAMINE.

And then came a famine such as no European land has known for long centuries—a famine which was awful in its sudden and widespread character, but which compelled even the most reluctant statesman to attend to it. The Irish cottier, in return for his labour, had the right to cultivate a wee plot of ground, just as much as in average times would keep him and his family in life. Everything went to the landlord—corn, grain, even all potatoes beyond those needed to support life. The people lived almost entirely upon the potato. We are told by scientists that the potato is a poor food, affording but little nutrition; but, on the other hand, it suited Irish soil, and the Irish climate suited it; it gave more return per acre than any other crop; and, though lacking in nutritive qualities, it supplied the bulk, without which digestive operations cannot be successfully carried on. In one night the crop failed absolutely. Starvation stared the whole land straight in the face.

Yes, and this was so, although that land was sending out daily great stores of grain to many distant lands, grain which would have kept the starving people who raised it alive, but not one seed of which dare they touch, not even for the sake of dear life itself. The good grain was the landlord's; the bad potato was the tenant's; and

the tenant must die the most lingering and painful of deaths rather than lay a hand on the wealth which he had himself created.

We talk of the Inquisition as something unrivalled for cruelty. It was bad enough, but centuries have passed since it was an active force, but the united (!) Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland was allowing men to suffer death in hundreds, only forty years ago, to save intact the rent of the landlords, and death by means as cruel as the worst which the Inquisition ever practised. Had Ireland then had its own Government the famine might have been prevented; it certainly would have been stopped long before it grew to a head, for Daniel O'Connell pleaded in the English Parliament, but pleaded in vain, for steps which had been effectual elsewhere to be tried in this case whilst yet there was time.

I cannot describe the terrors of the famine. They are too horrible, too discreditable to the English Government, to write about in detail. The facts about them are to be found in the newspapers of the day; in Mr. T. P. O'Connor's most valuable book, "The Parnell Movement"; in the late Mr. A. M. Sullivan's "New Ireland"; in the report of the Census Commissioners for 1851; and many other works. Let me only give the numerical facts which most men can fully understand and read into for themselves.

In the ten years 1841-1851, in Ireland, out of a population of 8,000,000 persons, there was a yearly average of 22,200 deaths from fever. In 1847 alone there were 57,095 cases. In 1847 29,446 persons died of dysentery; 35,989 died of cholera in 1848-49; and ophthalmia increased until in 1851 there were no fewer than 45,947 cases. Of deaths from starvation there are only 117 registered from 1831 to 1841, whilst there are 6,058 in the year 1847 alone, and 21,770 in the decennial period. The committals for crime of every description also increased with appalling rapidity. In 1848 there were 34,105 more than in 1847, and in 1849 3,467 more than in 1848. There was a regular exodus from Ireland. In 1847 there landed in two months in Glasgow 26,335 persons, and in four months at Liverpool 180,000. In the same year the number of emigrants to the United States rose until it reached 215,444. In 1841 the population of Ireland was 8,175,124. In 1851, had it increased at the same ratio as that of England and Wales, it would have been upwards of nine millions. It was only 6,615,794. Ireland had lost about two millions of her population; she had nearly 300,000 people fewer than in 1821.

The failure of the potato crop lasted for several years, and the blight was nearly as bad in 1849 as in 1845. The condition of the peasantry was simply awful. The taxes levied upon them to pay for the abortive and costly attempts to relieve their distress, the poor's rate of 23s. 1d. to the pound, crushed the power of exertion out of them. They were starved down almost to the point of death; they were physically exhausted; they were dispirited and distressed mentally by the scenes of horror and anguish amongst which they had lived for years. They had no outlook. The simple statements

of officials, published by the Census Commissioners, and speaking to facts which they had themselves observed, are so pathetic that you think as you read them this patient but dreadful suffering might have touched hearts of stone.

EVICTIIONS.

But it did not touch the hearts of the Irish landlords. During all this dreadful time their favourite game of eviction was carried briskly on. We realise with difficulty here in England what eviction means in Ireland. We find it hard to believe, as we read the very words of Government officials, that they can be recording the truth. It is impossible in a sketch like this to go into such a matter in any detail, but I hope that means will be taken to publish the full facts of the evictions between 1848 and 1856. An eviction is just as cruel now, and often quite as unfair now, as it was then, but there was then the additional barbarity of carrying it out against people who had suffered as the Irish people had during the great famine, and it could be and was enforced, not only against those who were unable to pay their rent, but against those who could and did pay it regularly.

I must give one or two instances of the kind of thing that went on, and I shall quote from a speech made by Sir Robert Peel upon the subject. He said in the House of Commons on June 8th, 1849, "I do not think that the records of any country, civil or barbarous, present materials for such a picture as is set forth in the statement of Captain Kennedy." Captain Kennedy was the representative of the Poor Law Commissioners in the Kilrush Union, and his reports are filled with facts about evictions, and Sir Robert Peel dwelt upon some of them. One case he mentioned of two children lying asleep on their father's corpse whilst their dying mother lay near them—all turned out of hearth and home. Another case he told of a man whose house had been destroyed, and who made himself and his children a shelter under some stones, but the agent destroyed it also whilst they were gathering shellfish for food. Captain Kennedy says, "These ruthless acts of barbarity are submitted to with an unresisting patience hardly credible"; and Sir Robert Peel remarks, "Such tragical instances I do not believe were ever presented, either in point of fact or as conjured up even in the imagination of any human being."

He also mentioned an eviction reported by Major McKie, who was another Government official, the evictor being a Mr. Blake, a justice of the peace in Galway. "It would appear from the evidence recorded that the forcible ejectments were illegal, that previous notices had not been served, and that the ejectments were perpetrated under circumstances of great cruelty. The time chosen was for the greater part nightfall on the eve of the New Year. The occupiers were forced out of their houses with their helpless children, and left exposed to the cold on a bleak Western shore on a

stormy winter's night ; some of the children were sick ; the parents implored that they might not be exposed, and their houses left till morning ; their prayers for mercy were in vain, and many of them have since died."

And this was in a Christian land,
Where men kneel off and pray !

I shall only give one more instance, and that a thoroughly typical one, which occurred near Mount Nugent, county Cavan, in September, 1847. Dr. Nulty, the Bishop of Meath, was an eye-witness of it, and he says :—"Seven hundred human beings were driven from their homes in one day, and set adrift on the world, to gratify the caprice of one who, before God and man, probably deserved less consideration than the last and least of them. And we remember well that there was not a single shilling of rent due on the estate at the time, except by one man. . . .

"The Crow-bar Brigade, employed on the occasion to extinguish the hearths and demolish the homes of honest, industrious men, worked away with a will at their awful calling until evening. At length an incident occurred that varied the monotony of the grim, ghastly ruin which they were spreading all around. They stopped suddenly, and recoiled panic-stricken with terror from the dwellings which they were directed to destroy with the rest. They had just learned that a frightful typhus fever held these houses in its grasp, and had already brought pestilence and death to its inmates. They, therefore, supplicated the agent to spare these houses a little longer ; but the agent was inexorable, and insisted that the houses should come down. The ingenuity with which he extricated himself from the difficulties of the situation was characteristic alike of the heartlessness of the man, and of the cruel necessities of the work in which he was engaged. He ordered a large winnowing-sheet to be secured over the beds in which the fever victims lay—fortunately they happened to be perfectly delirious at the time—and then directed the houses to be unroofed cautiously and slowly, 'because,' he said, 'he very much disliked the bother and discomfort of a coroner's inquest.' I administered the last sacrament of the Church to four of these fever victims next day ; and, save the above-mentioned winnowing-sheet, there was not then a roof nearer to me than the canopy of heaven.

"The horrid scenes I then witnessed I must remember all my life long. The wailing of women—the screams, the terror, the consternation of children—the speechless agony of honest, industrious men—wrung tears of grief from all who saw them. I saw the officers and men of a large police force, who were obliged to attend on the occasion, cry like children at beholding the cruel sufferings of the very people whom they would be obliged to butcher had they offered the least resistance. The heavy rains that usually attend the autumnal equinoxes descended in cold, copious torrents throughout the night, and at once revealed to these

houseless sufferers the awful realities of their condition. I visited them next morning, and rode from place to place administering to them all the comfort and consolation I could. The appearance of men, women, and children as they emerged from the ruins of their former homes—saturated with rain, blackened and besmeared with soot, shivering in every member from cold and misery—presented positively the most appalling spectacle I ever looked at. The landed proprietors in a circle all around, and for many miles in every direction, warned their tenantry, with threats of their direst vengeance, against the humanity of extending to any of them the hospitality of a single night's shelter. Many of these poor people were unable to emigrate with their families; while at home the hand of every man was thus raised against them. They were driven from the land in which Providence had placed them; and, in the state of society surrounding them, every other walk of life was rigidly closed against them. What was the result? After battling in vain with privation and pestilence, they at last graduated from the Workhouse to the tomb, and in a little more than three years nearly a fourth of them lay quietly in their graves."

But even after the proof of this paper has been corrected in this first month of the year of grace (?) 1887, comes the following account from the Killarney district of Ireland, where Lord Kenmare and Mr. Herbert, of Muckcross, seem to be trying who will evict the most tenants:—"Patrick Leary's house was first visited. He has nine children. The tenant could not afford to pay a farthing. The children all tattered in rags were seated round the turf fire, imparting warmth to their naked limbs, and when the police put in an appearance their heartrending cries could not fail to send a thrill of pity through the spectators. The bailiffs quickly set to work in removing the furniture, &c., and in order to facilitate the removal they were broken up and thrown on a manure heap opposite the door. It was in vain that Leary and his wife expostulated with the bailiff to be allowed to seek temporary shelter in an outhouse. They were put out in a blinding storm of hail. The poor woman sought shelter alongside the furniture, which was piled upon the road. She had a child, about two years of age, in her arms, who cried bitterly. Three other little bareheaded children standing in the snow, without shoes or substantial clothing to keep out the intense cold, were blinded by hailstones, threw themselves under the skirts of their mother's gown for shelter, and were sobbing and weeping intensely. A little child, about nine months old, was wrapped up in a blanket in the arms of his sister. The police appeared to be visibly moved. Leary held the place under a lease at the yearly rent of £22, the valuation being £16 5s. Only twice did he get a reduction of 2s. in the pound. He asked to be allowed into the Land Court to have a fair rent fixed, but was refused. To-day he asked French, the bailiff, for time to pay a part of what was due, but the former said it was Mr. Hussey he had to deal with, and no compromise was come to. There are only about three acres in the entire holding for tillage, the

rest being mountains and rocks. The present tenant came into the place ten years ago. He and Looney are the only two tenants in the place, and the nearest farmer's house is three miles, so that the probability is that they had to take shelter by the ditch for the night, as they got no notice of the eviction, and consequently could not go to their friends to-day, who would provide them shelter. A move was next made to the house of Timothy Looney. He was not able to afford to pay any rent, and he asked for time, but the bailiff would not listen to this. He has seven young children, his wife, and his aged father, eighty years of age, leaning on two crutches. The place was in possession of the family from time immemorial. The poor old man was not permitted to remain for the night, and probably to-day's proceedings will end his days. Before leaving, I saw Looney improvising a sort of shelter by the side of an outhouse, composed of beds and furniture, where they were going to put up for the night. The rent Looney was paying was £25, while the valuation is only £15 5s. Two years' rent was due."

THE RULE OF THE ESTATE.

Such was and such is an eviction. Remember that up to 1870, only sixteen years ago, the system continued in all its rigour. At any time and upon any pretext a man might be turned out from his home. The house he or his fore-elders had built might be pulled down about his ears, and he might be driven away from the land to which he had given all its value, the owner quietly pocketing the benefit of the exertions of generations of tenants. The tenant might have paid that rent which justly had never become due with perfect regularity, still out he must go. The landlord held in his hands that which meant life or death to his tenant, and he availed himself in many instances of this power to the full. Upon the Lansdowne Estates, for example, tenants were forbidden to marry without the agent's permission. On the same estates a tenant sheltered his sister-in-law whilst her husband was seeking work. The rule of the estate was that no stranger should be taken in. The poor woman was approaching her confinement, and she was removed to a shed on a relative's land, where the child was born. The relative was fined a gale of rent, and made to pull the shed down. The poor sick woman took refuge in a cavern on the mountain, and for allowing it the tenants who jointly grazed the land had two other fines levied upon them. Sir John Gray, quoting Chief Baron Pigott's words in passing sentence upon persons accused of the manslaughter of a boy of twelve years of age, spoke thus of evictions and of the rules of this and many other estates, the breaches of which being punished by eviction became imperative and dangerous laws, laws which men must obey or suffer the result, which, to an Irishman, is worse than death. The boy's "mother at one time held a little dwelling, from which she was expelled. His father was dead. His mother had left him, and he was alone and unprotected. He found refuge with his

grandmother, who held a little farm, from which she was removed in consequence of harbouring this poor boy, as the agent of the property had given public notice to the tenantry that expulsion from their farms would be the penalty inflicted upon them if they harboured any persons having no residence on the estate. These two cases showed that the tenantry were, because of the extraordinary powers conferred by law on landlords, in such a state of serfdom that the mother could not receive her daughter, that the grandmother could not receive her own grandchild, unless that child was a tenant on the estate; and the result, in the case he was referring to, was this—that the poor boy, without a house to shelter him, was sought to be forced into the house of a relative in a terrible night of storm and rain. He was immediately pushed out again, he staggered on a little, fell to the ground, and next morning was found cold, stiff, and dead. The persons who drove the poor boy out were tried for the offence of being accessories to his death, and their defence was that what they did was done under the terror of ‘the rule of the estate,’ and that they meant no harm to the boy.”

Now, Englishmen and Englishwomen, who have the love of your own little ones deeply implanted in your hearts, who have understood how close the ties of blood are amongst the Irish people, who know what the land which they have made and which is their one hope and their only home means to them, can you not understand how these accursed laws which allow men who have done nothing for them, who have never seen the land from which they have sucked all the improved annual value, who in the sight of God are unjust and extortioners, to turn them and their little ones adrift on the world, homeless and houseless, make the crimes and outrages of which you hear so much, and such exaggerations, not only possible but certain? I have not given you the worst cases. If you will look into the books and papers, which are accessible to all, you will read for yourselves scores of instances as bad, and at times even worse, than anything I have told. And remember that in the four years from 1849 to 1852 there were 221,845 evictions, and that in each there was misery to a family of our fellow-beings involved, and that even yet, this very day, the same infernal work is going forward wherever a man is unable to pay his rent, from whatever cause, and that we English people are paying for it, and providing police and soldiers that it may be done effectually.

THE ENCUMBERED ESTATES ACT.

The first step taken by the English Parliament to improve the Irish land laws made the condition of the tenant worse. In 1848 the Encumbered Estates Act was passed, and it enabled estates to be sold upon the application of owners or encumbrancers without the restrictions which would ordinarily have applied to such transactions, and at a moderate cost, whilst the Commission which was appointed to make the necessary sales granted to the purchaser an

indefeasible title, including the authority to put him in legal possession. The landlords who had heavy mortgages on their estates were obliged to sell them, and that at a time when the value of land was unusually low. There was thus a great inducement to land speculators to purchase estates for the mere object of getting as much out of them as could be got, and the new proprietors had, in most cases, even less thought and care for the peasants from whom their profit was to be obtained than the old ones had. In too many instances the landlords alone got any benefit. The tenants had exchanged King Log for King Stork.

THE CONSTANT NEED OF AN INDEPENDENT IRISH PARLIAMENT.

At every step which the English Parliament had taken since the year 1800, how painfully conscious must the Irish people have been of the evil nature of the first step then taken: how cruelly they were made to feel, even in the blind attempts which were made to benefit them, that the one need of Ireland, as of every land, is self-government.

Constantly during the whole of the period there was tumult, disorder, agrarian violence and crime in Ireland. That is the uniform experience of all Governments which endeavour to rule by force and against the will of the people governed. No man who will give a calm and fair hearing to the facts of the union, of the land system, of the electoral, social, and religious disabilities under which the Irish people laboured, but must admit that there was more than sufficient cause for the violence which frequently prevailed. At the same time, and although it must be confessed that the English attention was often only really turned to Ireland by some terrible outbreak, I am firmly persuaded that then, as later, the policy of meeting wrong by wrong was in itself a wrong one, and did much to prevent the English people opening their eyes to the truth about Irish affairs. The calm and patient attitude which the great majority of the Irish Catholics have maintained during the trying period which has elapsed since the failure of Mr. Gladstone's grand attempt to settle the most difficult of questions, has won for them the admiration, sympathy, and support of the people of England as well as of all free countries.

But it is well to remember that, as John Bright said in 1866, he believed "it was true that there is no Christian nation with which we are acquainted amongst the people of which crime of the ordinary character . . . is so rare"; in this, as in all matters, it is well to keep in mind the great teaching of the Talmud, "Judge not thy brother until thou hast stood in his place." *We* look on from a safe distance. These questions are with us of the nature of pious opinions; they do not affect our own lives, the welfare of those dearest to us, the happiness and existence of our own people. No kid-gloved politicians or rose-water reforms are suited to the needs of the bitter Irish question.

DISESTABLISHMENT.

One of the terrible outbreaks to which I have alluded drew the attention of prominent English politicians to the startling anomaly of the Church Establishment in Ireland. The position of that Establishment had been frequently canvassed in Parliament, but it had not really received any thought here. As Mr. Gladstone said himself, "Nobody cared for it; nobody paid attention to it in England." Is that not the secret of Irish discontent? Is not that what really lies at the bottom of the demand for a separate Parliament? Irish questions are not cared for or attended to until English statesmen take them up, and then they are dealt with from an English point of view, and so never dealt with in accordance with Irish wishes. Now English statesmen began to expatiate upon Irish grievances. Some men who were then looked upon as dangerous, and called by the Tory Press "itinerant agitators," had long pleaded for religious equality in Ireland. Twenty years before the Irish Church was disestablished John Bright's sympathetic voice had been raised in the House of Commons in favour of such a measure, and again and again had he given expression to his views. In 1849 he said, "My opinion is that the course which Parliament has taken with respect to Ireland for upwards of a century, and especially since the union, has been in accordance with the wishes of the proprietors of the land of that country. If, therefore, there has been misgovernment in Ireland during that period, it is the land which has influenced Parliament, and the landowners are responsible. . . . This it is which has proved fatal to the interests of Ireland; the Ulster men have stood in the way of improvements in the franchise, in the Church, and in the land question; they have purchased Protestant ascendancy, and the price paid for it is the ruin and degradation of their country." And, again, in the same speech he said:—"The people of Ulster say we shall weaken the union. It has been one of the misfortunes of the legislation of this House that there has been no honest attempt to make a union with the whole people of Ireland up to this time. We have had a union with Ulster, but there has been no union with the whole people of Ireland, and there never can be a union between the Government and the people whilst such a state of things exists as has for many years prevailed in the south and west of Ireland."

One of the first measures carried by the first Government in which Mr. Bright held office was the disestablishment of the Irish Church. It is strange now to look back upon the wild storm of words with which Mr. Gladstone and his supporters were assailed in 1869. Abuse, scandal, calumny seemed to exhaust all their resources. Threats of what would happen in Ulster were heard even in the House of Commons, although in those days no leading "Loyalist" openly advocated the use of force to frustrate law. As for the Ulster Orangemen themselves, they were in a state of frenzy. "The Queen should be reminded that one of her ancestors, who swore to

maintain the Protestant religion, forgot his oath, and his crown was kicked into the Boyne." "We must tell our gracious Queen that if she breaks her oath she has no longer any claim to the crown." "If the Church Establishment be destroyed in Ireland, there cannot, there shall not, there must not be peace in Ireland. If they think the Protestants of Ireland will succumb without a struggle they know not the men with whom they have to deal. That I say solemnly before God." "We will fight as men alone can fight who have the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other."

If the sword is to be used with one hand the Bible had better be left at home. "I don't want to go no fuder then my Testyment fer that." The above are a few of the sayings of the pugnacious Protestant preachers of the Gospel of peace who hold forth in Ulster. And the laity were not behindhand. Man after man, many of them of high position, solemnly declared that the Protestants would fight; that they were organised, and prepared to die for the Establishment. Others declared that if the Irish Church Bill became law the Protestants would hold the Act of Union virtually repealed; that the two countries would be separated for ever; that "they would reject the iron hoof of England and get rid of the Papacy at the same time—driving two serpents out of the land at once."

But all this pother ended in smoke. When Mr. Gladstone's Bill was rejected the other day the Orange enthusiasts celebrated their victory by killing some Catholics, but when his Bill became law in 1869 they did not even do that. True, in those days they had not had the countenance or counsel of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain or Lord Randolph Churchill.

ORANGEISM.

As much the same kind of storm was raised in the year which is past over Mr. Gladstone's proposed measure, let us for a moment inquire what Orangeism is that it should claim so complete a monopoly of consideration, and whether Ulster is really the Protestant colony which the Orangemen would have us consider it.

I have spoken of the origin of the Orange movement. It was founded with the view of driving the Catholics out of the northern counties of Ireland by wrecking their houses. "To hell or to Connaught with you," was the cry of these Protestant lodges, by which it is stated that 7,000 Catholics were driven out of County Armagh. In 1798 Lord Gosford, the governor of that county, stated that "a persecution, accompanied with all the circumstances of ferocious cruelty which have in all ages distinguished that frightful calamity, is now raging in this country. . . . The only crime which the wretched objects of this merciless persecution are charged with is a crime of easy proof: it is simply a profession of the Roman Catholic faith. A lawless banditti have constituted themselves judges of this species of delinquency, and the sentence they pronounce is equally concise and terrible; it is nothing less than a confiscation of all property and immediate banishment.

. . . In what history of human cruelty have we read of more than half the inhabitants of a populous country deprived at one blow of the means as well as the fruits of their industry, and driven, in the midst of an inclement winter, to seek shelter for themselves and their helpless families where chance may guide them? . . . These horrors are now acting, and acting with impunity."

But Orangeism spread rapidly in Ireland, and flowed across to England. The members of the lodges swore to "defend the King and his heirs so long as they support the Protestant ascendancy." The wretched Duke of Cumberland was elected Grand Master in 1827, with an absolute veto and a power of issuing commands which every Orangeman was bound to obey; and in 1835 Mr. Hume obtained a Parliamentary committee to investigate the whole position of Orange lodges, as there was a strong belief amongst the people generally that they entertained the treasonable design of setting aside the Princess Victoria, and placing the Duke of Cumberland upon the throne. The evidence proved, amongst other things, that there were lodges in nearly every regiment of the army, formed under warrants signed by the Duke. He declared that he did not know of the existence of such lodges, but he was censured by the House of Commons, and it was actually proposed to indict him for conspiracy.

The Orange lodges aggravated in every way the religious difficulties which, at the time they were established, seemed about to cease to exist. The Liberals to a man, and all the better Conservatives, looked upon them with the strongest dislike. In 1836 the Duke of Cumberland, in reply to the vote of censure, stated that he had already recommended the dissolution of the Orange societies throughout Ireland. They have never ceased to exist. They have never ceased to be centres of mischief. When the Nationalist party in 1883 resolved to hold public meetings in Ulster to prepare for the general election, the Orangemen organised an armed resistance to them. Openly and plainly was the doctrine of physical force preached. Lord Claud Hamilton, Mr. Murray Ker, and others, as well as the Orange newspapers, used language of a far more incendiary nature than that which the Nationalist leaders had been imprisoned without trial for using. And it is in the recollection of everyone how, last year, the same Orange leaders openly declared that they would rebel, and line the ditches of Ulster with rifles in undisguised and violent revolution, if the Parliament, which they as Loyalists were bound to obey, allowed Ireland to manage her own affairs for herself.

RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION.

It is difficult to say whether the Orangemen are more wicked or contemptible, but there is a large body of earnest and devout people in Ulster who are neither, and who oppose the proposed Home Rule upon religious grounds conscientiously held. They deserve our most

earnest consideration, but we must not forget that the Ulster Presbyterians did not always take the position towards England which they now hold. They were the very founders of the United Irishmen, as I have already shown. They forget their religious hate in their political anxiety. They have in more recent times thrown in their part and lot with their old persecutors, the Episcopalians, and it is not strange that when for long centuries the church of the minority has been dominant, when the Administration favours and recognises that dominancy even to-day, when the majority have won any kind of recognition slowly and painfully, that the minority should struggle fiercely to retain its favoured position.

The fact that Daniel O'Connell was tried in 1843 by a jury upon which not a Catholic was allowed to sit—the fact that at this very time the Conservative Government is endeavouring to secure the conviction of Irish political leaders by the same miserable device—speak volumes as to the real cause which leads the Protestants of Ulster to take the stand they do against Home Rule.

RELIGION IN ULSTER.

But Ulster is not the Protestant preserve many Englishmen imagine. There are nine counties in it, and in five of these the Catholics are in a majority. In Cavan county, for instance, there are 19,022 Episcopalians, 4,396 Presbyterians, and 104,685 Catholics. Taking the whole of Ulster, there are :—

Episcopalians	...	...	...	379,402	
Presbyterians	...	...	...	451,629	
					831,031
Other denominations	...	..		78,478	
					909,509
Catholics	...	...	...	833,566	833,566
Total population	...	...	...		1,743,075

Now Ulster returns thirty-three members to Parliament, and out of them seventeen are Home Rulers and followers of Mr. Parnell, and we therefore find that, taking the whole of Ireland, and remembering that, at the last election, the one question was Home Rule, three and a-half out of the four provinces of Ireland were in favour of Mr. Gladstone's measures.

RELIGIOUS FEARS.

But it has frequently been said to me by Englishmen, who are anxious to do what is right in this matter, "Is there not a reasonable fear that when the Catholics once get control they will avenge the long centuries of cruelty and oppression under which their forefathers suffered?" Most of us have friends and relatives in Ireland, and they are divided upon this question, and we have been driven to consider it very closely. There are good and kind landlords who

have duly recognised their responsibilities, and, amongst them, there is an almost universal feeling against Home Rule, and a dread of power being in the hands of the majority, because that majority is Catholic. This point becomes, therefore, one of great importance, and it is necessary to give very plain reasons for the belief that in this, as in all other cases, it is right that we should recognise the rule, which has been long laid down in our political affairs, and that the majority should govern.

It is important to remember that the Home Rule movement did not begin with the Roman Catholics or the Nationalist party, but that at the meeting which was held on May 19th, 1870, at the Bilton Hotel, in Dublin, men of many faiths were present, and the Conservatives were largely represented. Major Knox, the proprietor of the Conservative organ, the *Irish Times*; Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Purdon, the Conservative Lord Mayor of Dublin, and others, assisted at the foundation of the "Home Government Association of Ireland," and assented to the resolution—"That it is the opinion of this meeting that the true remedy for the evils of Ireland is the establishment of an Irish Parliament with full control over our domestic affairs." By the scheme which the association formulated, Ireland was to have the exclusive control of Irish business, whilst the Imperial Parliament retained the control of Imperial affairs. The Irish Protestants were mainly instrumental in starting the Home Rule movement. Their opposition to it when Mr. Gladstone proposes to carry out their views is, at least, somewhat inconsistent.

In the second place there is a considerable Protestant minority still in favour of it, and the Protestant Home Rule Association is not the only evidence of this. I have met Protestants from different parts of Ireland who have lived long in the country, and who support the measure because they have never had any difficulty in dealing with their Catholic neighbours. This has been emphatically the case where the Protestants have been in a great minority. Some of the men I allude to are large employers of labour, and we have gentlemen well known in Newcastle and resident here, but interested in works in Ireland, who bear the same testimony.

Lord Spencer, who has had greater opportunities than perhaps any other Englishman of looking at this matter from a dispassionate and unprejudiced standpoint, has distinctly stated that he sees no reason to apprehend any attempt on the part of the Catholics to oppress the Protestants.

And history bears out this view. "The Irish have not generally been an intolerant or persecuting people," says Mr. Lecky. "During the atrocious persecutions of Mary, the English Protestants were totally unmolested in Ireland. The massacre of Protestants in 1642 was so little due to religious causes that the only Englishman of eminence who was treated by the rebels with reverence and care was Bishop Bedell, who was one of the most energetic Protestants of his age, and the first Irish bishop who endeavoured to proselytise among the Catholics." The wretched prosecution of

witches which was so universal in England and Scotland during the seventeenth century scarcely found any footing in Ireland, and the first Act of James II.'s Parliament, in which only six Protestants sat, was to pass a measure of religious equality.

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

And surely it is only fair to admit that the worst religious intolerance of to-day has not been exhibited by the Roman Catholics. There are Protestant members of Boards of Guardians and Town Councils, and Protestants are elected to positions of trust, responsibility, and profit in most of the districts in Ireland where the Catholics are in an overwhelming majority, but where the Protestants have the upper hand no such catholicity of action is evinced. There are 208,000 people in Belfast itself; one third of that number are Catholics, and yet in forty years only two Catholics have been elected to the Town Council. As a matter of fact the positions of trust, of honour, of emolument, of official responsibility in Ireland are practically monopolised by the Protestants.

In the greatest test of all, that of representation in Parliament, there are innumerable instances of Catholic constituencies returning Protestant members, and the great leader of the Home Rule movement, Mr. Parnell himself, is a Protestant, as was his predecessor, Mr. Butt.

Then it is said that the priests have absolute power over their flocks in Ireland, and that they will use that power for the aggrandisement of their faith at the expense of Protestantism. The arguments I have used seem to me to confute this statement, but what a lurid light it throws upon the conduct of the Protestant minority towards the Roman Catholic majority! We all alike hold the golden rule, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do to you." Is Ireland, then, to be the one exception to prove that rule?

I have no love for priests of any denomination as priests. I believe in one mediator, and one alone, between man and God. But I can well understand the devotion of the Roman Catholic peasantry to their priests, and their deep affection for them, and the devotion and affection do both priests and peasants alike infinite credit. We should admit this as of course in any other country but Ireland. There can be no doubt that, in that land, the priests have an influence which is probably without a parallel in the world. In this sketch of Irish history I have shown how we have taken good care that this should be so. But whilst I hope that in religious matters their influence for good may continue, I am persuaded that, in political matters, as soon as Ireland has the full and free control of her own affairs, that will happen which has happened in every land in our own day where the people have gained their liberty. The people will look to their spiritual leaders for direction in religious matters, but to their political leaders in all others. France, Italy, Hungary all teach us that lesson.

And the religious animosity which now divides Ireland into two hostile camps will die in Ireland, as it has died elsewhere, before the influence of common needs, common hopes, common objects, in every day life. This will not be the work of a day nor of a generation. Evil ways are not easily destroyed. Mistakes there may be, difficulties there will be, but difficulties as great have been overcome in other lands. Few places leave the leisurely visitor a more charming recollection than the little town of Heidelberg. Lying between the Odenwald, through which the lovely Bergstrasse makes its way, and the more distant Schwarzwald, the Neckar winding among the richly-wooded hills and through the town to the fertile plain where the Rhine receives it, and far away the blue Alsatian mountains closing in the view, it is difficult to imagine a more peaceful scene. The vast ruin of the castle, interesting beyond all others for its history, its architectural variety and beauty, and the glory of its position, rises proudly above the town, and everywhere the woods and meadows vie in quiet loveliness. Yet few places have been so filled with the demon of religious discord. Thrice was it burned and ten times besieged. The town itself has been bombarded five times, twice laid in ashes, and thrice taken by storm and given up to the cruellest pillage. The town where Jerome of Prague, the favourite companion and friend of John Huss, fixed his famous theses to the door of St. Peter's Church, it was conspicuous above all in religious strife. Its sufferings were from religious war. Even up to 1693 the cruelties practised upon the Protestants of the town by the French troops were almost without parallel. And yet the last time I visited it the great church in which many Electors and Counts of Palatinate lie buried was divided down the middle by a wooden partition, and the Protestants worshipped quietly and peacefully at one side of the whitewashed deal boards and the Catholics at the other.

And I smiled to think God's greatness flows around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His rest.

THE IRISH LAND ACT, 1870.

With the disestablishment of the Church a new era in the dealings of England with Ireland began. In 1870 the first Land Act became law, and the English people believed that a great act of justice had been done, and that a final measure had been passed. But the voices of the more advanced Irish party were not listened to. They had consistently and persistently pointed out that the remedy proposed did not go to the root of the disease, and that, in some respects, it would but aggravate the evils which it was intended to cure. The Act sought to create fixity of tenure for the tenant so long as he continued to pay his rent, and to insure him compensation in any event for the improvements which he had made, but it was an imperfect and complicated measure, and its working soon showed that the views of the Irish members were correct. The landlords had retained "their power to arbitrarily increase their rents,

irrespective of the value of the holdings on their estates." The Act only provided for compensation in case of eviction. Eviction for non-payment of rent was a simple process if the rent were only made sufficiently high, and it was held that, where a tenant was evicted for non-payment of rent he lost, his right to compensation for improvements. Thus the Act failed to carry out its object. In some instances rents were raised as high as 500 per cent. In the three years before 1870, the notices to quit served in Ireland were 4,253; in the three years after, 5,641; and in the two years from October 1875 to October 1877, 8,439. The Irish members, who declared that the measure was imperfect and unsatisfactory, and could in no sense be final, were amply justified by the facts, although in introducing it, Mr. Gladstone had said—"I am sanguine in the hope that it will pass, not as the triumph of a party, but as a great work of goodwill for the common good of our common country, and that its result will be to diffuse the blessings of peace, order, and industry over a smiling land."

May our Unionist friends not learn something from the high hope with which this measure was introduced, and the failure which it has proved? They insist upon Ireland being governed by our Parliament, and that our Parliament can and will redress Irish grievances as effectually as an Irish Parliament could and would. And yet every fact of history teaches that this is not so; that we have failed in our best-intentioned work because we would look at Irish affairs through English spectacles; that, with a strange fatuity, whenever the chosen representatives of Ireland have told us that *we* were mistaken, we have replied that *they* were, and have gone our own road in despite of their warning, and have found that they were right after all. We must consider what the future will be by the light of what the past has been, and it is futile to say that from this time forward there will be a change, and that Ireland will be listened to. With her own Parliament she will redress her grievances and order her affairs in her own way. So long as our Parliament governs her we shall attend to her in our way. That way may be better in our opinion, but she has the right to her opinion also. Indeed the rejection of Mr. Gladstone's Irish measures itself shows the kind of attention the English Parliament is prepared to give to the will of the Irish people as expressed by their chosen representatives.

Between 1871 and 1880 no fewer than twenty-eight measures to amend or extend the provisions of the Irish Land Act, 1870, were introduced into Parliament; but not one of them was carried. What marvel that the Irish people despaired of obtaining justice from that body, which treated every effort their leaders made with contempt, and that they were forced into the adoption of means which were contrary to the law, and that there were terrible outrages from time to time which threw back any hope of reform, and were deplored by no men more truly than by those Irish leaders whom it suits the greater part of the London Press to denounce as

the confederates of assassins, but against whom the men who held highest office in Ireland, and who alone had the opportunity of knowing the whole of the facts, declare that there is not a tittle of evidence.

THE END OF COERCION.

In 1880 Ireland had suffered exceptional repressive legislation for more than seven years. The Tory party were defeated by a great majority at the general election, and brighter days seemed in store for that unhappy country. I need not dwell upon the story which we all know too well, how the House of Lords contemptuously rejected the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, and how, after a bitter period of doubt, the Liberal party took the old road of coercive legislation, and, under the guidance of the men who had declared that "force was no remedy," and that "to the Irish peasant a sentence of eviction was a sentence of death," proceeded to crush out crime by the severest exceptional legislation, and, with crime, to class, and to endeavour to crush, legitimate political agitation. Their attempt failed, but it opened the eyes of the English people, as nothing else could have done, to what coercion really means. It little becomes those of us who took part against Ireland so recently to judge harshly those Liberals who have refused to leave the ways we ourselves then trod with them. We have learned the truth which our newspapers so long and so sedulously concealed from us. We have at length, and not without much earnest study of the causes which have made Ireland what she is, learned that we have been punishing her people vicariously and for our own defaults, and we believe that those who are not blinded irretrievably by passion and prejudice, by an insane love of power, and a blind zeal for English supremacy and Protestant ascendancy, will, ere long, be at one with us. They will see that to speak of Ireland as a sister country at the same time as they insist upon England's being supreme over her in her domestic affairs is to indulge in a contradiction in terms, and that Protestant ascendancy in a Roman Catholic country is a scandal to the cherished Liberal belief in religious equality.

THE IRISH LAND ACT, 1881.

But in 1881 another and a very earnest attempt was made to deal with the land question. The Bill which Mr. Gladstone introduced was a bold and sweeping measure, and, like its predecessor, it showed unmistakably the immense progress which the views of the Irish party had made. Many men who took part in the debates upon this scheme had suffered imprisonment for the fair, if forcible, expression of the very views which it formulated. But the Irish party again pointed out that the measure was endeavouring to accomplish the impossible. It was aimed at providing that "the three F's—fair rent, fair sale, and fixity of tenure, should thence-

forward be the law of the land." It gave the Irish tenant privileges unknown to the English tenant, but it created what was practically a joint ownership in the soil between persons who had conflicting interests, and that was not a practical arrangement. Again the Irish members urged their objections to the measure. Again they brought forward amendment after amendment, which, with but little exception, were rejected by the body which may be "as safely trusted to redress the grievances of Ireland as an Irish Parliament itself," and again have events proved that they were in the right. It would be absurd to say that nothing had been gained by the passing of this measure, but the very existence of the "plan of campaign" shows how ineffectually it has met the real difficulty. Sir James Caird has shown how, in cases numbering hundreds of thousands, the tenants are simply unable to get the rent out of the land. In some parts the holding is of a bare bit of rock upon which the tenant has built his cabin, and his summer work in England and the sale of shellfish picked up on the sea-shore have to pay the landlord interest upon the capital the unfortunate tenant has expended, for the holding itself can produce nothing whatever. These cases are extreme ones, but there are thousands of instances in which the hard-earned harvest wages of Irishmen in England, now much reduced by the general introduction of agricultural machinery, and the contributions of sons and daughters settled in Canada and America to the needs of the old folks at home, all are swept away to satisfy the insatiable rent-dragon, and yet to-day evictions for non-payment of rent are going forward with Unionist approval and at the expense of English taxpayers, as though rent in Ireland was infinitely of more value in the eyes of English statesmen than the lives of Irish peasants.

In 1881, 17,341 tenants were evicted. In 1882, after a fierce struggle with the House of Lords, Mr. Gladstone's Government passed the Arrears Act; an Act which Mr. T. P. O'Connor states was simply an adaptation of one drafted by Mr. Parnell when a prisoner in Kilmainham gaol. The object of the Arrears Act was to stay evictions, but the landlords have still remained the true masters of the situation.

CONCLUSION.

I have now traced the dealings of England with Ireland from the reign of Henry II. to the present time. I have tried to do this fairly, and have endeavoured, by careful research, to verify my facts. Here I must leave the question. In government we still insist upon Ireland's submitting even her most simple domestic affairs to the useless and ineffective supremacy of the English Parliament. In religion the view which even Liberationist statesmen of the Unionist type favour is that of Protestant ascendancy. In commerce, Ireland has gained free trade, but her debt had increased from £22,345,190, at the time of the union, to £154,602,769 in 1817, when the finances of both countries were combined, and even at the present

time, poor and over-burdened Ireland contributes more than twice her proper share to the Imperial Exchequer. The land question is still a burning question, and in it, as in commerce, Ireland still feels keenly the effect of the vicious legislation of past centuries. We can point to no single department in which Ireland has had the justice done to her which a Parliament devoted to her business, and understanding all her affairs, could and would have done. It makes no difference whether the question be a great or small one, the English Parliament cannot and will not attend to it. Ireland could not even close her public-houses on Sunday when the vast majority of the nation asked that she should be allowed to do so, because English members thought her people should still have the privilege of getting drunk when they did not want it. All the information which Parliament receives comes through Englishmen appointed from the exigencies of party, who derive their information from permanent officials, who, as a rule, are not Irishmen; and questions relating to the local necessities of remote Irish districts have to be submitted to the decision of men who have never been in Ireland, who could not point out the districts, the subjects of discussion, upon the map, and who, in any conflict of opinion, naturally adopt the authorised version—the view of the Irish official filtered through the English Minister. Two facts illustrate the true position of Ireland in the councils of the empire to-day. In Mr. Gladstone's last brief Administration, the only one to which Irishmen have given confidence, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was a Scotchman, and the Irish Secretary an Englishman. Again Ireland is now the great subject of political discussion. Our Unionist friends profess the warmest wish to do Ireland good in any way but its own. And yet there is probably not one Unionist who would not feel personally aggrieved if he were to hear that Mr. Gladstone or Lord Hartington had invited Mr. Parnell to stay with him, and discuss the Irish question in all its bearings.

England has tried in these late years to act fairly and justly towards Ireland. With the best intentions she has grievously failed, and she has failed because she has refused to see that that which is good for her is not necessarily good for every other people. But she has now awakened to the true state of the case. That which has been can never be again. It is but a question of time, and Ireland's independence will be won.

Nor can I finish these papers without one word of grateful reference to the great leader who has brought the Irish question into its present position. Mr. Gladstone has failed in his noblest endeavour. He is beaten, and another reigns in his stead. It is the hour of triumph of his many enemies, of all who detest earnestness and worship success. And of those who followed and flattered him in his time of power, not a few have turned against him. No term of contempt, hatred, or opprobrium has been too vile to hurl at him. No ass in the political world but has ventured to raise his heel against the fallen lion. And yet the people of England do not

recognise that fall, and history will avenge him. When the petty spite and passion of to-day have passed for ever, posterity will see but the sublimity of the man who, "at a time when nature craves repose," at an age when most men have ceased to be open to fresh impressions, daring to acknowledge the mistakes which he himself has made, steps calmly down once more into the great arena of political strife, and, deserted by his most trusted friends and oldest colleagues, strikes such a blow for the freedom of an oppressed people that, though he himself be the sacrifice, the victory must be won.

But he stood sad before the sun,
 The peoples felt their fate—
 The world is many, I am one—
 My great deed was too great.
 God's fruits of justice ripen slow ;
 Men's hearts are narrow—let them grow ;
 My brothers, we must wait.

Yes. We must wait, but not for long. Power is now in the hands of the people, and they will not be blinded by political passion or religious prejudice. They are awake to the injustice of England's treatment of Ireland when power was in the hands of the few. Darkness as of night hangs over that unhappy country, "darkness which may be felt," but the deepest darkness is that which precedes the dawn. Already upon the political horizon the eye of the watcher may discern the faint glimmer of the approaching day—the day of true union between two free and sister peoples, a union founded upon mutual respect and cemented by mutual love.

December, 1886.

NOTE.—Since the preceding pages were written "darkness which may be felt" has once more settled down upon unhappy Ireland. Tories and Dissident Liberals, vieing with each other in their eager haste to crush that League which the Irish people "believe is their salvation," and which alone stands between them and the cruellest oppression, propose to insure their object by placing liberty in the keeping of the Lord Lieutenant (appropriately enough a Castlereagh) and the Irish Attorney-General! Once more the Orangemen are to have full ascendancy and the landlords are still to have the full power of the British Empire at their backs to enforce the payment of unjust rents, the cost of their collection being defrayed by the taxpayers of the United Kingdom. To accustom all men to the suspension of political safeguards and constitutional rights, and to compel the Irish people to submit cheerfully to injustice, new and ingenious devices have been discovered by which religious and political equality shall alike be abolished. In the hands of the Tories and Dissidents united the venom is to be extracted from the poison, and "the ever-failing

remedy" is to succeed. And, for the first time, that all hope may be for ever abandoned, and that Ireland may learn that never shall she be governed by equal laws with England and Scotland, the coercive and exceptional legislation is to be permanent. By these lovers of freedom and equality she is to be stamped for all time as inferior and a serf. And this is done with the deliberately avowed object of destroying the political organisation of the Irish people.

But let that people remember that they are no longer alone : the great heart of the democracy of the United Kingdom now beats in unison with theirs. Let them bear the bitterness of their cruel grief a little longer. Let them be patient although the provocation be all but more than flesh and blood can endure. The night of bondage and despair is far spent : the day of freedom is assuredly at hand.

April, 1887.

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 and give a little longer. Let them be patient although the
 government will not make them less and blood can endure. The
 right of freedom of choice is the point; the day of freedom is
 assembly is here.

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