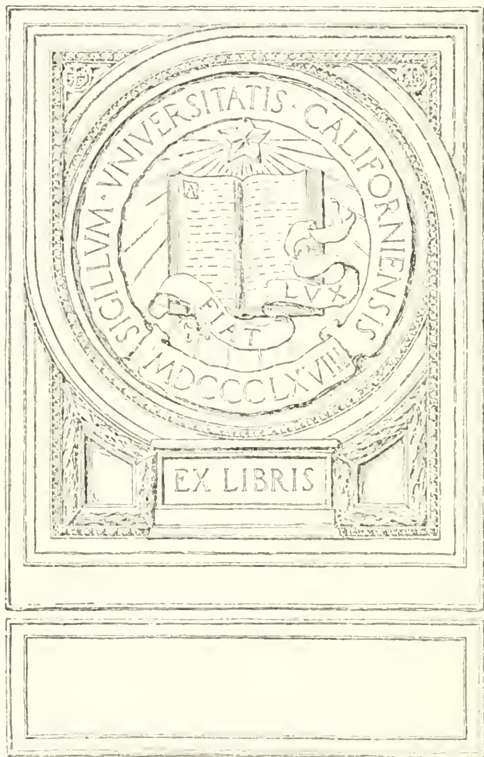
ULSTER AND IRELAND

BY JAMES WINDER GOOD

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



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BY JAMES WINDER GOOD

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PREFACE

At the climax of the anti-Home Rule campaign in the spring of 1914, a correspondent of one of the Continental papers, so the story runs in Belfast, had the good luck to be granted an interview with Sir Edward Carson. Having penetrated through the ranks of the Ulster Volunteers, who in those days kept watch and ward over the Ulster leader, the journalist was ushered into the Council Chamber of the Provisional Government. He was received with that courtesy which Sir Edward Carson always extends to the Press; but the great man gently remarked that, as urgent affairs demanded his attention, he would take it as a favour if questions were made as brief and concise as possible. "Certainly, Sir Edward," said the interviewer. "What I particularly want to know is how did this Ulster trouble come about!" "My dear fellow," replied Sir Edward, with his sweetest smile, "to explain that I should have to go back in history for at least three centuries. It would take me about a month to do so, and at the end I suspect you wouldn't understand."

I differ from Sir Edward Carson in thinking that if people were given the materials they might be trusted to form a right judgment upon them. As I see it, the existing confusion springs largely from the fact that politicians, as well as newspaper correspondents, are striving to handle consequences in Ulster without any clear understanding of causes. Efforts to deal with the question, which take no account of events and developments that have shaped it to what it is to-day, are as futile as would be an attempt to remodel Europe by statesmen who were ignorant of what happened at Vienna in 1815 and at Versailles in 1871. Yet how many members of the British Cabinet possess even a rudimentary knowledge of Ulster history of the pre-Home Rule era? I question if Sir Edward Carson himself could state three facts in the political career of Henry Cooke, the greatest of his predecessors.

I do not expect Ulster Unionists to agree with my conclusions, but I shall be well satisfied if what I have written induces some of them to investigate on their own account the evidence on which these conclusions are based. In the main I have taken my facts from Unionist writers, and, so far as I am aware, I have set down no historical statement that is not accepted by reputable authorities of all parties. In Irish affairs, to know all may not be to forgive all; but, I believe, the deeper the knowledge one possesses, the less likely is one to fall into the error, all too common in Irish

controversies, of "treating," in Lecky's words, "differences of national character as innate and inexplicable, and national crimes and virtues as the materials for mere party eulogy or party invective."

While this volume does not profess to be an exhaustive record of Ulster history, such as Sir Edward Carson outlined to his interviewer, I have endeavoured to make it more than a series of detached studies. Whatever faults it may have in execution—I am only too conscious these are legion—I have aimed at a certain unity of plan with the object of linking up present day developments with past happenings.

The opening section is devoted to a survey of Ulster history, in which I endeavour to give due emphasis to the influences—overlooked or suppressed by the majority of chroniclers—that tended towards the unity of settlers and natives. My profound conviction is—and the evidence, I hold, confirms it—that when the Ulster Protestant fights for rights which are in harmony with democratic ideals he instinctively turns to the Ulster Catholic for support.

In the sections on Religion and Orangeism I discuss the forces which have operated, and for that matter still operate, against the unifying power of common economic needs and social grievances.

This is followed by a study of the Carson movement, the supreme example in modern times of the triumph of the influences that make for division in Ireland.

In the concluding chapters I have attempted to analyse some qualities of the Ulster mind, as they present themselves to a native of Munster who spent the best and happiest years of his life in Belfast, and values, as St. Paul valued his Roman citizenship, the right he has acquired by adoption and sentiment, if not by birth, to boast himself an Ulsterman.

J. W. G.

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ULSTER AND IRELAND.

I.—The Verdict of History.

CHAPTER I.

PLANTERS AND PAPISTS.

THE tendency of the majority of writers and speakers on the Ulster question is to present the issue as if it were perfectly simple and clear cut. On one side is shown the Unionist ready to die at the stake rather than abandon a jot of his principles or a tittle of his prejudices; on the other, the Nationalist is revealed, ruthlessly hostile to compromise and insistent that in all things his will shall prevail. Destiny, we are told, may have ordained that these people shall dwell cheek by jowl; but the gulf between them is wider than that which divided the Jews from the Samaritans, and woe betide well-meaning folk who, armed only with logic and reason, come between the fell and incensed points of such mighty opposites. Fortunately, or unfortunately, no political problem is quite so simple as this. Strong as party discipline and popular prejudices may be in the North of Ireland, they are not strong enough to ensure that everywhere staring Orange shall confront hard and vivid Green. Politicians have this in common with sensational novelists that they prefer to see things in terms of jet black or snow white and rule out vague indeterminate shades, though it is the existence of these shades that makes all the difference. If the hostile colours in Ulster do not blend, I believe it can be shown that

they soften a good deal when one examines them with the impartial lens of history instead of viewing them through the distorting medium of popular passion.

Ulster professes to stand four-square to all the winds of Nationalism, yet even inside the province one finds variations and differences of which too little account is taken in current controversies. The Ulster atmosphere, for instance, is almost a negligible quantity in counties on the outer fringe of the province, like Donegal, Cavan, and Monaghan. Here the situation is roughly that common to the rest of rural Ireland, in which the Nationalists are mainly farmers and labourers, and the Unionists a tiny minority of landlords, with a sprinkling of professional men. The opposition is that of a community to a class—a class, moreover, which, since the triumph of land purchase, has accepted defeat. Difficulties may not yet have been wholly composed, and a social gulf divides the parties, but, it is safe to say, Nationalists and Unionists are nearer to an understanding in these three counties than anywhere else in Ulster.

One finds the other extreme on the eastern side of the province, where in agricultural areas scattered groups of Nationalists hold their own in the midst of an overwhelmingly Protestant population. They are settled for the most part on the bad lands to which their ancestors were driven in the days of the Tudors and the Stuarts ; and the Glens of Antrim, the stony slopes of the Mourne and the Sperrin Mountains, and the water-logged plain that borders Lough Neagh are still strong Catholic enclaves. It is a safe rule in the north-eastern counties that to leave the fertile fields for the barren hills is to pass from Unionist into Nationalist territory. Yet so little are prejudices influenced by facts that one of the commonest arguments on Orange platforms is to point to the presence of Nationalists on this unprofitable soil as a final

proof of their inferior economic aptitude. In the central districts different conditions prevail. The Nationalist has indeed a monopoly of the bad lands, but he has also a share of the good, and, politically and economically, he fights on something like even terms. Instead of a contest between a community and a class one gets a clash of two democracies, and this clash has given rise to the Ulster question as we know it.

The great achievement of the Ulster Unionist has been to persuade himself, and impose the belief on the outside world, that he is *sui generis*. Whatever is peculiar to the Northern province was, he claims, created by him, and applies only to him. Thus he makes a political asset of his "dourness" and "doggedness," and the homely burr of his speech rings all the more sweetly in his ears because it has so little in common with the brogue of the South. He flourishes these things before the world as the final justification of his demand for separate treatment, conveniently ignoring the fact that they are equally characteristic of Ulster Nationalists, who instead of being an inconsiderable minority, as Unionist propaganda would lead one to imagine, are not far short of half the population of the province.

Once it is realised that, leaving politics aside, the special conditions of Ulster life operate in exactly the same fashion on Nationalists as on Unionists, differentiating them from their fellow-countrymen in the South, but welding northern Protestants and Catholics into a homogeneous whole, the Unionist case, as it is usually presented, falls to the ground. Hitherto it has been the Nationalists who have been slowest to admit that if they take their political creed from Dublin the influences that count for most in their everyday life radiate from Belfast. To them such a confession seems a kind of treason to their fellows

on the wrong side of the Boyne, and, in public at least, they vehemently proclaim that the only difference between North and South is a difference of political ideals. One can understand this sentiment, but it is a sentiment as far removed from the truth of the situation as it would be to argue that the sole difference between a Yorkshire miner and a Surrey farm-hand is that one votes Labour and the other Conservative. In speech, in temper, in outlook, the Ulsterman of all creeds contrasts more sharply with the natives of the other provinces than the Black Country does with the Home Counties; and Nationalists who refuse to admit that such a difference exists for them, are simply playing into the hands of their opponents, who insist that the cleavage between North and South is purely along the lines of race and religion. However race and religion may have accentuated divisions in the past, environment in the present is a more potent element than heredity. There may not be complete assimilation, but there has undoubtedly been widespread modification. If Ulster Protestants are, as some of them love to boast, Scots improved by three centuries of residence in Ireland; Ulster Catholics are Irishmen improved, or at least modified, by three centuries of contact with Scots.

The Planters of Scottish and English birth, having driven out the natives, were determined, in a phrase which Parnell made famous in another connection, "to keep a firm grip of their homesteads." To that end they found it good policy to attribute all Irish discontents not to resentment against alien rule and shameless exploitation, but to the incurable defects of the Celtic race and the blighting influence of the Catholic religion. That racial and sectarian differences intensified hostility between Planters and natives in Ulster is axiomatic, but to admit this does

not imply, as some modern controversialists insist, that they were the sole factors in producing and perpetuating antagonism. Such an assumption is as stupid as it would be to argue that Lorraine's objection to German rule was due purely to the Catholic prejudices of its people, or to contend that Belgium would speedily have bowed to the inevitable had its invaders been men of its own blood.

Political conditions have changed out of all recognition inside three centuries, but human nature was not so different in the Stuart era that a nation accepted massacre and expropriation not merely with philosophic calm, but with profound gratitude. Yet, according to a certain school of historians, Ireland's refusal to kiss the feet of her conquerors is the final proof of the unfitness of the Celt to be the master in his own house, and stamps him as a political degenerate of the most hopeless kind. Froude's *English in Ireland* is one long fantasia on this theme, and men infinitely more fair-minded than Froude have upheld the same contention quite as positively if with less vindictiveness and passion.

Dr. Seaton Reid, the able historian of the Presbyterian Church, in his analysis of the events that followed the Ulster Plantation, writes of the "fancied wrongs" of the Irish, and complains almost tearfully that they regarded the Settlers as "invaders" and "oppressors." It is difficult to imagine in what other light they could possibly have regarded them. Ireland, in the phrase of Sir John Davies, had been "brayed as in a mortar," and the most submissive of peoples does not take kindly to such a process. The Lord Deputy Chichester has left an illuminating description of the methods by which he laid the foundations of Protestant Ulster. "I burned," he reports as if it were a mere matter of routine, "all along the Lough (Neagh) within four miles of Dungannon, and

killed 100 people, sparing none, of what quality, age, or sex soever, besides many burned to death. We killed man, woman and child, horse, beast, and whatsoever we could find." Even fire and steel, ruthlessly as he plied them, did not satisfy Sir Arthur Chichester. "I have often said and written," he remarks, "it is famine that must consume the Irish, as our swords and other endeavours worked not that speedy effect which is expected. Hunger would be a better, because a speedier, weapon to employ against them than the sword." True Christianity indeed might have urged the Irish to turn the other cheek to the smiter, but this type of Christianity was no more popular in seventeenth century Ireland than it is in Europe to-day.

It is not unamusing, if anything in this blood-boltered tragedy can be amusing, to see how apologists who are amazed that the natives refused to take extirpation kindly, resent the application of the same policy, even in a modified form, to anybody else. What was just, or at least excusable, when ordered by the English for the Irish becomes fiendish when ordered by the English for the Settlers. Historians, who have no word of reproof for Chichester, flame with indignation over Wentworth's tyranny, though that tyranny in comparison with the heroic Elizabethan methods was as mild as milk. The explanation is exceedingly simple. Wentworth substituted for the old division of English and Irish a new classification of Royalists and Puritans, and meted out to the Ulster Scots, who were strongly Puritan, a little of the medicine that had hitherto been reserved for the Catholic Celts. I willingly admit that Wentworth's policy was wholly indefensible; all I seek to show is that when he struck at the Settlers in the name of the British Government they proved not a whit more tractable than the unruly Irish. They met the

"Black Oath," as it was called, which demanded absolute obedience to the King's commands and the abjuration of the Solemn League and Covenant, with open defiance, and the Deputy's proposal to transport the colonists back to Scotland set the whole North ablaze.

Unionists insist that from the beginning a great gulf divided Protestant and Catholic in Ulster, and declare that the Planters preferred injustice from England to the friendship and favour of the mere Irish. As a matter of fact, the first result of Wentworth's policy was to establish an alliance between Catholics and Presbyterians which proved so strong that it was able to dominate the Irish Parliament, reduce the subsidies previously voted to the King to one-fourth of the original grant, and carry a Remonstrance indicting in fifteen articles the methods of Government adopted by the Deputy. The fact that such co-operation was possible serves to discount many of the popular generalisations about Ulster divisions, and indicates that had politicians laboured for unity half as zealously as they did for separation, differences of race and religion would not have proved insurmountable barriers. The alliance had in it potentialities that might have altered the whole course of Irish history had they been developed along right lines. Unfortunately, it failed, but it is important to note that its failure did not spring either from the refusal of the natives to accept anything less than the restoration in their entirety of the lands of which they had been deprived, or from the aggressive policy of the Catholic Church, the two factors which, Unionists argue, are a sufficient explanation of the tragic misfortunes of Ireland. On the contrary, it was the temptation to make Irish interests a pawn in the game of English parties that now, as in the years to come, destroyed all hope of an understanding.

To the English Puritans Ireland was a useful weapon in their struggle against the King; and it was the charge that he was willing to use Popish aid to strengthen his claims that served to inflame English popular opinion against Charles. Pym and his fellows looked to the Ulster Scots to supply the necessary evidence, and they did not look in vain. "The humble Petition of some Protestant Inhabitants of the Counties of Antrim, Downe, Derry, Tyrone, etc.," presented to the Long Parliament in 1641, may have been nominally an indictment of Strafford's policy, but it is really a Presbyterian onslaught on Prelatists and Papists. It is an interesting example of the "Ulster" spirit, as we know it in later days, that toleration of Catholicism should figure as the sovereign crime of "the children of Ishmael and Esau," as the Protestant bishops are politely described. "Titular bishops," the petition proclaims, "are by them winked at in the exercise of jurisdiction from foreign power, mass-priests are frequent, and pretend a title to every parish in the kingdom, masses publicly celebrated without controulment, to the great grief of God's people, and the increase of idolatry and superstition." Protestants who had allied themselves with Catholics against Strafford, sought to make the Deputy's supposed Papistical views the crowning proof of his guilt. The Long Parliament, as might be expected, was only too ready to listen to charges of this kind, if indeed it did not directly inspire them. Sir John Clotworthy, an Antrim Presbyterian, who had been returned for an English borough, was the recognised spokesman of the Ulster Scots at Westminster. He was a member of the Commons' Committee which drew up the charges against Strafford, and gave evidence against him at his trial. According to Nalson, Clotworthy declared from his place in the House "that the conversion of the Papists in Ireland was only to be

effected by the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other," and though this statement has been denounced as "a Royalist calumny," it was thoroughly in keeping with the sentiments of the Puritans who were anxious to rouse Protestant prejudices against the Monarchy.

The attitude of Parliament in seeking to force anti-Popery measures on the King precipitated the Rebellion of 1641. The Irish believed, and speeches in the Commons warranted the belief, that the popular party in England was bent on extirpating Catholicism as the prelude to a new confiscation. No serious historian now contends that the Rebellion was planned as a massacre. It suited the political passions of the time to present it in this light, and such is the tragedy of Irish affairs that political ends are still believed to be served by using the charge to intensify party and sectarian hatreds. The strongest proof that racial and religious animosity was not the dominant motive of the rebel leaders is the fact that when the outbreak took place, and for the best part of a month afterwards, no attack was made on the Scots who constituted five-sixths of the Protestant population of Ulster. On this point contemporary evidence is final. Colonel Audeley Mervyn, in a report presented to the House of Commons in June, 1642, states that—"In the infancy of the Rebellion the rebels made open proclamations, upon pain of death, that no Scotchman should be stirred in body, goods, or lands, and that they should to this purpose write over the lyntels of their doors that they were Scotchmen, and so destruction might pass over their families." The same officer relates that he read a letter, "sent by two of the rebels, titulary colonels, Colonel Nugent and Colonel O'Gallagher . . . which was directed to 'Our honourable friends, the gentlemen of the never conquered Scotch nation.'"

In the actual fighting quarter was freely given by

the rebels until the Lords Justices issued orders to refuse it; and, Lecky adds, "the Irish leaders in most cases did their utmost to restrict the horrors of the war, and it is also certain that in a great measure they were successful." If on the Irish side there were outrages as appalling as disgraced any *Jacquerie*, atrocities as bad and worse were perpetrated by their opponents, who were supposed to be disciplined soldiers. It was not the Irish Catholics, but English Puritans, who made the struggle a war of religion; and when in 1643 the King agreed to a truce with the Irish, his action was denounced by Parliament on the ground that Papists "under pretexts of civil contracts would continue their anti-Christian idolatry." The methods adopted by God-fearing English soldiers to uproot belief in this idolatry are recorded in their own words. Sir William Cole thus succinctly describes the work of the troopers under his command in Ulster—"Starved and famished of the vulgar sort, whose goods were seized on by this regiment, 7,000." Sir Henry Tichborne wrought such havoc in the border districts that "there was neither man nor beast to be found in sixteen miles between the two towns of Drogheda and Dundalk; nor on the other side of Dundalk, in the County of Monaghan, nearer than Carrickmacross—a strong pile twelve miles distant." It was not merely rebels taken with arms in their hands to whom no quarter was given. General Preston describes the soldiers as "destroying by fire and sword men, women, and children without regard to age or sex." Coote declared he liked the "frolic" of one of his soldiers who headed the line of march with a baby spitted on the point of his pike; and, according to Nalson, "If anyone who had some grains of compassion reprehended the soldiers for this unchristian inhumanity they would scornfully reply 'why nits will make lice!'" When the Bishop of Meath in a

sermon preached in Dublin in 1642 ventured to plead for mercy to Irish women and children, an English officer was so outraged that he promptly resigned his commission.

It is the simplest thing in the world to compile lists of outrages committed by both sides, but popular as this method has been, and indeed still is, it leads nowhere. In my opinion it is much more important to realise the fact, overlooked or ignored by most popular commentators, that in the course of the struggle all parties changed sides not once, but, in most cases, several times. If, as Ulster politicians still assert, the Rebellion was a wanton massacre which dug an impassable gulf between natives and settlers, how does it come that in the fighting that followed Ulster Presbyterians were found in alliance with Royalists and Irish against the forces of Parliament ? Forty years before the siege which is still the great event in Ulster history, Derry suffered for five long months a strict blockade which its people, wedded as they are to the commemoration of historic anniversaries, have conspired to forget. On this occasion the town was held by Parliamentary republicans under Sir Charles Coote who had abjured the Covenant, and it was besieged by a combination of Royalists, Ulster Presbyterians, and Irish Catholics who, for the time being, had sunk their differences. It would be folly to urge that anything remotely resembling unity of purpose or principle existed amongst these strangely assorted allies. Their co-operation was purely a piece of political tactics, and was designed less with a view to serve Irish interests than to meet the needs of parties in Great Britain.

The Ulster Settlers stood by the Scots in their quarrel with the Long Parliament, and were denounced in consequence by no less a man than John Milton as " a generation of Highland thieves

and red-shanks who, being neighbourly admitted . . . by the courtesy of England, to hold possessions in our province, a country better than their own, have with worse faith than those heathen, proved ungrateful and treacherous guests to their best friends and entertainers." The prevalent view is that Ulster's action was inspired by detestation of the execution of the King, but it is obvious from the "Representation" drawn up by "these blockish presbyters of Claneboy," as Milton termed them, that they were less troubled by the fact that Cromwell and his fellows had "garred kings ken they had a lith in their necks" than by the opposition of the Independents to Presbyterian Government and, particularly, to the Solemn League and Covenant. The unpardonable sin of the "sectaries," according to the Ulster divines, was that they "endeavour to establish by law an universal toleration of all religions which is an avowed overturning of unity in religion, and so repugnant to the Word of God and the two first articles of the Covenant."

This was the point on which Milton fastened, and this extract from his *Observations* remains, after the passage of three centuries, perhaps the wisest contribution that has been made to the solution of the religious side of the Ulster controversy. "The Covenant," Milton declares, "enjoins us to endeavour the extirpation first of Popery and Prelacy, then of heresy, schism and profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness. And this we cease not to do by all effectual and proper means; but these divines might know that to extirpate all these things can be no work of the civil sword, but of the spiritual, which is the Word of God. No man well in his wits, endeavouring to root up weeds out of his ground, instead of using the spade, will take a mallet or a beetle.

Nor doth the Covenant anyway engage us to extirpate or prosecute the men, but the heresies and errors in them; which, we tell these divines and the rest that understand not, belongs chiefly to their own function in the diligent preaching and insisting upon sound doctrine, in the confuting not railing down errors, encountering both in public and private conference, and by the power of truth, not of persecution, subduing those authors of heretical opinions, and, lastly, in the spiritual execution of Church discipline within their own congregations."

The Ulster Scots agreed no better with Puritan saints than they had done with Royalist sinners or Irish heretics. "We are now," they complained in a paper challenging the authority of Parliament, "called by your soldiers 'seditious fellows'; our nation is styled 'a base and treacherous nation which you will ere long make a province of'; our oaths are no more accounted than 'the bark of a dog.'" Having refused to take the "Engagement," as it was called, which demanded the swearing of allegiance to "the Commonwealth of England as now established, without King or House of Lords," a hue and cry was raised against "all delinquent and scandalous ministers." They were excluded from their pulpits, their stipends were sequestered, and, finally, in March, 1651, an Act of banishment was passed against them. This measure was so rigorously enforced that by the summer of that year only six or seven remained in the province, and these were forced to lie in hiding, "preaching in remote or private places, where the people willingly meet them."

It was arranged that the deportation of the pastors should be followed by the expulsion of the flock. The Rump Parliament had little in common with Strafford, yet, curiously, it was Strafford's methods it favoured in dealing with the Ulster question. Ulstermen to-

day, who acclaim Cromwell to the skies as the only statesman whose handling of the Irish problem was logical, coherent, and effective, conveniently forget that the Protector designed that their ancestors should be the first to experience the full rigour of his policy. The germ of the Cromwellian Confiscation was the proposal, put forward in 1653, to remove " all the popular Scots " out of Ulster to districts in Munster where there was no hazard of their insurrection against the Government," and " where," as the official proclamation put it, " they may not be capable of doing that mischief which they give us much cause to believe they only want power and opportunity to practise in the place where they now are." Elaborate conditions were laid down guaranteeing the deportees lands proportionable to the value of the estates held by them in Ulster, appointing surveyors and valuers, and arranging convoys and escorts. To show that the Government were in earnest a list was published of two hundred and sixty persons, " including," according to Reid, " all those who by their known attachment to monarchial and Presbyterian principles, and by their station and influence, were most obnoxious to the reigning faction." These were required within a specified time, and under certain penalties, to accept the terms of the Declaration. Fortunately for the Ulstermen, the Rump Parliament was dissolved before the proclamation was enforced, and the Scots, having professed their readiness to give security for their good behaviour, Cromwell, who had enough trouble on hand, suspended the operation of the scheme, though, as is shown by instructions issued to the Lord Deputy and Council as late as 1656, it was not definitely abandoned. In the closing years of the Protectorate Presbyterianism, as a result of Cromwell's policy of providing a counter-check to the influence of other

denominations, increased its power in Ireland. But its leaders, though they made the most of their opportunities to obtain supremacy over Episcopalians and Anabaptists, never forgave the Cromwellian abjuration of the Covenant, and to them, to quote Patrick, Adair, " this Government, though now flourishing and pretending some owning of religion, yet it was iniquity at bottom."

After Cromwell's death the Ulster Presbyterians took an active part in the intrigues for the restoration of the monarchy, not indeed through any fanatical devotion to the theory of divine right, but in the vain hope that Charles who had accepted the Covenant under *duresse* in Scotland, would of his own free will compel his subjects of all creeds to conform to principles which personally he detested. Charles gave fair words, but nothing else ; and once he was firmly seated on the throne he lost no time in declaring his policy. While two Archbishops and ten bishops were consecrated in one day in St. Patrick's Cathedral—an event, according to Dr. Mant, probably without parallel in the history of the Church—troops of horse were sent to break up Presbyterian synod meetings ; and the ministers who a few months before had lorded it over Episcopalians, found themselves to their disgust no less than to their dismay, " numbered with Papists and fanatics," in the proclamation prohibiting unlawful assemblies. It is a strange commentary on " Ulster's unbroken record of loyalty " that Lord Caulfield in a letter to Primate Bramhall should declare—" In these unhappy northern quarters—those whom we esteem most dangerous are the Presbyterian factions who . . . preach the authority of their kirk to be above that of the Crown and our dread sovereign. I have myself discoursed with divers of their ministers both in public and private, who have maintained that the kirk hath power to

excommunicate their kings; and when the oaths of allegiance and supremacy were administered here, one of them told me that we had pulled down one Pope and set up another."

Jeremy Taylor, who for his sins was made bishop of Down in 1661, declared "the country would be very well if the Scotch ministers were away, at least some of the prime incendiaries. They talk of resisting unto blood, and stir up the people to sedition. . . . They threaten to murder me. . . . It were better for me to be a poor curate in a village church than a bishop over such intolerable persons." . . . But Jeremy Taylor was by no means as mild a man in action as this plaintive appeal would suggest, or as tender of the honest scruples of opponents as he professed to be in his *Liberty of Prophesying*. His record in Down goes far to confirm the story that in later years he instructed his secretary to procure all the copies of his early plea for toleration—written when the Church was under the harrow of the Puritans—and made a bonfire of them in the market square of Dromore. He drove harder against the Nonconformists than any other Irish bishop, and lives in Presbyterian memories as the typical persecuting prelate. Long before the Act of Uniformity led to ejections in England, practically all the Presbyterian ministers in Ulster had been expelled from their manses, and Taylor could congratulate himself on having dealt faithfully with the "sad race of Dissenters," or, as he called them in one of his sermons, "wild asses in the wilderness." His view of their incorrigibility was confirmed by the appearance in his diocese of the famous soldier of fortune, Colonel Thomas Blood, who, having fought against the Long Parliament for the King, was hatching plots in Ireland in connection with some of Oliver's old soldiers to restore the Cromwellian *régime*. One of the

conspirators, an ejected Presbyterian minister named William Lecky, was a brother-in-law of Blood, and early in 1663 it was arranged between them that they should repair to Ulster and enlist the other ejected ministers by hanging out the Blue Banner of the Covenant. Neither Blood nor Lecky seems to have been the type of man whose arguments were calculated to make converts. They looked, according to Patrick Adair, " more like trepanners than anything else ; " and with one or two exceptions those whom they approached in Ulster, however eagerly they desired to restore the Covenant, declined to have anything to do with " these so despicable persons." The plot which aimed at the capture of Dublin Castle and the seizure of the Duke of Ormonde, was betrayed by an informer. Blood managed to make his escape, but Lecky and the other conspirators were laid by the heels. In the opinion of the Government the real danger lay in the North. An order was given to disarm the Presbyterians, " which was vigorously, closely, and suddenly executed " ; and urged by Jeremy Taylor, the Dissenting ministers, whom he had denounced on wholly insufficient evidence as being " all more than consenting " to Blood's plans, were swept into jail, and after some months' rigorous imprisonment received instructions " to depart the kingdom." For the most part they withdrew to Scotland where two at least of their number who had been implicated in Blood's Plot were killed in the ill-starred Pentland Rising. Later, however, the cloud of persecution lifted, and Charles, who was personally in favour of toleration, granted in 1672 a yearly subsidy known as the Regium Donum to eke out the salaries of the Ulster Dissenting ministers.

The Presbyterians increased greatly in strength as a result of the influx of Scottish Covenanters, who

fled to Ulster to escape the terrors of the "killing times," and also of Huguenots banished from France by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Trade is said to have increased, but I have been able to discover few signs of that prosperity which modern Ulster claims has always been the proof of the superior merits of her political and religious creeds. On the contrary, in the last year of Charles's reign I find the ministers of the Laggan Presbytery announcing to the other presbyteries their intention of emigrating to America, "because of persecutions and general poverty abounding in these parts, and on account of their straits."

Later generations have scoffed at the "Declaration for Liberty of Conscience" issued by James II. shortly after his accession, but to the Irish Dissenters of that day it came as a heaven-sent boon. Reid admits that it "restored peace to Ulster," and put an end to the disturbance caused by the violence of the High Church party against the Nonconformists, "but," he adds very characteristically, "the Presbyterians generally forgot their past sufferings from the Episcopalians and cordially joined with their recent persecutors in opposing the rising ascendancy of the Romanists." This union culminated, as everyone knows, in the heroic defence of Derry and the victory of the Boyne, which are still for Ulstermen the epical events in their history. To them the Williamite wars represent the triumph of Protestantism, or, as they would put it, of true religion over degrading superstition. This may be so, but they represent also, and this is economically more important, the defeat of the last attempt of the Irish to recover by force of arms the lands wrested from them by the Planters. The struggle, which under various forms had extended over a century, concluded with a victory for the Settlers all along the line, for, on the death of William

III., it was estimated that "there did not remain in the hands of Catholics one-sixth of the land which their grandfathers held, even after the passing of the Act of Settlement."

To ensure that Protestant Supremacy should never again be challenged the Penal Code was devised, "a machine," in Edmund Burke's scathing words, "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." At last it seemed as if the ideal of the Northern settlers were to be realised. It was no longer a question whether Catholicism would be dominant in Ireland, but whether it would survive as a faith. "The law," an Irish Lord Chancellor declared, "does not suppose any such person to exist as an Irish Roman Catholic"; and Swift described the native Irish as "harmless as women and children, powerless to hurt, and doomed to certain disappearance in one or two generations." The Ulster Presbyterians had never made any secret that this was the consummation at which they aimed. They were foremost in demanding that the "ferocious acts of Anne" should deserve their reputation for ferocity, and their representatives in Parliament endorsed by their votes the most atrocious provisions of the Code. But they were soon to discover that the very men who were enlisting their aid against the "common enemy" designed to reduce them to impotence by means of the instrument which had been fashioned to grind the Catholic Irish to powder.

So little are the facts of Irish history understood, even in Ireland, that it is almost universally assumed that the Revolution of 1688 ensured the triumph of the Ulster Protestants. As a matter of fact it ushered in the darkest chapter in their history, a record of

humiliation, oppression, and degradation which is paralleled only by the sufferings of the Catholic Irish of the same period. King William may have delivered the Protestants of the North from "Popery, brass money, and wooden shoes," but this deliverance brought in its train evils that to those who experienced them far outweighed its benefits. For a century from the Jacobean Plantation the Settlers had been striving to maintain their hold on the land as against the claim of the original owners. If the Williamite Revolution decided this issue in their favour it raised other issues of no less vital importance which for the space of a hundred years kept Ulster in a ferment, and the effects of which have not yet wholly disappeared. The Whig Revolution meant the overthrow of the divine right of kings, but it meant also the triumph of oligarchy. In Ireland, even more than in England, the oligarchs, having disposed of the danger from above, were determined that there should be no challenge to their supremacy from below. By the Penal Laws they had forged fetters that shackled helplessly the limbs of the Catholics, and not the least remarkable of their achievements was to rivet these fetters on the necks of the Presbyterians who had helped them to reduce the Irishry to serfdom.

To the land-owning and Episcopalian aristocracy who held the reins of power in Ireland throughout the whole of the eighteenth century, Ulster Presbyterians were anathema not merely on account of their religious creed, but because, under the leases granted to their ancestors in Plantation times, they enjoyed a measure of tenant-right which, in Palmerston's jingling epigram, owners of the soil then, as in later days, held to be "landlord wrong." The influx of Covenanting refugees from Scotland at the end of the seventeenth century had strengthened the Presbyterian influence enormously. Archbishop Synge

estimated that no fewer than 50,000 Scottish families had settled in Ulster in the years that followed the Revolution; and the Presbyterians boasted that over the whole of Ireland their numbers were at least equal to those of the Episcopalians, while in the northern province they had a vast majority. Their consciousness of their strength is revealed in a complaint by Archbishop King which shows that the inhabitants of Belfast, as far back as 1698, were already true to type. "I understand," the Archbishop wrote, "that the people of Belfast are very refractory and do many irregular things; that they will not enlarge their church lest there should be room for all their people; that they bury in spite of the (law) in the church without prayers, and come in with their hats on; that they break the seats, and refuse to deliver their collections for briefs, according to the Order of Council, to the churchwardens." Instead of contenting themselves, as they had hitherto done, with ministering to members of their own faith, the Presbyterians began to win converts from other creeds, a proceeding which was facilitated by the gross neglect of the beneficed clergy. In the diocese of Down and Connor, for instance, the bishop, Dr. Hackett, had not set foot inside his charge for twenty years, residing at Hammersmith, where he openly sold the benefits and preferments in his gift to the highest bidder. He was finally, in 1694, deprived of his see as a result of the findings of an ecclesiastical commission; and the Archdeacon of Down and the Dean of Connor were at the same time deprived of their offices, the first for "enormous neglect of his cures" and the second for "the crime of adultery, and incontinence of life." The commissioners left it on record "that catechising, visiting the sick, and administration of the sacraments were so neglected that many left the Church, and turned Presbyterians

and Papists." And it throws a strange light on the spirit that animated the Establishment to find the commissioners stating in a letter to the Primate: "If we would give way to the passions and animosities of the clergy here against one another, who are not sparing in their informations against their brethren, I believe we might deprive, or at least suspend, one half of the clergy."

While Episcopalians relied on the strong arm of the civil power to maintain the claims of their creed, the Presbyterians devised measures on their own account. They were charged with engaging no apprentices that would not attend their meetings, and, according to their opponents, their practice was "to employ none or trade with any that are not of their own sort, if they can help it; to plant their land with such; and on all Juries and other occasions to favour such more than Justice." Another indignant divine expressed the view that "lawn sleeves and caps and surplices are too mean a quarry for these men to fly at . . . and monarchy in general is the true and real grievance." But the heart of the matter, it seems to me, is summed up in a single sentence by Archbishop King. "The true point," he wrote, "between them and the gentlemen is whether the Presbyterians and lay elders in every parish shall have the greatest influence over the people, to lead them as they please, or the landlords over their tenants."

CHAPTER II.

ASCENDANCY IN THE SADDLE.

The fear that religious influence might be used to threaten the supremacy of a territorial aristocracy sufficiently explains why the Episcopalians, having trampled on Catholicism with the aid of the Presbyterians, should rank their allies with the "common enemy." Sectarian animosity was at best purely a subsidiary reason. There was no real desire to make Presbyterians abjure their faith, any more than there was to convert Catholics to Protestantism. In 1711, eight years after the "Act to prevent the further growth of Popery" was passed, we find Archbishop King stating in a letter to Dean Swift: "we shall, I believe, have some considerations of methods to convert the natives, but I do not find that it is desired by all that they should be converted. There is a party amongst us that have little sense of religion and heartily hate the Church; these would have the natives made Protestants, but such as themselves, (and) are deadly afraid they should come into the Church, because, say they, this would strengthen the Church." The same party was as firmly resolved to keep Dissenters in subjection; and the extraordinary thing to a modern mind is that Presbyterians were so blinded by anti-Catholic bigotry that they failed to see the trap into which they were forced even after its teeth had closed upon them. They would not be convinced that to their prelatical rulers the difference between them and the "mere Irish" was one of degree and not of kind, inasmuch as they, like the Catholics, held land instead of owning it. Strong as the Presbyterians were in numbers they had not,

according to a contemporary estimate, one share in fifty of the landed interest in Ulster, and in the province the number of Dissenters possessing estates of the value of £200 a year and upwards did not at the highest computation exceed sixty. If the Dissenters' activity in trade, and the exceptional tenures under which the majority of their creed held land, helped to differentiate them from the natives, the distinction in the eyes of the ruling class was of no more significance than that which separated the *bourgeoisie* from the peasants in pre-revolutionary France. Both were included in the Third Estate ; and in Ireland, as in France, the vital policy in the opinion of those in power was not to raise the classes outside the charmed circle to the standard of the most prosperous amongst them, but to reduce them to a common level of economic helplessness and political degradation, with the object of eliminating the possibility of a successful challenge to the authority of their overlords.

The methods employed against the Ulster Presbyterians were as simple in design as they proved to be effective in practice. In Queen Anne's reign, and long afterwards, the Irish Parliament was compelled to send to London heads of Bills which it was proposed to adopt in Dublin. These heads were submitted to the English Privy Council, which had power to alter them. When the Bill so altered was transmitted to Ireland under the Great Seal, the Dublin Parliament was obliged either to adopt or reject the measure as a whole. In the case of the anti-Popery Bill of 1704 which the Presbyterians had heartily supported, the English Privy Council, at the instigation, there is reason to believe, of its Irish advisers, inserted a clause known as the Sacramental Test which made it obligatory on all office-holders, civil or military, to take the sacrament according to the rites of the

Established Church within three months from the date of their appointment. This clause barred Presbyterians as effectively as Catholics from the public services. So rabid, however, was the Dissenters' hatred of Romanism that, to the unconcealed joy of their opponents, they made only the feeblest protest against the Bill. As a contemporary supporter of the Establishment put it, Presbyterians "were so sensible of the great advantages accruing by the Bill for suppressing the Popish interest that they have almost declined any further talk about it, and I see nothing to interrupt a good conclusion."

As a matter of fact nothing did interrupt the "good conclusion." The measure which was passed into law remained on the Statute book until the era of the Irish Volunteers and Grattan's Parliament; and as the first fruits of it, Presbyterians were bundled out of every office they held. The expulsion of Dissenters from the magistracy and municipal corporations was only the beginning. The Episcopalian "high-fliers," as they were popularly known, were determined to justify their title. They solemnly excommunicated Presbyterians who, having been married by their own ministers, declined to confess themselves guilty of fornication; prosecutions were instituted in the bishops' courts against Dissenters for working on Anglican saint-days and holidays; schools and seminaries in which the doctrines taught were not those of the Established Church were suppressed on the ground that they tended "to perpetuate misunderstandings among Protestants"; landlords refused to allow meeting houses to be erected on their land, and in Presbyterian strongholds like Antrim and Downpatrick the churches of this denomination were forcibly closed in the last year of Anne's reign.

It is little wonder that Daniel Defoe, who championed the cause of the Ulstermen, should have

written, "If this be the Church's method of 'remembering favours,' if this be their return of gratitude, let them fight for them next time that dare trust their temper." But the Church knew the character of the people it was dealing with better than Defoe. It was quite satisfied they would be, as Defoe doubted, "fools enough to stand in the gap," and for the best part of a century the event justified its confidence. Not only did the Establishment succeed in preventing its opponents from uniting to overthrow the system of economic privilege on which its prestige rested, but by raising the cry of "No Popery," it possessed the power to rally the Dissenters to its side against their own interests. Much has been made by later-day chroniclers of the touching devotion of the Presbyterians to the Protestant cause and their meekness under persecution throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century. To me, and the facts, I think, will bear out the assertion, this pity has always seemed singularly misplaced. Presbyterians submitted to oppression not because they loved those who despitefully used them, but because they hated others who were still more despitefully used than themselves. Though their claim was nominally for toleration, they would not have accepted toleration on the only basis on which it was possible—equal freedom for all. Their attitude leaves no doubt that they preferred the Establishment should retain its persecuting spirit even at the expense of Presbyterianism rather than that Catholicism should escape the doom prepared for it. But it is questionable if they realised the full extent of the price that would have to be paid. The loss of political power by the operation of the Sacramental Test paved the way for the attack on the favoured position Dissenters had hitherto enjoyed as holders of land; and this, in conjunction with the savage laws against Irish

industries for the benefit of English manufacturers, undermined the whole economic fabric.

In the second decade of the eighteenth century as leases began to fall in, the landlords levied fines for their renewal which the tenants were wholly unable to pay. Cattle raising was believed to be a more profitable speculation than tillage, with the result that " in some of the finest counties, in many places, there was neither house nor cornfield to be seen in ten or fifteen miles travelling"; and Primate Boulter on his visitation in 1726 "met the roads full of whole families that had left their homes to beg abroad." In this year the port of Belfast was crammed with ships to carry emigrants to America, hundreds of whom were so poor that they sold themselves as serfs to escape out of Ireland. " The humour," the Primate informed the Archbishop of Canterbury, " has spread like a contagious distemper, and the people will hardly hear anybody that tries to cure them of their madness. The worst is that it affects only Protestants and reigns chiefly in the North, which is the seat of our linen manufacture." Unfortunately the " humour " was no passing disorder but a canker that ate deeper and deeper.

The history of Ulster during the greater part of the eighteenth century is a melancholy anticipation of the history of Connacht since the Famine. Between Christmas, 1728, and Christmas, 1729, 5,655 Irish, practically all of whom were Presbyterians, arrived in Pennsylvania alone ; and eight years later it was reported that 1,000 families had assembled in Belfast waiting for conveyance across the Atlantic. After the famine of 1740 the tide flowed stronger than ever ; and for several years the average number of emigrants leaving Ulster for the Plantations rose as high as 12,000 annually. From 1771 to 1773, when Lord Donegall and Mr. Upton were " clearing " their

Antrim estates, no fewer than 30,000 people, " all Protestants and Protestant dissenters," as they described themselves, set sail for America, where inside a couple of years they proved themselves the stoutest fighters in the ranks of Washington's army. The victory of King's Mountain, which Mr. Roosevelt describes as one of " the decisive battles of the Revolution," was won by a force of Ulstermen commanded by five Presbyterian elders; and fully half the names attached to the Declaration of Independence were those of men of Ulster stocks.

In America the Presbyterian emigrants fought side by side with Catholic comrades, and served without complaint under Catholic leaders, to establish a constitution which treated all creeds on a basis of equality. Had they shown the same readiness to unite at home, the possibility is they would have won on Irish soil, and without the effusion of blood, victories as decisive in their effects as Bunker's Hill and Saratoga. No one who has studied the facts will deny that if the Americans were justified in resisting oppression by force, there was infinitely stronger justification for a rising in Ireland against a system under which the majority of Protestants and Catholics alike were robbed, persecuted, and degraded for the benefit of an insignificant minority. Yet in modern Ulster, while it is the fashion to glory in ancestors who fought for American independence, the men who sought to imitate at home the example of the emigrants, and establish freedom on their own soil, are held to be at the best deluded victims of unscrupulous agitators. The tyranny that ranked in arms the farmers of Massachussets and the backwoodsmen of Pennsylvania would have seemed to the rack-rented Irish peasant a Government almost Utopian in its benevolence; and except on the ground that success is the only test of statesmanship,

I have never been able to understand how it is that north of the Boyne to-day George Washington is a hero and Wolfe Tone a villain.

The Settlers, it is claimed, by virtue of their Protestantism, turned Ulster into a garden while Celtic Ireland remained a wilderness; but throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century one searches in vain for a hint of anything remotely resembling the idyll of a pious and prosperous race dwelling happily under its vines and fig-trees, which latter-day politicians conjure up as a true vision of life in the northern province in the days of the first three Hanoverians. One discovers instead, when one turns from new fictions to old facts, that great as may be the merits of Protestantism it contained no balm to heal the wounds inflicted by an intolerable land system and the dominance of a privileged minority. Between the glorious Revolution and the outbreak of the American War Presbyterian Ulster had to suffer not only the drain of emigration, but was continually hag-ridden by the spectre of famine. Inside the first thirty years of the eighteenth century the stipends of many Presbyterian clergy were reduced from £50 to £15 a year; and in 1729 Primate Boulter, in urging a slight increase of the scanty royal bounty to these ministers, declared that "by the desertion of many of their people to America, and the poverty of the greater part of the rest, their contributions, particularly in the North, are very much fallen off."

The most vivid picture of Ulster life of that era is to be found not in official records, but in Samuel Burdy's *Life of Philip Skelton*, a biography by no means as well known as it ought to be. Skelton, a native of Derriaghy, a hamlet on the outskirts of Belfast, was a clergyman of the Established Church, who, unlike the majority of his fellows, dedicated himself to the service of his flock in the true spirit

of apostolic devotion. In his later years Skelton had one or two friendly skirmishes with John Wesley, but no man of his time came nearer to fulfilling the conditions which Wesley laid down as essential to the extension of Protestantism in Ireland. "Let all the clergy of the Church of Ireland," the great revivalist wrote, "only live like the Apostles, and preach like the Apostles, and the thing is done." Unfortunately for itself, the Church of Ireland in the eighteenth century preferred to take as its model the "true Irish bishop," sarcastically defined by Archbishop Bolton as one who had "nothing more to do than to eat, drink, grow fat, rich, and die." Skelton was appointed in 1750 to the living of Pettigo, on the borders of Donegal and Fermanagh. and so evil was the reputation of his parishioners that though himself a good man of his hands, and a cudgel-player of such distinction that in his college-days he was the champion of Donnybrook fair, he felt it necessary to enlist a famous boxer to serve as his bodyguard.

Private stills, patronised impartially by Protestants and Catholics, abounded in Pettigo, and twenty gallons of whiskey were often drunk at a funeral. "Mr. Skelton," Burdy writes, "told me a story that marks clearly the savage manners of the people. One of the Pettigo men came up to him one day with joy in his eyes, and said to him: "O! we had the finest drinking ever was two or three days ago; we were all drinking in a field after a burial, and we drank two or three kegs of the strong whiskey. While we were drinking the last keg a poor fellow (he said, mimicking him) who sat on the grass near me, fell down on his back, and then gave a shake or two with his hands and feet, and stirred no more. We looked at him and found he was quite dead; then we took an empty keg and clapt it on his breast, and shouted we'd have another fine drinking bout at his burial.

Then we waked him that night; and next day at the burial we drank strong whisky as much as before. So we had fine sport.' "

So ignorant were his flock that they imagined from the number of his books that Skelton had dealings with the black art; and though nominally Protestants, he declared, "they scarce know more of the Gospel than the Indians of America, so that, he said, he was a missionary sent to convert them to Christianity." Nor were their social superiors much better versed in the doctrines of their Church. When examining "persons of quality" in Sir James Caldwell's parlour, some of them informed Skelton there were two Gods, and others three Gods. Burdy adds, "one of them who had nothing to say, every question he was asked made a genteel bow, in which he was better instructed than in religion." In Fintona, Co. Tyrone, to which Skelton was preferred from Pettigo, the standard of religious knowledge was not much higher. Here his congregation was largely composed of Presbyterians who, attracted by his style of preaching, deserted their own minister, upon whom Skelton, as compensation for the loss of stipend, settled forty pounds a year which he paid out of his own pocket. Burdy records "an instance of the ignorance of the people." A woman at one of Skelton's examinations gave the number of Commandments as seven, and when asked to repeat the first began stuttering and stammering. "One John Patterson, a tailor, behind her, whispered to her 'Thou shalt have no other Gods but Me.' 'Do you hear, sir,' quoth she, 'what Johnny Patterson, a tailor body here, says to me? He says I shall have no other Gods but him. De'il in hell take such Gods!' "

No less urgent with Skelton than the problem of providing spiritual nourishment for the souls of his flock was that of providing food for their bodies.

"Dearths," as his biographer calls them, were common in all his parishes; and if they did not attain the severity of the ghastly famine of 1740, in which, according to Skelton, "as many people died of want as fell in the massacre and rebellion of 'Forty-One,'" they entailed sufferings such as could not be paralleled to-day, except perhaps in Russia. In Pettigo, so acute was the distress in 1757, that people were reduced to living on weeds and on sorrel boiled with blood drawn from living cattle. Skelton sold his library to buy meal for his starving parishioners, and the train of carts conveying the provisions had to be escorted by men armed with clubs, "as the people of the adjacent parishes strove to take it by force and eat it themselves; in which they sometimes succeeded, for hunger makes people desperate." The same thing occurred at Fintona, which was an almost exclusively Protestant centre; and as late as 1778 Skelton, who had sold his books a second time, and substituted a decoction of heath for the snuff of which he was so fond, is found appealing for subscriptions on the ground that the famine was attended in his parish by "two epidemic distempers, the small pox and a purple fever, that raged with great violence; that from one or other of those scarce a family was free, so that in many houses out of seven or eight inhabitants there was not one able to attend the rest, or search the fields or ditches for sorrel and nettles to relieve a perishing parent or child." There is no hint that the conditions prevailing in Skelton's parishes were in any degree abnormal; on the contrary, starvation in a bad year seems to have been less the exception than the rule in rural Ulster.

The champions of the "garden" theory have strangely ignored the verdict of Arthur Young, who cannot be accused of a desire to belittle Protestantism, and whose comments on the farming system of the

North of Ireland are more biting than anything to be found in Burdy's volume. "Agriculture," Young wrote in 1779, "is there in ruins; it is cut up by the roots, extirpated, annihilated; the whole region is the disgrace of the Kingdom; all the crops you see are contemptible, are nothing but filth and weeds. No other part of Ireland can exhibit the soil in such a state of poverty and desolation. A farming traveller, who goes through that country with attention, will be shocked at seeing wretchedness in the shape of a few beggarly oats on a variety of most fertile soils, which, were they in Norfolk, would soon rival the best lands in that county." Young attributed these evils to the fact that the Ulster farmers were also weavers who divided their attention between their fields and their looms to the detriment of both. "If I had an estate in the South of Ireland," he asserts, "I would as soon introduce pestilence and famine as the linen manufacture upon it, carried on as it is at present in the North of that Kingdom." The rapid growth in prosperity that followed the grant of free trade, and the measures to develop the agricultural and farming resources of the country adopted by Grattan's Parliament, reveal clearly that something more than the haphazard organisation of the linen industry was the obstacle in the path of progress. If Young's conclusions were too narrowly drawn, the facts he records establish beyond dispute the folly of the contention that Protestantism enabled the people of Ulster to flourish under conditions that were too hard for believers in the creed held by the vast majority of the Irish people.

While Young was penning his comments the Ulster people were themselves searching for a remedy. They found it, not, as the author of the *Tour in Ireland* suggested, in the concentration of weaving in the towns and increased emigration, but in the

ranks of the Irish Volunteers. "England," in Hussey Burgh's phrase, had "sown her laws in dragon's teeth and they have sprung up as armed men." Ulster gave the impulse to Ireland, an impulse which she in turn had derived from the example of her exiled sons in America. She adopted and improved on the no-importation agreements with which the colonists had met the English Parliament's penal legislation: and when at ceremonial parades the muzzles of her Volunteer cannon were adorned with scrolls bearing inscriptions such as—"Open Thou, our mouths, O Lord, and our lips shall show forth Thy praise" and "A free Trade or ——" British Ministers realised that this was the threat of Lexington over again, with the difference that the odds were more heavily in favour of the force which challenged Ascendancy rule.

"It is beyond a doubt," wrote the Viceroy, Lord Carlisle, in March, 1782, "that the practicability of governing Ireland by English laws has become utterly visionary. It is with me equally beyond a doubt that Ireland may be well and happily governed by its own laws. It is, however, by no means clear that if the present moment is neglected this country will not be driven into a state of confusion, the end of which no man can foresee or limit." The Cabinet Ministers to whom Carlisle confided his views preferred a state of confusion to an Ireland "well and happily governed by its own laws."

The menace of the Volunteers forced Great Britain to grant nominal Independence to the Irish Parliament, but by denying popular opinion power to influence that Parliament, she ensured not only the maintenance of her own supremacy, but the final defeat of the hopes of Grattan and his fellows. It is true that the Reformers were in no small measure to blame for the disaster that overwhelmed them. Grattan saw

that the question was, "whether we shall be a Protestant Settlement or an Irish nation"; but when it came to the test he lacked the courage of his convictions. Flood and Charlemont, and the territorial magnates who had obtained control of the Volunteers, assumed from the first that the Protestant Settlement was conterminus with the Irish nation, and were more anxious that the Catholics should remain under-dog than they were to clip the claws of the Ascendancy. They fashioned an imposing pyramid, but they made the fatal mistake of striving to balance it on its apex. The shrewdest of the Northern Dissenters realized that, as Abraham Lincoln said long afterwards, "a nation cannot exist half slave and half free," and were convinced that the fullest extension of equal rights to Catholics was the only guarantee that the concessions wrested from England would benefit the whole people instead of merely increasing the power of a corrupt, aristocratic minority.

Grattan had declared when the Volunteer movement was in its infancy that "the Irish Protestant could never be free till the Irish Catholic had ceased to be a slave"; but the only Volunteer leader who had the spirit to act up to this democratic profession of faith was much more of an aristocrat than Grattan, and, by his office, more deeply concerned with the welfare of the Protestant Establishment. Frederick Augustus, Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry, justified in his own person the eighteenth century epigram that "God created men, women, and Herveys." John Wesley, whom he entertained at the Palace, Derry, to a dinner consisting of "a piece of boiled beef and an English pudding," was as much impressed by his sermons as by his good breeding, and found him "exemplary in all parts of public worship and plenteous in good works." On the other

hand, Jeremy Bentham, with whom the Bishop had many conversations, describes him as "liberal-minded to the last degree," though Charlemont, it is true, denounced Bristol as a determined deist and an open blasphemer. Froude insists that the Bishop's actions in Irish politics were inspired by the idea of making himself king; Horace Walpole, who disliked intensely "the mitred Proteus," as he called him, informs one of his correspondents that the Bishop "has renounced all religions to qualify himself for being a Cardinal," believing that "as episcopacy is deemed an indelible character he would be admitted *ad eundem* (as they say at Oxford and Cambridge) into the Church of Rome." At one time this bewildering prelate is flirting furiously with Nelson's Lady Hamilton, to whom he protests—

"Ah, Emma, who'd ever be wise
If madness be loving of thee?"

At another, he is strenuously championing "the anti-episcopal schismatics called Presbyterians," declaring that "as to their political principles I think them, from their system of parity, and from their practice in most parts of Europe, infinitely more favourable to political liberty than ours."

The contradictions of the Bishop of Derry's character are as endless as they are piquant, but his significance in Irish history lies in the fact that at the crisis of the Volunteer movement he was, as Mr. Erskine Childers puts it, "the one leader who spoke undiluted truth and sense." He saw what both Grattan and Charlemont lacked the wit or the ability to understand, that Parliamentary Independence without Parliamentary Reform, while it might be freedom in name, meant in reality a more humiliating subordination to the English Cabinet. He saw also that the only hope of carrying Reform was to remove

political disabilities imposed on religious grounds, and confront the oligarchy with a united democracy. For that reason he regarded Catholic Emancipation as essential, and his arguments found support amongst the Northern Volunteers. Unfortunately for Ireland, old prejudices were still too deeply rooted and landlord influences too strong to enable the Bishop of Derry to succeed in his purpose of liberating, to quote his own words to a deputation of Presbyterians, "this high-mettled nation from the petulant and rapacious oligarchy which plunder and insult it."

At the Volunteer Convention held in Dublin, in November, 1783, the moderates, though only after a stiff fight, succeeded in defeating the efforts of the Bishop to press the question of the Catholic franchise to the front. Flood's scheme of reform, accepted by the Convention, was rejected by Parliament, which took the high ground that it would not, as Yelverton, the Attorney-General, said, "receive propositions at the point of the bayonet." The real fear, however, of too many of its members was that a victory for the Volunteers would have meant the end of bribery by Castle gold. The Bishop of Derry managed at least to scare the respectables. "We must have blood, my lord, we must have blood," he exclaimed to Charlemont, who records the fact with shuddering horror. Historians ever since have been shuddering with Charlemont, and exalting the public spirit of the Volunteers who were willing to forego Reform altogether if they could not obtain it by constitutional means. But the result of their action, far from establishing the triumph of law, meant its abrogation. Nine times out of ten the "whiff of grapeshot" is, I agree, a remedy worse than the disease it is employed to cure; but if ever there are exceptions, this was one. If the main reason for the failure to rise to a great opportunity was due to the fact that the heads

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of the Volunteers were more devoted to the interests of a class than to the welfare of the nation, the bulk of their followers do not escape the same reproach. They recognised for the first time in Irish history that the tie of a common country bound Protestants and Catholics together; but in the mass they still clung to the belief that unity might be established not on the basis of the equality of all creeds, but on the acceptance of the political supremacy of their own faith. Had their rulers played up to them, the breaking down of religious barriers in Ireland might have been delayed for many a year, but their determination to prove that divisions of creed mattered less to them than differences of class succeeded in doing what the eloquence of the Bishop of Derry, and those who thought with him, had failed to do.

After the failure of the Convention and the disbandment of the Volunteers, Lord Bristol flung up serious politics for art and philandering. "*Pour moi, j'irai mon train*," he wrote to his daughter, "and if I cannot be the Caesar nor the Cicero I will be a less splendid but a more useful citizen, the Lucullus of my time, the midwife of talents, industry, and hidden virtues." The "hidden virtues" are a rather doubtful quantity, in view of the Bishop's relations with Lady Hamilton—though he does call her "dear respectable Emma"—and with the equally notorious Countess von Lichtenau, mistress of Frederick William II. of Prussia. But he served art well as the generous patron of Flaxman; and when Napoleon's generals were raiding the treasures of Rome to enrich Paris, the collections of the Bishop were spared, as a result of a petition signed by over three hundred artists, who pointed out that for forty years the greater part of his income had gone to encourage artistic effort. In later years the Bishop of Derry deserted Ireland for Italy, where he devoted most of his

energies to denouncing the French revolutionaries in language that would have shocked Jeremy Bentham as a Liberal as much as it would John Wesley as a Methodist. One sample extracted from a letter addressed "*A son Excellence, Miladi Hamilton*" must suffice. "Hip! Hip! Hip! Huzza, Huzza, Huzza, for dearest Emma! Those doubly damn'd miscreants, first as French, secondly as Rep., have thrown doublets, and within these few days have been beat—ay, completely beaten twice."

The Earl of Bristol was a Renaissance figure born into an unsympathetic age, and he not only acted but dressed for the part in a coat of crimson silk or velvet, a white hat edged with purple, purple stockings, and a black sash spangled with silver, which the Italians fondly believed was the orthodox costume of an Irish bishop. Amongst his letters is one written in 1798, in which he sought to persuade Pitt that if he were appointed British Minister to Rome he could "wrench the Republic from the hands of its merciless French taskmasters." He admits, however, quite frankly to his daughter that his real object was to save, if possible, from sequestration, "a large mosaick pavement, sumptuous chimney pieces for my new house, and pictures, statues, busts, and marbles without end." In a sentence that might have been penned by Browning's Bishop of St. Praxed's, he implores his daughter to bring pressure to bear on Pitt so that he may not lose his "Titians, Raphaels, dear Guidos, and three old Carraccis—*Gran Dio! che tesora.*"

The "French tygers," to whom the Bishop would have given short shrift, proved themselves more effective propagandists of the creed of racial and religious equality in Ireland. I admit that the Irish Executive by its resolve to resist Parliamentary Reform at all hazards had helped to

prepare the ground for the new seed; and Wolfe Tone, a much more formidable leader of revolt than the Bishop of Derry, saw to it that the budding plant did not wither for lack of nourishment. It was the French Revolution, however, that gave the impetus, and, Tone insists in his *Autobiography*, "the citizens of Belfast were the first to raise their heads from the abyss and to look the situation of their country steadily in the face." "Long convinced in their own minds," he continues, "that to be free it was necessary to be just, they cast their eyes once more on the long-neglected Catholics, and profiting of past errors, for which, however, they had not to accuse themselves, they determined to begin on a new system, and to raise the structure of the liberty and independence of their country, on the broad basis of equal rights to the whole people." Like all men who have achieved great things in politics, Wolfe Tone did not so much create a new situation as divine possibilities in the existing state of affairs which, with the transforming energy of genius, he shaped to his own ends. On his first visit to Ulster in July, 1791, he records in his Diary that Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* was already "the Koran of Blefescu," as Tone nicknames Belfast in his private correspondence. In this connection I may mention that Tom Paine's Deism was a sore stumbling block to Ulster Republicans who were also good Presbyterians. Mary M'Cracken, the sister of the rebel leader who commanded at the Battle of Antrim, maintained to her dying day—and she lived well into the middle of the nineteenth century—that the *Age of Reason* was written by the orders of the British Government and fathered on Tom Paine in order to create prejudice against the author of the *Rights of Man*. All Dissenters, however, were not so rigid in their orthodoxy. Tone, amongst the noteworthy incidents of his first Belfast visit, refers to a

"curious discourse with a hairdresser, one Taylor, who has two children christened by the priest, though he is himself a Dissenter, merely with a wish to blend the sects."

With the eye of a born political strategist, Tone saw that the moment was ripe to convince Dissenters and Catholics alike that they had, as he put it, "but one common interest and one common enemy; that the depression and slavery of Ireland was produced and perpetuated by the divisions existing between them, and that, consequently, to assert the independence of their country, and their own individual liberties it was necessary to forget all former feuds, to consolidate the entire strength of the whole nation, and to form for the future but one people." The *Argument on behalf of the Catholics*, which in 1791 he addressed to the Ulster Dissenters, had an effect on Ireland not unworthy to be compared with that created by Paine's *Common Sense* in America. Like Paine, Wolfe Tone expressed what tens of thousands of his countrymen dumbly felt; and it may be said of the *Argument on behalf of The Catholics*, as Sir George Trevelyan has said of *Common Sense*, "the extraordinary success of this famous pamphlet proved, if it needed proving, that the power of authorship is as much in the reader as it is in the writer."

Because Tone urged an alliance of Catholics and Dissenters to secure Parliamentary Reform, while his real objects were, as he himself states, "to subvert the tyranny of an execrable Government, to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of our political evils, and to assert the independence of my country," he is described by historians of the school of Froude as a political hypocrite and an unprincipled intriguer. But the facts, as every impartial investigator has shown, leave no doubt that had Reform been granted Tone, in urging revolution,

would have been a voice crying in the wilderness. Nor is it at all certain that in these circumstances he would have continued to preach revolt as a sacred duty. His *Autobiography* reveals him not as a fanatical doctrinaire, hag-ridden by a theory, but as an eminently practical politician who, though he demanded a whole loaf, never hesitated to accept a crust in preference to going without bread. In a passage in his *Diary*, written in 1798, Tone thus replies to the argument that no concessions should be made to Ireland, because the United Irishmen intended to confiscate and distribute the property of the landlords. "I know not," he writes, "whether they do or not. I am sure in June, 1795, when I was forced to leave the country, they entertained no such ideas. If they have since taken root among them the Irish gentry may accuse themselves. . . . If such men, in the issue, lose their property, they are themselves alone to blame, by deserting their first and most sacred of duties—the duty to their country. They have incurred a wilful forfeiture by disdaining to occupy the station they might have held among the people and which the people would have been glad to see them fill."

Tone's political career from first to last was dominated by the conviction that the only hope of progress was, as he put it, "to unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishmen in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter." Unity was the condition precedent not only of the Independence of which Tone dreamt, but of all reform worthy of the name; and his insistence on this fact, and the measures by which he gave effect to it, rank him in point of statesmanship above all his fellows. The original leaders of the Volunteers had gifts denied to him, but if their tactics

were more showy they were the tactics rather of the full dress review than of the battle-field. Flood and Grattan both desired unity, but the first would not have it at the price of Protestant Ascendancy, and the second, scared like Burke by the nightmare of insurgent democracy which the French Revolution had conjured up, shrank from pressing his demands to their logical conclusion. Tone, on the contrary, declared that for Ireland the union of Irishmen came first, and anything that prevented this, however harmless or even laudable it might be in itself, must be sacrificed. His enemies have sought to make capital out of this "unscrupulousness," as they term it, but Irishmen have never failed to recognise the nobility of the passion that inspired him.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN ULSTER JOINED IRELAND.

In the Belfast of 1791 Tone found himself preaching to the converted. His difficulty indeed was less to stir up Presbyterian enthusiasm for the Catholic claims than to hold it in check. The Dissenters were ready to make more sweeping demands for the Catholics than the latter would advance for themselves. It was Protestants who, in the procession which on 14th July, 1791, commemorated at once the fall of the Bastille and the formation of the Society of United Irishmen, carried through the cheering crowds that lined the streets of Belfast a green banner with the inscriptions—" Our Gallic brother was born July 14th, 1789. Alas! we are still in embryo," and " Superstitious Jealousy the cause of the Irish Bastille; let us unite and destroy it." And it was Belfast Protestants who addressed the French National Assembly in these words—" If we be asked what the French Revolution is to us, we answer, much. Much as men. It is good for human nature that the grass grows where the Bastille stood. We do rejoice at an event that means the breaking up of civil and religious bondage, when we behold this misshapen pile of abuses, cemented merely by custom, and raised upon the ignorance of a prostrate people, tottering to its base, to the very level of equality and commonwealth."

Ulster did not rely on words alone to prove her devotion to the new ideal of fraternity. It became the fashion with Protestant Volunteers to attend Mass in companies as a demonstration of their feelings towards their Catholic brethren; and when Brunswick and the *émigrés* invaded France to restore the

Monarchy, the Ulster towns hastened to make collections to fill the war chest of the Revolutionary Government. Newry, for instance, sent to Paris £300, Coleraine and Limavady £600, and Armagh 2,750 livres. The defeat of the Austrians and Prussians at Valmy was celebrated in Belfast by a general illumination, in which one of the most-admired transparencies represented a gallows suspending an inverted crown. Amongst the mottoes which, as a contemporary Tory put it, exhibited " clearly the prevailing bias of the inhabitants," were " France is free, so may we—let us will it," and " May the fate of every tyrant be that of Capet."

Enthusiastic Volunteers had their babies christened Dumouriez after the French Commander, and of one of these, the son of a member of the Carrickfergus True Blues, the *Northern Star*, a revolutionary organ, prophesied " The child must certainly, in time, be a patriotic soldier." Stranger still to those who know the later history of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, thanksgiving services for the success of the French arms were held in several congregations. At Maghera, according to the session clerk, the service was " sanctioned by the hearty concurrence of the whole worshipping society—a few individuals excepted, on whom the breath of aristocracy had shed its baneful influence." Wolfe Tone himself was not certain if it were quite wise to design new uniforms for the Volunteers on the model of the French National Guard. His Ulster friends, however, were troubled by no such doubts, to judge by the letter one of them wrote to him at this period from Belfast :—" We are going on here with boots of seven leagues, and will soon be at liberty and equality." Every town had its corps of National Guards or Sons of Liberty ; and members of these organisations invariably addressed one another as " citizen soldier." Even Masonic

lodges caught the republican fever. Lodge 730, at a meeting at Garvagh, Co. Derry, passed this sweeping resolution—"That factitious titles such as monarchy, royalty, serenity, excellency, etc., are ponderous and oppressive mountains in the great globe of despotism under which poor Erin sinks and groans. A word in your ear: Whereabouts is France at a loss for the want of either." Delegates of thirty lodges assembled at Dungannon declared—"Let every lodge in the land become a company of citizen-soldiers, let every volunteer company become a lodge of masons."

Samuel M'Skimin, a furious Tory and a very cynical observer of the popular movements of his day, relates in his *Annals of Ulster*, from which I have borrowed a good deal, many curious incidents of this troubled time. Strangest of all is the narrative of the Kilrea guillotine, an admirable illustration of the practical bias of the Ulster mind. "In order that nothing might be wanting on the revolution breaking out," M'Skimin writes, "a guillotine was made by a mechanic in the vicinity of Kilrea, and a list made out of those to be decapitated, or, as it was said, 'to oil first the wheels of the Revolution for the public good.' As in France, the properties of the wealthy were to have been confiscated for the benefit of the republic, and hence, in the language of Robespierre, the guillotine was to have been called the 'National Mint,' a phrase much applauded for the expressive ingenuity of the application. The Kilrea instrument was nearly ten feet in height, its axe sharp and heavy and about ten inches deep. It was moved up in a groove by a pulley and rope. Lead being scarce, from the great demand of that metal for bullets, the axe was loaded by a piece cut off an old mill-stone. A few experiments were made by beheading dogs and cats, which being declared satisfactory, the maker was said to have deserved well of his country, and the

instrument was carefully deposited in an ark in the corn-mill of Lisnagrat."

As always in Ireland when political excitement rises signs and omens abounded. The prophecies that thrilled the country on the eve of '98 bear a strange resemblance to the numerous stories, which have been passing from lip to lip since the Rising of 1916, such as the tale of the Connacht babe who a few hours after birth declared the war would end in April, 1918, and straightway died; and the Black Pig of Kiltrustan, visible only to children, whose appearance portends the most direful happenings. These are nowadays held to be inventions that appeal only to the unpractical Celt, and at which the hard-headed Ulsterman jeers. But the Northern Presbyterian of the last decade of the eighteenth century was quite as credulous as the Connacht peasant. According to M'Skimin, a wide circulation was obtained in the Ulster counties for a pamphlet entitled, "A Paraphrase on the Prophecies of Daniel and John," which revealed the "Beast" of *Revelations* as "absolute tyrannical monarchy in a hereditary line"; and it was firmly believed that an animal had been foaled, striped like a zebra, which audibly repeated the following distich—

> "A wet Winter, a dry Spring,
> A bloody Summer, and no King."

It was announced that at Dundonald, now a suburb of Belfast covered with red-brick villas, "a young maiden with two thumbs on her right hand, was to sit upon a large stone, and to hold the horses of three kings during a great battle, in which Ireland was to be, as it were, three times lost, but at length won. During this conflict the wheel of an adjoining mill was to be three times turned round with the blood of the slain. Previous to this great day the maiden

was to have crossed the At'antic Ocean three times, which, it was asserted, she had already accomplished. Two common briars growing in the same neighbourhood, at a considerable distance from each other, were also to entwine their branches before this great battle, which union was affirmed to have been perfected—therefore civil war was believed to be at hand."

M'Skimin scoffs loudly at the fantastic ideals of the United men who "in their inordinate love of French politics avowed their contempt for every ancient right and privilege." In a footnote he adds that a generation after the rebellion the advocates of equality in Ulster were still preaching the grotesque doctrine that the Irish farmer has a right to the land he tills. M'Skimin's abhorrence of the "levelling spirit" with which Wolfe Tone and his fellows indoctrinated "illiterate bumpkins" is not a whit stronger than Froude's denunciation of the declaration of the Dungannon Volunteers that freedom consists in the consent of the governed to the laws under which they live. "They might as well have said," Froude comments, "that their consent was required to the law which would break their necks if they fell over a precipice." To-day the Irish farmer holds his land in as firm a grip as the French peasant; and if "government by the just consent of the governed" is not yet the rule in Ireland, the despised doctrine of the Dungannon Volunteers has become the rallying cry not only of the Allies, but of the nations with whom they were at war.

At the outset the stars in their courses seemed to be fighting on the side of the United Irishmen. Already they had gone far to remedy the state of affairs thus described by Wolfe Tone: "Our provinces are ignorant of each other, our island is connected, we ourselves are insulated; and distinctions

of rank and poverty and religious persuasion have hitherto been not merely lines of difference, but brazen walls of separation. We are separate nations, met and settled together, not mingled, but convened —uncemented, like the image which Nebuchadnezzar saw, with a head of fine gold, legs of iron, feet of clay—parts that do not cleave to one another." Most marvellous of all, the British Cabinet, to which Tone's principles of "the rights of man and the greatest happiness of the greatest number" were anathema, found itself constrained by the logic of events to support the Reformers against the Ascendancy party who were its agents in Ireland. Pitt was preparing for war with the French Republic, and he desired, nominally at least, to make the war a Christian crusade against the leagued hordes of atheism. But the Powers with whom he proposed to ally himself were largely Catholic; and the spectacle of Great Britain fighting side by side with Catholics to restore a Catholic dynasty, and re-establish Catholicism in France, while in Ireland the law "did not suppose such a person as an Irish Roman Catholic to exist," was too incongruous even for George the Third. Austria and Prussia might not have developed free institutions, but Protestantism was no more a badge of servitude in Vienna than Catholicism was in Berlin. Colonel O'Shee, who commanded an Austrian Brigade against Napoleon at Wagram, told his fellow-townsmen of Kilkenny that in contrast with the system which prevailed in Ireland a man's creed did not exclude him from military command either in Austria or the German States. Downing Street was reluctantly driven to the conclusion that something must be done, though it was well aware that the decision would be anything but palatable to College Green, where a prominent supporter of the Government had recently succeeded in having a petition in

favour of the Catholic claims kicked out of the House on the ground that it was the production of "shop-keepers and shop-lifters."

Lord Westmorland, who, like many Viceroys before and since, was the puppet and not the master of his nominal subordinates, shrieked warnings of irremediable disaster. He argued, as men like him have always argued, and for that matter still argue, that the clamour was wholly due to Jacobin agitators. "The violent attacks and threats of the democratic leaders of the Catholics," he declared, "have forced the clergy into a co-operation with their plan, and the gentry into an acquiescence." With a cynical frankness in which Tory historians see nothing to reprobate, Westmorland defended the perpetuation of the system under which, in his words, "Great Britain manages the Protestants, and the Protestants the Catholics." The fatal thing in Westmorland's eyes about the policy of the United Irishmen was not, as latter-day Unionists insist, that it would have meant the substitution of a Catholic for a Protestant Ascendancy, but that it "must end shortly in the abolition of all religious distinctions, and in a union of those distinctions." Unlike Wolfe Tone, the question with the Viceroy was not whether this would benefit Ireland, but whether it would serve the ends of English policy. Westmorland warned the Cabinet: "If such a union were once formed, and if the Protestants, after being forced into submission to it, should, contrary to their expectations, find themselves secure in their possessions without British protection, is it not to be feared they might run into the present State-making mania of the world, and form a government more to the taste and wishes of the people than their present aristocratical Constitution?" Thus the Viceroy admitted the truth of the contention of the United Irishmen that English

dominance in Ireland was designed to benefit a class instead of a nation, and maintained the interests of this class only in so far as they ensured the stability of alien rule.

In 1793 it was for the moment more important to placate European opinion than to gratify Protestant Ascendancy, so, in spite of the appeals of Westmorland and the threats of Fitzgibbon, George the Third not only reconciled it with his sensitive conscience to confer the electoral franchise on Catholics, but was exceedingly sympathetic towards the Catholic deputation which waited upon him to present a petition drafted—of all people—by Wolfe Tone. The delegates travelled to London by way of Belfast, where the townspeople who had assembled in force drew their carriage in triumph through the streets. It is little wonder that Hobart, the Chief Secretary, should have raged against Belfast as "the source of all the mischief," and declared "our security is in the army, and if that is not kept up, the levellers of the North will overawe every part of the Kingdom."

The Ulster Presbyterians were by no means overwhelmed by the magnanimity of the Government in consenting to give Catholics the vote. Like Wolfe Tone, they held that the concession was a shadow void of substance, unless accompanied by a genuine measure of Parliamentary Reform. Nor did it require extraordinary insight to divine that the franchise was largely a farce in a Parliament, where out of 300 seats 212 were absolutely controlled by individuals, and could be bought and sold in the open market. In 1792 seventeen boroughs had no resident electors, sixteen had but one, and ninety had thirteen each. At Bannow, County Wexford, not even a house was to be found in the constituency. When the notice of an election arrived it was posted on the ruins of an old chimney which rose out of a drifting desert of sand.

So Presbyterians, while welcoming the Catholic right to vote, made it clear they regarded the Act as only a paltry instalment of their real demand. As the Synod of Ulster put it, "a reform in the representation of the Commons House of Parliament is essentially necessary to the perfection of the constitution and the security and maintenance of public liberty." In the same resolution these divines expressed "their earnest prayer that the time may never more return when religious distinctions shall be used as a pretext for disturbing society, or arming man against his neighbours; that intolerance of every kind may be trodden under foot; and every equally good subject shall be equally cherished and protected by the State."

What the Presbyterians dreaded as a disaster was the mainspring of the policy of Fitzgibbon and the Irish Executive; and the course of events now made it possible for them to develop it with a success that exceeded their fondest hopes. In particular, the war which they feared at the outset might prove their undoing by compelling the British Cabinet to concede the Catholic claims, became by skilful management their salvation. However little the priests and the Catholic aristocracy might like the substitution of Feasts of Reason for the service of the Mass in Notre Dame, the great majority of their people had no enthusiasm for a struggle in which they were asked to restore Catholicism in France by men who were vowed to keep Irish Catholics hewers of wood and drawers of water. Dissenters, on the other hand, were openly hostile to the war. According to a report of the Irish House of Lords, prayers were actually offered up in Presbyterian churches for the success of the French arms, and the Ulster people were urged to petition for peace. "What is the navigation of the Scheldt to us?" inquired the authors of an address

widely circulated in Belfast. "Why should we interfere because France, like Cromwell, has killed a guilty king? Let the rich who want war pay for it. Trade in all its branches is paralysed. Yet Ireland has no cause of quarrel with France." In the light of what has happened in recent years it is not difficult to understand how this situation was developed by the Ascendancy. "Get on with the war," was the cry of Fitzgibbon and his colleagues; and on their lips getting on with the war meant, as in our own time, the prohibition of any scheme of reform in Ireland.

Jacobin influences were then as much a trump card as "German gold" or Bolshevism was destined to be a century and a quarter later. Not only was it the baneful principles of Republican France that induced Presbyterians and Catholics to join forces, but when in Cavan and Meath in the beginning of 1793 bodies of Protestants led not by United Irishmen, but by Ascendancy landlords, "pillaged, plundered, and burned without requiring any mark of guilt but religion," the outbreaks were as a matter of course attributed to the intrigues of French emissaries. Why the French, who presumably were working in conjunction with the United Irishmen, should deliberately try to run counter to them by stirring up the passions the Reformers were most anxious to allay is one of the things that Dublin Castle never condescended to explain. Its theory was that any weapon that could be used against the popular movement was good enough for its purpose, and the result certainly justified its wisdom.

It is impossible to say whether Pitt, undistracted by the complications of a European war, would have pursued a different course in Ireland. Intellectually, I imagine, his inclinations were rather towards the moderation of Grattan than the extremism of Fitzgibbon. He saw Ireland, however, only in relation

to other and, in his view, more important problems, and was content to shape his policy in accordance with the recommendations of "the man on the spot," without enquiring too closely whether the "man on the spot" was speaking for the whole people or purely for his own class. Burke, who knew the facts as Pitt could never hope to know them, summed up the situation in three sentences. "It is not to know Ireland to say that what is called opposition is what will give trouble to a real Viceroy. His embarrassments are upon the part of those who ought to be the supporters of the English Government, but who have formed themselves into a cabal to destroy the King's authority, and to divide the country as a spoil amongst one another. *Non regnum sed magnum latrocinium*—the motto ought to be put under the harp."

The events that followed the Whig Coalition with Pitt in 1794 and the appointment of Fitzwilliam as Viceroy confirmed the truth of Burke's words. Volumes have been filled with details of the controversies of the Fitzwilliam affair, but the vital facts can be stated in a few words. Fitzwilliam was for a policy of appeasement in Ireland, and, in keeping with what is now a commonplace of constitutional government, believed that a change of methods must be accompanied by a change in the personnel of the Executive. Pitt was nominally for a change in methods, but he was adamant against a change in men. Having failed to assert his views Fitzwilliam was recalled, and his departure was marked by scenes of mourning North and South without precedent in Viceregal history. Whether Fitzwilliam would have succeeded in reconciling the Catholic claims and the Presbyterian demands with the security of the British Empire in war time is a question upon which it is futile to dogmatise. But there is, I am convinced, no doubt at all that his overthrow sowed the seeds of

all the disasters that followed by establishing a belief in the invincibility of the Ascendancy not only in the minds of its members, but in those of its opponents.

Fitzgibbon and his fellows had the best of reasons for assuming that no constitutional check would henceforth hamper the development of their schemes; and the Ulster Reformers, who had up till then vehemently disputed the truth of Wolfe Tone's contentions, were driven to the conclusion that they could hope to accomplish their ends only by resorting to unconstitutional weapons. Grattan explained the Castle plot which, unfortunately, he was unable to counter. "Here," he told the Irish House of Commons, "is the system and the principle of the system; from a system of corruption to a system of coercion, and so on to military executions." It was essential to the anti-popular party that they should not only defeat the Reformers, but that they should divide them into mutually hostile factions. Fitzgibbon played upon the fears of the gentry by picturing the Catholics as united in a great conspiracy not to obtain reforms, but to establish an ascendancy of their own by regaining possession of the estates forfeited in previous confiscations and restoring "the religion of their ancestors in its full splendour and dominion." Castle agents worked even more effectively on the prejudices of Protestants who had less to lose. In this case the "old Irish," to use the phrase of the period, were represented not as a future menace, but as a present danger, and the utmost was made of the competition for holdings between tenants of rival creeds.

If the spark that started the fires of sectarian bigotry in Armagh was not kindled by emissaries of the Government, these saw to it that the outbreak should not abate for lack of fuel. In a subsequent chapter I discuss in detail the development of Orangeism and the methods by which its growth

was fostered. For the present I am concerned only with the more general aspects of the process by which a political union between a divided Ireland and Great Britain was substituted for a real union amongst Irishmen. The most biassed Orangeman readily admits that a union of Irishmen is the true ideal, and that Pitt's solution was, at the best, a *pis-aller*. He contends, however, that unity in the real sense is impossible ; and if pressed to state when the experiment of unity was tried and found futile, he invariably points to the closing years of the eighteenth century. Undoubtedly there was at that period an almost universal impulse North and South to break down dividing barriers and forget ancient antagonisms. And the impulse was not, as some latter-day politicians assert, a momentary hysteria which took no account of fixed and immutable facts. On the contrary, it rested on the solid basis of incontrovertible deductions drawn from premises that could not be disputed. For two hundred years " old Irish " and new Settlers had been kept growling at one another, in Strafford's phrase, like " muzzled dogs " ; to use one to neutralise the other, while holding both in leash, was the aim and end of all Strafford's successors from Primate Boulter to Lord Westmorland. Only slowly did it dawn upon the mass of the Irish people that they had less to fear from one another than from the tiny minority which exploited their prejudices to its own advantage ; and when at length they endeavoured to test this belief in practice the conditions were such as to render the experiment almost hopeless. From the moment the movement towards unity began all the resources, official and unofficial, of the party in power were flung into the scale against it.

Under any circumstances it would have been no easy task to obliterate the memory of feuds that had

been handed down like a sacred tradition from father to son through long generations, and replace the old doctrine of hate and division by a new gospel of brotherly love. As it was, the United Irishmen had to labour under the shadow of the sword of martial law, and with the promise for their converts not of a crown but of a halter. Their failure to effect a final fusion between parties in Ulster is constantly paraded as a proof that Irish racial and religious divisions constituted a problem which statesmen for their own sakes will do well to dismiss as insoluble. Yet the history of the period shows that not only had the United Irishmen found a solution, but that all the powers of the British Government were strained to the breaking point to prevent the successful application of this solution. Take, for instance, the case of the agrarian outbreaks in Armagh, the rock, according to the Unionists, which proved fatal to the hopes of Tone and his fellows. Here one finds religious hatred artfully stimulated by the very men whose claim to rule was that they alone were able to impose order and hold the balance even between rival creeds. Mr. Jephson, a member of the Irish Parliament, writing in 1795 from Loughgall, the storm-centre of Orangeism in Armagh, admits that the outrages have left "a deadly, irreconcilable rancour in the minds of the lower people." "But," he adds, "it is impossible for the Protestant gentry to keep up the farce of impartiality between the parties, or to disavow the absolute necessity of giving a considerable support to the Protestant party, who from the activity of the two Copes have got the name of the Orange boys." Thus the supporters of the Ascendancy, with, as contemporary evidence makes clear, the connivance of the Government, deliberately preferred massacre and anarchy as a lesser evil than the co-operation of Catholic and Protestant.

The Northern Presbyterians did not, as is often argued, speedily recover from their mad infatuation, and realise that hostility not friendship to the bulk of their fellow countrymen was for them the true ideal. There were undoubtedly many Ulster Dissenters who believed Reform was essential and could be achieved only by securing equality of treatment for Catholics, yet who shrank from an appeal to arms when the dismissal of Fitzwilliam made it certain that force alone would suffice to obtain concessions. And others who were revolutionists in theory lost heart in the hour of trial. Nationalist writers have sometimes commented on the failure of the Northern Republicans to make good their pledges, and contrasted Presbyterian performances in '98 with the promises of the early years of the United movement. This line of argument, tempting as it may be to controversialists, ignores, I think, the vital facts of the situation. All the plans of the revolutionaries were based on the assumption of French intervention; without an invasion the leaders realised—and the rank and file of their Ulster followers held the same view—that a rising would be no more than a signal for an open massacre by the forces of the Ascendancy. The policy of the Irish Executive was to force a premature rising at all hazards. The scheme was simple, and, as the result proved, effective, but its legitimacy depends upon whether one considers that the duty of a Government is to meet discontent amongst its people with concessions, or whether the right course is to drive moderates and extremists alike into armed revolt. There was never any doubt as to which attitude Dublin Castle preferred. Camden, writing in 1795 of the decision of the graziers to raise wages and reduce the rents of potato patches, tells the Cabinet " both these measures were very just and necessary in themselves, but very improper and

impolitic, forced, as they were, by intimidation." This has been the guiding rule of English politicians ever since. Measures of Irish reform are admitted to be "just and necessary," but nothing is done to give practical effect to them. When in despair at the failure of other means "intimidation" is resorted to, the concession, however desirable it may be on its merits, must be denied, because to grant it would be a surrender to force.

The Irish administration was well aware that even a moderate measure of reform would have deprived the United Irishmen of the bulk of the men whose support constituted the driving force of the movement; and it knew also, as George Ponsonby expressed it, that "coercion will never do to defend the country against the French." But Fitzgibbon and his colleagues were convinced that coercion was essential to the triumph of a system which, as Sir John Moore told Grattan, would have made him a rebel had he been an Irishman. And on this occasion coercion, from the point of view of its authors, was justified by the results. Later generations of Ulstermen affect to believe it was the glare of Scullabogue barn that changed their ancestors' views of things; but all the evidence goes to show that more potent arguments were the torches of Lake's Yeomanry applied to the thatch of Presbyterian farmhouses, and the floggings, half-hangings, and pitch-caps which were the approved Protestant methods of demonstrating that rebellion against English rule was really, in the Old Testament phrase, "the sin of witchcraft."

This view, I know, is pleasing neither to Unionists nor Nationalists. The Covenanters of to-day, wrong as they hold their ancestors' Republican ideas to have been, are naturally reluctant to think that an Ulsterman could be bullied out of any belief he might choose to entertain, and their political opponents make it

an article of faith that force is no remedy. I am willing to agree that in the long run force will not change convictions, but in Irish history—and the dragooning of Ulster in 1798 is a leading case—coercion has produced temporary results that to coercionists, who are invariably opportunists, not statesmen, serve to demonstrate the efficacy of their creed.

Those who complain that the Ulster Reformers were easily cowed can have but little knowledge of the nature of the ordeal to which they were subjected. For almost eighteen months before the despairing appeal to arms was made, the Protestant counties of the North, under the instructions of the Viceroy, were treated by Lake as if they were already in active insurrection. Camden informed the Cabinet that " if the urgency of the case demands a conduct beyond that which can be sanctioned by the law, the General has orders from me not to suffer the cause of justice to be frustrated by the delicacy which might possibly have actuated the magistracy." This, as Grattan said, was " law-making in the spirit of law-breaking," but, unfortunately, something more effective than an epigram was needed to pierce the joints of the Viceroy's armour. Camden, with Fitzgibbon as his evil genius, held rigidly on his way; and Lake lost no opportunity of bettering the instructions he had received from the Castle. Lecky quotes a letter which reveals the spirit that animated the commander charged with restoring order in Ulster. " I much fear," Lake wrote, " these villains will not give us an opportunity of breaking them in the summary way we all wish. You may rest assured they will not have much mercy if we can once begin. . . . Belfast ought to be proclaimed and punished most severely, as it is plain every act of sedition originates in this town. I have patrols going all night

and will do everything I can to thin the country of these rebellious scoundrels by sending them on board the tender. . . . Nothing but terror will keep them in order."

Terror Lake certainly did not stint; and the rank and file of his army set themselves with whole-hearted enthusiasm to execute their general's plans. The favourite methods of persuasion adopted were half-hanging, picketing, which meant suspending a victim by one arm so that the whole weight of his body rested on one foot which was placed on a sharpened stake; and pitch-caps, an ingenious improvement on the methods of the Red Indian, because the unfortunate who was crowned with one of these caps filled with hot pitch, had to submit to a scalping process to free himself. House-burning was by comparison a minor punishment; and the peasant had every reason to congratulate himself if his blazing homestead was not also his funeral pyre. The Orange yeomanry and the undisciplined English militia who were entrusted with the task of disarming the country acted as it was intended they should act. The Ancient Britons, a Welsh fencible regiment, perpetrated a hideous massacre near Newry, though, according to a militia officer who was present, "no opposition whatever had been given . . . and, as I shall answer to Almighty God, I believe a single gun was not fired, but by the Britons or yeomanry." Yet the Viceroy's comment on this murder of women and children was a jest about the zeal with which the Ancient Britons practised "the sword exercise which they had recently learnt." Lord Moira, from one of whose Ulster estates ninety-one householders had been driven by the Orangemen, told his fellow-peers who knew his record as a soldier, "I have seen a conquered country held by military force, but never did I see in any conquered country such a tone of

insult as has been adopted by Great Britain towards Ireland."

The charge that the Executive deliberately encouraged and instigated military license does not rest on the evidence of the opponents of the Government. The most damning proof of guilt is to be found in the indictment of Dublin Castle policy by Sir Ralph Abercromby, who was appointed Commander-in-Chief in the last months of 1797. Abercromby wanted troops who would in an emergency be able to oppose a French invasion; he found regiments so demoralised by free quarters and lack of discipline that they were, in a phrase in his famous general order, "formidable to everyone but the enemy." He denounced the ridiculous farce of proclaiming the country in a state of rebellion "when the orders of his Excellency might be carried over the whole kingdom by an orderly dragoon;" and in private letters he stated that the struggle was whether the character of the army was to be destroyed by "the violence and oppression of a set of men who have for more than twelve months employed it in measures which they durst not avow or sanction." In any other country in the world the exposure would have ruined the conspirators; in Ireland it reacted only on Abercromby. The Castle Junta, instead of flinging up the game, actually desired to impeach the "Scotch beast," as Fitzgibbon described him; but, finally, it was decided that Abercromby should retire in favour of Lake, who, if a deplorably poor soldier when real fighting was in question, had mastered the art of provoking a rebellion which stronger hands and shrewder heads would be required to subdue.

Lake's anxiety to oblige his employers nearly proved their undoing. In Ulster, where he had both time and opportunity fully to develop his methods of barbarism, the Rebellion exploded, as it was desired

it should explode, in an outbreak which served to provide a pretext for ruthless repressive measures. In the South, notably in Wexford, the explosion came sooner than the plotters had anticipated, and its force staggered and amazed them. The peasants of Wicklow and Wexford were inspired less by the ideals of the United Irishmen than, as one of their Protestant leaders said, " by the instinct of self-preservation." Yet lacking, as they did, organisation, arms, and equipment, they inflicted a series of bloody defeats on formidable British armies ; and country gentlemen and parish priests proved themselves more competent soldiers in the field than Lake and his captains.

Abercromby's predictions were verified in detail, but the men who drove out Abercromby were skilful enough to turn the happenings in Wexford to their own advantage, by representing the uprising of a maddened peasantry against a campaign of outrage and torture as an upheaval of Catholic bigotry. This lie was sedulously circulated in Ulster, where undoubtedly it had its effect on popular opinion, though a study of the records does not, in my opinion, confirm the modern Unionist view that the rising in the South opened the eyes of Northern Presbyterians to the folly of their republican dreams. Scullabogue barn and Wexford bridge may have been grim revelations of Catholic ferocity, but the Orange yeomanry before, during, and after the Rising were guilty of excesses every whit as unpardonable against their fellow Protestants in Antrim and Down. British officers like Nugent, who in Presbyterian Ulster refused quarter, hanged, flogged, and tortured innocent as well as guilty, turned great stretches of the country-side into a desert by firing the houses and carrying off stocks and cattle, cut a strange figure when they set up as Christian heroes in opposition to the degraded savages of Wexford. And unless human nature in

the North has radically changed, United Irishmen, who had experienced at first hand the tender mercies of the Ancient Britons and the Downshire Militia, were not likely to be appalled by the knowledge that the exertions of these warriors had provoked in Catholic districts reprisals in kind, more especially as the details of the reprisals were circulated by Government agents who had for years been denouncing the Ulster Presbyterians to whom they now appealed as miscreants and murderers whose doctrines had put them outside the pale of humanity.

CHAPTER IV.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER.

It is argued by Nationalists as well as Unionists that the failure of Presbyterian Ulster to offer any violent opposition to the Union is a proof that it had buried its democratic ideals deeper than ever plummet sounded. This, I am convinced, is a complete misinterpretation of the facts of the situation. In the first place the Republicans lacked the power, even if they had the will, to oppose the measure. The leaders of the North who escaped the scaffold were behind prison bars; the pick of their followers had been drafted into penal battalions in the West Indies, or were serving as pressed men aboard the Fleet. Secondly, the Ulster democrats of that period had sacrificed everything to accomplish the reform of the Irish Parliament, and with the failure of the Rising they realised that Reform was a forlorn hope. Ascendancy was fixed more firmly than ever in the saddle, and they at least felt themselves powerless to unhorse it. Therefore it was only natural that in the Union proposals many of them should see not, as Grattan did, "the destruction of Irish liberty," but, as Hamilton Rowan said, the downfall of a corrupt assembly and the wreck of a feudal aristocracy. This view was strengthened by the fact that most of the stoutest champions of the Ascendancy were vehemently opposed to the Union. Orange Yeomen marched in processions of protest, and the lodges, in spite of the efforts of the Government, adopted fiery resolutions denouncing the measure. The survivors of the rebels would have been less than human had they not chuckled over this turning of the tables. A

popular song of the day may be taken as a faithful reflection of their feelings :—

> " You remember the time when each village and town
> Most gaily resounded with ' Croppies lie down ! '
> Billy Pitt changed the note, and cries, ' Down with them all,
> Down Croppy, down Orange, down great, and down small.'
> Ah, that was the way to be free."

To assume that the Dissenters in taking the Union so quietly had accepted Fitzgibbonism as their creed is much the same as if one were to urge that the Orangemen who opposed the Union had suddenly become converts to Jacobinism. The attitude of the North is capable of a simpler explanation. Having failed to mend the Irish Parliament by their efforts and sacrifices the Ulstermen were not unwilling to see it ended, especially as the process of ending it was highly distasteful to a majority of those who had taken the lead in the fight against Reform. The event, however, was to prove that this assumption, attractive as it might be, was radically unsound. Individual members of the Ascendancy suffered by the Union ; and a few years after the fusion one of the Beresfords is found denouncing " the intrusion of English ideas " with a vigour not unworthy of Wolfe Tone. But Ascendancy as a whole benefited enormously. An isolated group of oligarchs could not have continued to defy the wishes of a whole nation, and must sooner or later have compromised, if it did not surrender at discretion. By subordinating its interests to those of the ruling classes in Great Britain the Irish aristocracy had to endure a certain loss of prestige, but it managed to retain its dominance over the Irish people, which was the possession it

valued most. Henceforth in all its struggles it could rely on the backing of its fellows on the other side of the Irish Sea ; and when in the process of time these had, outwardly at least, to accept democracy, matters were so skilfully arranged that in the twentieth century it is still possible to persuade nominal English democrats that Ireland must remain an exception to the rule that government should rest on the just consent of the governed.

There is no force in the contention that the Union was a settlement in full of the Presbyterian claims. As a matter of fact it left most of their real grievances untouched. The political concessions it offered proved in practice to be almost wholly illusory. If it conceded nominal equality in the matter of parliamentary representation between Episcopalians and Dissenters, the Establishment succeeded in preserving its monopoly ; and long after the passing of the Irish Church Act of 1869, at a time when the Unionist party depended largely on Presbyterian votes, it was still powerful enough to bar Presbyterians from sitting for Ulster constituencies.

The Presbyterian Church, it is true, received a substantial increase of the Regium Donum shortly after the Union. Rev. W. T. Latimer describes the grant in his *History of the Irish Presbyterians* as "a political bribe"; and conditions were laid down for its allocation which enabled the Government in practice to impose a veto on the choice by a congregation of a minister whose politics might be objectionable to Dublin Castle. When the new Regium Donum proposals were finally passed through Parliament in 1803, Alexander Knox, not the least formidable of Castlereagh's henchmen in the Union scheme, declared exultingly in a private letter to his master, "Never before was Ulster under the dominion of the British Crown. It had a distinct moral existence before, and

now the Presbyterian ministry will be a subordinate ecclesiastical aristocracy, whose feeling must be that of zealous loyalty, and whose influence on their people will be as purely sedative when it should be, and exciting when it should be, as it was the distinct reverse before."

The Union did less than nothing to improve the relations between landlord and tenant, which to those who looked deeper than surface appearances constituted a problem more urgent and imperious than any question of political reform. On the contrary, the authors of the Act were determined to stereotype existing relations; and their successors set themselves to tilt the balance still more strongly against the occupiers of land. It is true the precedent of Lord Donegall's "clearances" found no more imitators in Ulster on the same grandiose scale. Landlords had sufficient wisdom to see that an offensive on these lines would drive the Protestant democracy, whose support was essential to the maintenance of the Ascendancy, into the arms of its bitterest opponents. But as it became evident that the work of the United Irishmen had been undone, and the gulf grew wider between Protestant and Catholic—largely as a result of the efforts of Dr. Cooke, whose policy I review in another chapter—a movement took shape to deprive the tenants of the North of the special safeguards which had preserved them from the worst of the evils that had overwhelmed the peasantry of the other provinces.

The Ulster Custom, by which the occupier of land was able to claim compensation for improvements effected by him, had never been relished by landlords. Naturally they liked it less than ever when in the generation that followed the Union all Ireland united in "a methodised war," as the report of the Devon Commission phrased it, to make universal throughout the country the tenant-right principles which had

hitherto been the peculiar monopoly of the Northern province. The Devon Commission declared, and landlord opinion heartily agreed, "that the effect of this system is a practical assumption by the tenant of a joint proprietorship in the land." This, in the opinion even of landowners who called themselves Liberals, was a monstrous invasion of the sacred rights of property, and was denounced with a fury which in these days is reserved for the doctrines of the Bolsheviks. There were few fairer minded men of his class than the first Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, but the wails and protests with which he met the demand for Fixity of Tenure and Free Sale enable one to understand the attitude of the overwhelming majority of proprietors to whom Dufferin was at the best a half-hearted advocate of a holy cause. The shrewder heads on the landlord side discerned that the most effective way of meeting the agitation would be to destroy the Ulster Custom altogether. So long as it existed it was inevitable that farmers in the other provinces would clamour for the protection it afforded, and, should they manage to secure this protection, would use it as a lever to overthrow landlordism.

In essentials the situation strikingly resembled that which followed the Williamite wars and the inauguration of the Penal Code. Like the Revolutionary settlement, the Union was trumpeted as a charter of liberty for the Protestant Dissenters, and then dexterously manipulated in the hope of depriving them of a right which was the foundation of such property as they enjoyed. The Ulster Custom saved the North from the worst effects of the Famine, though there were Northerns who affected to think that their immunity was directly ordained by Providence to demonstrate to an unbelieving Ireland the superior merits of the Protestant faith. Nay, it was actually argued that the hideous visitation which

resulted in the death or exile of one-fourth of the Irish race was devised by the Almighty to reveal to England the madness of tolerating Popery. A Belfast clergyman, writing in 1850, thus explains the causes of the Famine. "The Government," he says, "resolve to endow in a permanent form the fountain-head of Popery in Ireland—the Royal (?) College of Maynooth. The Universal Protestantism of Great Britain and Ireland revolts, and with a million and a half voices deprecates the measure. This is of no avail. The miserable minority of men in power accomplish this infatuated purpose. It is done; and *in that very year, that very month*, the land is smitten, the earth is blighted, famine begins, and is followed by plague, pestilence, blood! The work of encouragement to Popery proceeds; the essentially Popish Board of Irish National Education has been doubly, trebly endowed and chartered; the Popish priesthood are flattered, and unconstitutional, illegal titles are heaped upon the Hierarchy. A state endowment is lavishly offered to them, and, parallel with all this, pestilence grows and increases, famine spreads, civil war and rebellion stalk through Ireland." This is not the view of an isolated and irresponsible individual. I could quote a score of declarations of the same kind from contemporary speeches; and even yet, in the opinion of a good many Unionists, the Famine ought to be regarded not as the inevitable consequence of an impossible land-system, but as a divine judgment on a stiff-necked and unruly race.

In the upheaval that followed the great disaster the landlords believed that the time had come when it would be possible to compel the Ulster farmers to trust to Protestantism alone as a shield and buckler against aggression. Half of Ireland had been turned into a wilderness littered with the bones of starving peasants in order that the laws of Ricardian economics

might not be violated; and it was surely intolerable that the great ideal of uniformity between Ireland and England should be marred by the survival of a gross anomaly like the Ulster Custom. In the orthodox phrase of the era, "contract must be substituted for status in the matter of land tenure," otherwise the central object of the Act of Union, which was the abolition of all distinctions between Ireland and England, would be rendered null and void. "Let the Government," it was urged, "resolutely and impartially discharge its primary duty of preserving order, of upholding undeniable property rights, and of enforcing reasonable contracts; let small holdings which cannot support the cultivator be discouraged; consolidate the farms; let emigration drain off the stagnant population—and the chronic malady that has so long afflicted Ireland will disappear."

Politicians might argue that tenants ought to make sacrifices in the interests of the Union, and preachers like Cooke and his satellites might proclaim that Ulster needed no other bulwark than her Protestantism to save her from the fate of the benighted Catholics of Connacht, but the people of the North were not in the mood to accept this gospel. Their point of view is admirably set forth in a ballad which was very popular amongst Presbyterians half a century ago, and is still, strange to say, reprinted in Orange song-books:—

"What is this right your new-made laws demand of us to yield?
The right to live like Christian men, not oxen of the field;
To feel we freemen tread the land our freeman fathers trod,
The right to lift at Kirk and Church unfettered hands to God.

"We have been kinsmen of your blood, and clansmen of your name;
No bond we asked but nobles' words when to this land we came;
And now our rights, but favours none, we're asking at your hands;
We gave our yeomen service—we'll keep our yeomen lands."

In vigorous rhetoric it was made plain that the appeal to the Protestantism of the North was double-edged:—

"Bethink ye well before ye try to grind us down to earth,
The hands that kept a hostile land can keep a yeoman's hearth;
We look around our hills and vales—are recollections there
Of failure or defeat to bid our fathers' sons despair?

"Derry frowns 'unsurrendered' yet, where Foyle and ocean join;
Proud as of yore looks down Donore upon the storied Boyne;
Dungannon still uprears its spire against the vault of blue,
As when waved glorious in its choir the flags of 'Eighty-two.

"The ploughman's share each year lays bare the bones of Diamond field;
Tell us have memories such as these but taught our hearts to yield?
And ere by fraud ye take the right our toil repays again,
From days past learn this lesson stern—Beware the Ulster men!"

And when Protestant landlords turned a deaf ear to this remonstrance, Protestant tenants were not slow to act. As in the days of Wolfe Tone they turned again to their fellow-countrymen; and for a time it appeared as if the Tenant-right movement of 1850 was destined to crown with success the ideals of the United Irishmen. At a meeting held in Newtownards, one of the strongest Presbyterian centres in Ulster, Rev. John Rogers struck the popular note of the hour. "Does my Presbyterianism," he asked, "forbid me to be a patriot? Is it because I am a follower of John Calvin that I am not to be a Christian? Will the farmers of Ireland—because they may conscientiously differ in their religious opinions—look on one another with distrust and jealousy and hatred, while landlords and the legislature, that differ in religion as widely as you do, are combined, heart and soul, to carry on against you the old familiar work of robbery, extermination, and death?

'While your tyrants join in hate,
Will you not join in love?'"

One of those industrious Englishmen for whom Ireland has the same sort of attraction as slums used to have for a certain type of interfering old lady, published at this time a volume in which extracts from speeches made at Tenant-right meetings were quoted in bulk as proof of the triumph of seditious doctrines. The more violent of these addresses were delivered by clerics; and in a debate in Parliament it was urged from the Tory benches that such poisonous propaganda was the inevitable consequence of the training given to Catholic priests at Maynooth College. Unfortunately for the champions of landlordism, it was pointed out by Charles Gavan Duffy that the clerical firebrands whose utterances had been quoted were not Catholic priests, but Presbyterian ministers.

The League of the North and South won a series of brilliant victories at the polls, and originated in Parliament the policy of Independent Opposition, which Parnell in the next generation was destined to develop with such startling results. Very early in its career the League had to withstand not only the direct assault of the landlord party, but the more dangerous influences of the "No Popery" crusade, which culminated in Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Those who know only the Ulster of to-day will be astonished to learn that the Presbyterian land reformers of the 'fifties took their stand with the aggressively clerical section of Irish members who followed the lead of Sadleir and Keogh, in preference to that of Gavan Duffy and Lucas. The attitude of the Ulstermen was not due to any love of the clericalism of the "Pope's Brass Band," as Sadleir's and Keogh's faction was derisively nicknamed by Catholic Ireland, it sprang from a mistaken belief that it was better tactics to accept office and trust to influencing the Government from the inside, than to remain in permanent opposition. As Gavan Duffy wrote long afterwards: "The estrangement of the Northern delegates . . . did not originate in any hereditary causes of quarrel existing between North and South. . . . The controversy primarily was whether certain persons accepting office had acted with probity and good faith. No difference of creed was involved, for the men impeached were not Northern or Protestants, but Catholics, and those who impeached them were also Catholics. Still less did a provincial question arise, for none of the deserters were Ulster men. It may be confidently assumed, I think, that while four years of harmonious action justifies the conclusion that Irishmen of various races can sink their differences for public ends as well as Swiss or Hungarians of various races, the break in

their friendly relations was one which must have happened wherever free controversy exists, and does not disturb that conclusion."

With the failure of the League reaction seemed to triumph, but its victory was short-lived. Parliamentary majorities, however formidable, are of no avail against the sweep of social forces ; even bayonets were powerless to maintain an anomaly at once so grotesque and so tragic as the Irish land-system. Up to the beginning of the 'eighties the sole hope of the tenant had lain in the goodwill and generosity of individual landlords ; with the Land League a new force came into being powerful enough to establish the rights of the holder on a secure basis of law. The political leaders of the Ulster Protestants, like the rest of their class all over Ireland, denounced the policy and methods of the movement as sheer rapine and robbery. But their followers, once again, betrayed a reluctance to dance to their piping. When Davitt came North in 1880 as the apostle of the "New Departure," his meeting at Armagh was presided over by the Worshipful Master of an Orange Lodge ; Parnell's whirlwind campaign in the Ulster constituencies owed its success to the support of Protestant farmers. The Land Act of 1881, according to the Tories, was a disgraceful attempt to bribe revolutionists by robbing loyalists, but the Northern tenants, who cheered Tory speeches and voted for Tory members, were the first into the Land Courts to secure their share of the "plunder." Mr. William O'Brien illustrates this point very neatly by an incident in the South Tyrone election of 1885, in which he defeated the Hon. Somerset Maxwell (afterwards Lord Farnham), who stood as the Tory champion. A Presbyterian farmer, whipped up to vote by the influence of the rent office, deliberately spoiled his ballot paper by writing after Somerset Maxwell's

name " No landlord," and after Mr. O'Brien's " No Pope." It was, as Mr. O'Brien said, " a perfect picture of the mentality of the ordinary Ulster Presbyterian tenant."

Blind as they were to the signs of the times, Unionists were not too blind to realise that they were in danger of losing the allegiance of the strongest section of their followers, unless means were taken to counteract the influences of Davitt and his followers. The situation was met, not unskilfully, by including as a sort of tail to the Tory phalanx an Ulster tenants' party which, while opposing the principle of self-government, stood for a popular settlement of the land question. But for this device there is little doubt the rural constituencies of the North would have been swept into the net of the Land League. As it was, the Ulstermen succeeded for many years in running with the hare and hunting with the hounds, and annexed as a right every concession won by agitation, while denouncing the agitators as traitors to the Commonwealth. It was not a very heroic part to play in a great drama, but it must be admitted that when the Unionists were in power the pressure of the Ulster tenants did something to modify reaction. By the beginning of the twentieth century it was evident to everyone except the Irish landlords that dual ownership must go, and that compulsory sale was necessary to establish tenant proprietorship on a sound basis. Protestant farmers were as eager as their Catholic neighbours to end an intolerable system. Sir Thomas Russell, who, as Mr. T. W. Russell, led the Protestant tenants, expressed what most of his followers felt, when writing in 1901 he said, " I thought that Irish landlords were Unionists on high political grounds ; that they were fighting for the country's good, not their own. I do not think this to-day. On the contrary, I have come to the con-

clusion, slowly but surely, that in pretending to fight for the Union, these men were simply fighting for their own interests—that Rent not Patriotism was their guiding motive."

When agricultural Ulster began to echo the demands of the United Irish League even the stoutest Conservatives, however little they might like it, could no longer ignore hard facts. The knowledge that North and South were united in their claims had much to do with inducing a mood of sweet reasonableness at the Land Conference, whose agreement formed the basis of the Wyndham Act of 1903. From the Plantation to the Union the land had been the bone of contention which divided Protestants and Catholics into hostile factions. If the clash of races and religions would have been severe in any case, the fact that victory for a creed or a race meant possession of the land intensified a thousandfold the bitterness of the struggle. In the nineteenth century, however, what had hitherto been a disruptive became a unifying force. From the first efforts of Sharman Crawford, in the years preceding the Famine, to obtain legal recognition for the principle of tenant right, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the theory that Catholic Irishmen aimed at expropriating the Protestant tenant as well as the Protestant landlord.

The old thesis, so familiar to students of Irish history, that the demand for self-government merely masks a plot to perpetrate a *Jacquerie* on an epical scale has been recently re-stated in a book entitled *The Soul of Ulster*, by Lord Ernest Hamilton. According to the author, Nationalists, having overthrown landlordism by legal enactments inside the British constitution, are now seeking to establish a State outside the British constitution, in which they will have power to confiscate the property of all Protestant

tenants, simply because they are Protestants. The bogey thus conjured up may thrill timorous English Tories, but it awakens no response in Ulster. Whatever Orange farmers may fear from Home Rule they do not believe that under it their holdings will be confiscated, and they and their children turned out to beg on the roadside. If any reader of *The Soul of Ulster* demands proof of this assertion I simply point to the fact that North Tyrone, a constituency which Lord Ernest Hamilton's family looked on for generations as their private preserve, was held from 1895, until it was merged under the new Franchise Act in North-West Tyrone, by Home Rulers who owed their return to Protestant votes.

Personally, I have little doubt that had the possession of the soil been the only economic issue, racial and religious bigotries would long since have proved powerless to keep North and South asunder. But just as the Land Question began to exercise a reconciling influence a new and disturbing factor came into play in the success of the industrial revolution in the North. It might have been thought that industrialism, if it resulted in a cleavage, would have meant a cleavage along new lines ; the curious thing is that it deepened instead of obliterating existing differences. Belfast owes its prosperity more to the power-loom than to Pitt ; and its insistence that the Union meant for it commercially the parting of the ways is as good an example as modern politics can show of the fallacy *post hoc ergo proper hoc.* Yet no belief is held more strongly by Ulster Unionists who, wilfully closing their eyes to the fact that throughout the Three Kingdoms the opening decades of the nineteenth century synchronised with a depression in agriculture as great as the boom in industrialism, persist in declaring that if the Irish people had only abandoned their idle dreams of self-government the

cottiers of Connemara would be as wealthy to-day as the linen lords of Ulster.

The smoke of factory chimneys is in the minds of the North incense burned as a visible proof that its people are as much a race apart as the Jews, and, like them, dowered with blessings denied to those who do not hold their faith. Yet the wealth of industrial Ulster has failed to safeguard its people against evils which many of them fondly believe to be a special doom designed for the chastening of Catholics and Nationalists. The population of the province has decreased by a third since the 'forties; and if Belfast, within living memory, has trebled and quadrupled its inhabitants in a fashion that equals the records of American boom cities, despite its unprecedented growth, the two counties in which the city is situated contain to-day fewer people than they did before the Famine. The emigration from the North, instead of diminishing, has steadily increased inside the last generation; and the extraordinary feature of the lists is that the increase is heaviest in the Protestant counties. The number of emigrants from Down and Antrim (including Belfast) in the decade ending 1911 was more than double that of the previous decade; whereas, in the same period, emigration from Catholic Monaghan and Cavan showed a substantial decline. This fact ought surely, one would think, to modify the rhapsodies about Ulster's unparalleled prosperity which are so incessantly dinned into our ears. A community which loses man-power as it gains wealth might well be more concerned about the beam in its own eye than about the mote in that of its neighbour.

Nowadays it is in the industrial areas that antagonisms are sharpest edged. The towns provided the driving force for the Carson crusade, and prejudices flourish more rankly in the back streets of Belfast

and Portadown than in the fields of Tyrone and Antrim. In the country Orange and Green generally live and work apart, and come into collision only on the high days of their respective creeds, when bad whiskey has perhaps more to do with their broils and battles than either King William or the Pope. In the towns, though the factions reside for the most part in separate quarters—the Ghetto principle still survives in Ulster—the chances of friction are naturally greater, and a tiny spark can provoke a shattering explosion. The real reason why hostility should have developed so strongly lies deeper down ; and its roots are to be found, I believe, in economic rather than political causes. On the land, as I have shown, the Catholic inside the last generation has attained a status equal to that of the Protestant, and, in attaining it, has established an identity of interests which, though it may be obscured by party or religious differences, exercises a potent influence. In industry, on the contrary, the Catholic is still regarded as a " have not," whose efforts to better his position are denounced as inspired simply by a desire to dispossess the " haves."

In a word, capitalism to-day has stepped into the position vacated by autocratic landlordism ; and by playing on the racial and religious prejudices of the workers uses one section to depress the other, while it profits by exploiting both. I do not say this is true of every individual capitalist, but that it is the general tendency can be denied only by those who shut their eyes to obvious and notorious facts. It is essential to understand the conditions which have enabled this policy to be developed with such conspicuous success. Just as the Protestant tenant in other generations was protected by the Ulster Custom, so the Protestant workers in Ulster industries constitute the vast majority of the skilled artisans who

have gradually established for their members a definite status in the industrial world. Nationalists are strongest in the ranks of unskilled labour ; and, until the war transformed the existing system, it was precisely amongst unskilled workers that the leaven of a new gospel was fermenting most vehemently. They were demanding their " place in the sun," in the shape of a living wage and the safeguards which the members of skilled trades had through their organisations managed to secure by dint of persistent agitation.

Everywhere, except in Ulster, this movement was seen to be the logical consequence of theories accepted as axioms by the whole trade-union world. The class-consciousness of the mass of Belfast trade-unionists is, however, obscured by their conviction that their prosperity springs from the fact that they are members of a dominant race, and that the maintenance of this imaginary prestige is vital to their interests. Nothing is therefore easier, to those who know how to play on their feelings, than to represent a demand for improved conditions by a class in which Nationalist workers are strongly represented, as inspired by insidious political motives. The questions at issue may be better wages for home workers or shorter hours for dock labourers, but devil's advocates can always be found to argue, in a favourite phrase of Ulster Unionism, that this is " the thin edge of the wedge." The strikers, if not actually denounced as participants in a plot, are depicted as the ignorant tools of unscrupulous agitators, whose sole object is to destroy Ulster industries and reduce Belfast to the desolation of the Cities of the Plain. I have known many strikes in Belfast, but I never remember one of any importance in which this contention was not raised by the champions of the masters ; and the champions of the masters are in all cases the official

spokesmen of the Unionist Party. No Ulster Unionist paper has ever backed a strike ; and in my recollection no Episcopalian or Presbyterian minister has stood on a strike platform. Even since the beginning of the war the old game has been played, and played successfully. Its latest triumph was to represent as a Sinn Fein plot the attempt of scandalously underpaid Protestant girls in a well-known Belfast draper's shop to obtain something like a living wage.

If it is argued that these are fair tactics as between capital and labour, it cannot be denied that they react disastrously on the social life of the community. While it is unfortunately easy enough to loose such forces it is another matter to ensure that they shall rage only according to order. When political excitement rises to the boiling point in Belfast its results are apt to stagger some of those who have most diligently stoked the fires. Even the interests of capital, which are for Unionist Ulster the Ark of the Covenant, become a trifle light as air, not indeed to the capitalist, but to the Protestant democracy, whose support is the mainspring of his power. The Orangemen, like the founders of his Order, invariably meets what he considers to be a threat to his political prestige by a ukase declaring an economic boycott of his opponents. Catholics are driven from mills and factories by the same methods of mob violence that were employed to clear them out of Armagh in the last decade of the eighteenth century. During the anti-Home Rule agitation Nationalist workers for months at a time could enter the shipyards only at the risk of their lives ; yet the very men whose political stock-in-trade has been the denunciation of agrarian outrages as the unpardonable sin, uttered no protest against these barbarities. On the contrary, mobs whose deeds emulated those of the Black Hundred proclaimed, unreproved by the leaders, lay

and clerical, to whom they professed to owe allegiance, that they were serving the cause of civil and religious liberty.

Under such circumstances the Northern Nationalist might have been pardoned had he lost heart in the struggle, and degenerated into a mere helot trembling before iron-fisted taskmasters. This, however, he has not done. Hard pressed indeed he often is, but, as even his foes are constrained to admit, he has never accepted defeat. If he does not meet his trials precisely with a frolic welcome, he has developed powers of endurance as great if not greater than those of his political opponents, whose supreme pride is their "dourness." North of the Boyne one looks in vain for the unstable and mercurial Gael of popular tradition. The Orangeman finds himself confronted with an antagonist fully his match in tenacity, and never more dangerous than when he is fighting an uphill battle against apparently hopeless odds. Though in the main the Ulster Nationalist contends with the Orangeman, he is more often than not fighting the Orangeman's battle as well as his own. To the particularism of the Unionist he opposes not the special claims of a creed or a race, but the broad principle of democracy, and it is not his least memorable achievement that his enemies nowadays can maintain their cherished dogmas only by repudiating the whole modern movement. This is not an exaggeration, but a plain statement of fact, as a good many Unionists are beginning to realise. In the recent Belfast elections Mr. W. J. Stewart, a Democratic candidate, the sincerity of whose devotion to the Union even Sir Edward Carson did not question, bluntly stated the truth to an audience of Covenanters, and his plain speaking was greeted with cheers not, as would formerly have been the case, with volleys of brickbats and paving-stones. "The

danger to the Union to-day," Mr. Stewart declared, "lay in those men who were endeavouring to retain their old privileges and their old ascendancy, and who were thus connecting the Union with privilege and with ascendancy, so that the Ulster Party stank in the nostrils of every right-thinking man in England and Scotland." Unionism aims at stereotyping the existing industrial hierarchy, and bases its arguments on the assumption that any movement which threatens the powers and privileges of a class endangers the whole political fabric. This contention has its attraction for Orange democracy when it is employed to restrain the class amongst whom the Nationalists are most numerous; but when it is advanced to justify the refusal of concessions to other grades of workers not a little of the gilt disappears from the gingerbread.

When the industrial skies are clear the Protestant worker may cheer Sir Edward Carson; when he desires to improve the conditions under which he labours he promptly turns for support to Nationalist leaders like Mr. Joseph Devlin, and does not turn in vain. There have been few more memorable developments in modern Irish politics than Mr. Devlin's campaign in the interests of Ulster wage-earners. It was denounced with rabid vehemence not only as a plot to set class against class—that was to be expected as a matter of course—but as a scheme to undermine the very foundations of Ulster's prosperity. When Mr. Devlin attacked the sweating of home workers the reply was that to mention sweating was to drag politics into business; when he demanded a minimum wage for factory girls his opponents beat their breasts in frenzied lamentations over the vision of mills and factories lapsing into ruin, and the green grass sprouting in the once busy streets of Belfast. Yet to-day

it is Sir Edward Carson himself who stoops to steal Mr. Devlin's policy. Just as the landlords tolerated a tenants' tail to the Irish Unionist Party, so the capitalists find it imperative for their own safety to permit a workers' tail to be added.

It remains to be seen whether the Ulster Labour Unionist Association is intended to be more than an obvious springe to catch woodcock. At its inaugural meeting Sir Edward Carson appeared on the platform flanked by a shipbuilder and an Irish peer who draws the bulk of his money from English mining royalties ; and the refrain running through all the speeches was that, whatever might be the case elsewhere, Labour and Capital in fortunate Ulster are two hearts that beat as one. It is important to note, however, that Sir Edward Carson, instead of giving pledges to Labour, has, with the skill of an old Parliamentary hand, so arranged matters that Labour is pledged to Unionism. Therefore should divisions come, and should Unionism, as always in the past, stand by Capital, the Labour Unionists, in theory at least, will be bound to obey the official Unionist leaders who, judging by Sir Edward Carson's record, are pretty certain to be found in opposition to any bold scheme of social reform.

The calculation, of course, is that the Orange worker's prejudice against Nationalism is so strong that he can be trusted to sacrifice his material interests on the shrine of this ancient feud. But the Carsonite leaders have failed to reckon with one factor which may invalidate all their conclusions. In the case of the land it was possible to represent the struggle as one between "loyalists" and "disloyalists." In labour matters this will not be so easy, for the issues on which masters and men may differ in the future are almost certain to be issues with an international rather than a local application.

I question whether Sir Edward Carson's persuasive eloquence will be equal to the task of convincing the workingmen of Ulster that Irish Nationalism is the tail which invariably wags the dog of organised European democracy. That was possible only so long as Labour could be denied its "place in the sun." But even Sir Edward Carson, whose Ulster Provisional Government is memorable in that it did not contain a single representative of the workers, has been forced to recognise that some concession must be made to the spirit of the age. The creation of the Ulster Labour Unionist Association is a belated admission that the working-classes have rights as well as duties—a novel, not to say revolutionary, doctrine to many Irish Unionists—though the founders of the Organisation have done their best to inspire the belief that these rights can be preserved not by circumscribing the powers of the masters, but by limiting the rights of other workers, especially if they happen to hold different religious and political views.

This device may give good results for a time, but I have sufficient confidence in the democratic instincts of the average Ulsterman to hold that his bigotry, however artfully it may be inflamed, will not always dominate his reason. Just as Ulster tenants came to see that their interests were identical with those of their Nationalist neighbours, so, I am convinced, in the new epoch of democratic reconstruction, on which the world is entering, Orange workers will realise that in matters affecting their economic welfare they are bound by closer ties to their Nationalist fellow-workers than to their capitalist leaders. It would be absurd to argue that this discovery will settle as by a stroke of magic all Irish political controversies. Unionists and Home Rulers may still hold different views on the question of constitutional

reform ; but these views will be based on a consideration of the merits of the case instead of being, as they now are too often with both parties, a mere projection of traditional prejudices and antagonisms.

END OF PART I

Note.

While these pages were passing through the press the argument I have used above that Ulster Orangemen would not always be content to sacrifice their material interests on the shrine of their political and sectarian prejudices, was strongly confirmed by the general strike, which paralysed the industries of Belfast within a few weeks of the elections in which Carsonite candidates were returned by sweeping majorities for eight of the nine Parliamentary divisions of the city. The trouble which spread in ever-widening circles, began amongst the shipyard workers, who are overwhelmingly Unionist, and was backed throughout by the rank and file of the Orange lodges, and directed by purely Protestant leaders. Orangemen and Covenanters dominated the Strike Committee, which superseded the civic authorities by what was to all intents and purposes a Soviet, whose power was so formidable that employers had to obtain permits from its members to enable them to enter their own works. Sir Edward Carson declared the men were befooled by revolutionary "Red Flaggers," but when these "Red Flaggers" organised street demonstrations it was Orange drums that thundered defiance against capitalists. The Unionist leader understood the strikers as little as did some Nationalists who assumed that Belfast was pulling down its political idols from their pedestals. As a matter of fact the demand for a forty-four hours week was intended by those who made it to prove to the world at large that a belief in the doctrines of the Ulster Covenant could go hand in hand

with advanced theories about the rights of Labour. On the eve of the elections the Unionist candidates led by Sir Edward Carson had given a specific pledge to support the campaign for shorter hours, and when at the first hint of trouble these leaders ostentatiously took their stand beside the employers their working-class followers were no less disgusted than amazed. The struggle may not have weakened the faith of the mass of the Covenanters in their political dogmas, but it has opened the eyes of not a few of them to the fact that those to whom they have been accustomed to look for guidance act as if they believed that democratic and labour ideals are irreconcilable with Orange and Unionist principles. As yet the worker has not been forced to chose between these alternatives, but the next battle for better economic conditions threatens, unless the Unionist chiefs play their parts more skilfully, to produce dramatic political developments. Not the least significant feature of the dispute was the fact that for the first time attempts to destroy the solidarity of the men by appeals to sectarian passions, failed ignominously The watchword of the strikers throughout was, as an Orangeman in their ranks characteristically put it : " To Hell with the man that names religion."

II.—The Religious Question.

CHAPTER V.

DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH.

English politicians of all parties are confident that the Irish question is at bottom a problem of political mechanics, where the riddle to be solved is the exact amount of driving force that can be safely entrusted to a Home Rule administration. Sinn Feiners, on the other hand, proclaim that only on the lines of internationalism can a settlement be achieved; and Labour is just as positive that social reform will bring healing in its wings. The Ulster Unionist is prepared to dispute each and all of these positions; but, beaten back from them, he retires to his last line of defence that the issue is religious not political. This is his Verdun, and on it he plants his flag with a gesture of grim defiance. *J'y suis, j'y reste* is the sole answer he condescends to make; and attempts to dislodge him are the more difficult because his opponents have only arguments to match against prejudices rooted deeper than reason.

I have known a student of history who maintained that to understand the mentality of the Stuart and Tudor times it was less profitable to dig amongst mouldering records than to live in modern Ulster. According to him, one need only scratch the twentieth century veneer to realise the spirit that regarded an auto-da-fé as the equivalent of a bank holiday. I have had much the same sensation myself when in

talk with a business man, whose contempt for tradition would have pleased Chicago, a stray word has provoked an outburst that might have fallen from the lips of one of Cromwell's pikemen as he mounted the breach at Drogheda. There are well-meaning people who maintain that the safest way of dealing with these passions is to ignore their existence. Undoubtedly it is true that discussions about the sectarian element in Ulster politics serve as a rule merely to add fuel to the flames. But in the majority of these discussions the aim of writers and speakers has been either to justify or denounce, and comparatively few have attempted to analyse and explain. Yet analysis and explanation are more important, if less exciting, and, unfortunately, they are at times exciting enough. The most prudent investigator cannot handle these flaming embers without running the risk of burning his fingers in the process.

The paradox that confronts one at the outset is that a state of affairs which in other communities would be regarded as fatal to right development, is held by certain sections of Irish opinion to be not only normal, but to provide the sole guarantee of stability and the one hope of progress. Protestant Ireland still, in Sheil's phrase, "kneels to England on the necks of her Roman Catholic countrymen;" and her official leaders in practice, if not so openly nowadays in theory, echo the fear which Archbishop Boulter expressed when the old barriers that divided the races appeared to be collapsing. "The worst of this," declared the astute ecclesiastic, "is that it tends to unite Protestant with Papist, and whenever that happens good-bye to the English interest in Ireland for ever." So far from recognising as a reproach the survival of these mediaeval feuds, the Ulsterman flourishes them as a proof that he has kept the faith pure in a world of

Laodiceans who will blow neither hot nor cold. Most curious phenomena of all, he has taken of late years to basing his case for the maintenance of the Union on an admission of his own intolerance. Where formerly he stood for Ascendancy as his right, he now argues that no Irish party can exercise power because Protestants cannot act fairly towards Catholics any more than Catholics can towards Protestants. This is not quite so ingenuous as it looks. If England continues to hold the balance the Unionist feels, however small his minority may be, there is always a sporting chance that the scales will be tipped in his favour.

One would imagine that Protestants would bend all their energies towards establishing in Ireland the high ideals of tolerance which, they would have us believe, exist in Great Britain. But this they never think of doing. These differences are, in their view, part of the eternal scheme of things ; and though they profess to contemplate a world after the war in which the clash of religious and racial prejudices shall be resolved into harmony in Bohemia, Belgium, and the Balkans ; in Ireland alone the old evils are to persist *in secula seculorum*. There is an element if not of insincerity, certainly of *blague* in these declarations. The Ulster Unionist no more fears that the grant of self-government will be a signal for re-kindling the fires of Smithfield than he believes the retention of the Union will turn Catholics *en masse* from their faith. If he continues to beat the drum ecclesiastic with resounding vigour it is because he enjoys doing it, and because hitherto he has never failed to find the exercise profitable as well as pleasant.

It must not be assumed from this that the Orangeman's hatred of Popery, as he loves to term it, is not the expression of a genuine conviction. The war has introduced us to the mystery of the "Hidden Hand." North of the Boyne there was never any

mystery about it, for here the "Hidden Hand" is, and has always been, the Vatican. The question at issue may be a County Council contract or the appointment of a dispensary doctor; but, if the wrong side wins, opponents see the sinister finger of Rome pulling the strings, and hear the College of Cardinals chanting "Te Deums" over another nail driven into the coffin of Protestantism.

In his autobiography, *Father and Son*, Mr. Edmund Gosse describes the shuddering horror with which his parents taught him to regard the Papacy. "We palliated nothing," he says, "we believed in no good intentions; we used (I myself used, in my tender innocency) language of the seventeenth century such as is now no longer introduced into any species of controversy. As a little boy, when I thought, with intent vagueness, of the Pope, I used to shut my eyes tight and clench my fists. We welcomed any social disorder in any part of Italy, as likely to be annoying to the Papacy. If there was a custom-house officer stabbed in a *fracas* at Sassaria, we gave loud thanks that liberty and light were breaking in on Sardinia. If there was an unsuccessful attempt to murder the Grand Duke, we lifted up our voices to celebrate the faith and sufferings of the dear persecuted Tuscans; and the record of some apocryphal monstrosity at Naples would only reveal to us a glorious opening for Gospel energy.

"As a child, whatever I might question, I never doubted the turpitude of Rome. I do not think I had formed any idea whatever of the character or pretentions or practices of the Catholic Church, or indeed of what it consisted, or its nature, but I regarded it with a vague terror as a wild beast, the only good point about it being that it was very old and was soon to die."

Mr. Gosse tells us that in after life he met "gallant

'Down-with-the-Pope' men from County Antrim." and, in contrast with his own youthful fervour, found "their denunciations err on the side of the anodyne." I suspect he met them elsewhere than on their native heath. A Sunday afternoon at the Belfast Custom House steps, with Protestant oratory in full blast, or the sort of speeches that invariably conclude an Orange meeting would cause him to revise his views. I remember an Orange sheet in Belfast in which an enterprising shoemaker advertised his wares in one glorious sentence:—"Wear Kelly's boots to trample the Papists." I remember, also, a lecture on Rome by a clergyman who described a visit to St. Peter's with much the same air as Daniel might have recounted his experiences in the den of lions. "As I crossed the threshold," he said impressively, "my good Presbyterian boots creaked in protest." These people lack the consolation which Mr. Gosse enjoyed of thinking that because the Church of Rome is old it is soon to die. Rather, in their eyes, it goes marching on from victory to victory, and they can never remember the time when the trumpet was not sounding "To your tents, O Ulster!"

If Catholic Emancipation was in Unionist eyes the crime of the century, the Disestablishment of the Irish Church which followed forty years later was the supreme betrayal. Even the Carsonite crusade did not produce stronger language than that of the peers who announced their determination to "fight as men alone can fight who have the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other," or the lawyers who were eager, on platforms at least, to "seal their protest with their blood in martyrdom and battle." These people really seem to have persuaded themselves that the preservation of their Ascendancy was essential to the cause of Christianity. On the first Sunday after the Disestablishment Act came into force, a hymn,

specially written for the occasion by Mrs. Alexander, the wife of the Bishop of the diocese, was sung in Derry Cathedral. The opening verse ran :—

> " Look down, Lord of Heaven, on our desolation,
> Fallen, fallen, fallen is our country's crown ;
> Dimly dawns the New Year on a churchless nation,
> Ammon and Amalek tread our borders down."

The words would not have been inadequate had another Cromwell commandeered cathedrals as stables for his troop horses, or had Terrorists, as in the days of the French Revolution, danced the *carmagnole* before the altar. Whereas what had happened was that a Church which had failed notoriously in its mission, and served merely as the symbol of the supremacy of a privileged minority, was reduced to an equality with other denominations, and started on its new career with compensation to the tune of more than eleven millions sterling.

A curious survival of the Disestablishment agitation is still to be seen at Roxborough Castle, Tyrone, the seat of the Earls of Charlemont, the first of whom has a place in history as the leader of the Irish Volunteers of 1782. The third Earl, in keeping with his family traditions, was a strong Liberal, and when the castle was rebuilt in the 'sixties, so fervent was his party loyalty that he adorned the façade with sculptured masks of Gladstone and John Bright. The work was scarcely finished before the Irish Church Act became practical politics, and Charlemont straightway repudiated his allegiance to his leaders. Gladstone from an idol became a traitor who deserved a traitor's fate ; and, as he could not be punished in the flesh, orders were given to tar the mask. The bulk of his fellows speedily became resigned to disestablishment, but Charlemont never relented. Each

year while he lived a fresh coat of tar was added; and in his will he left a sum of money to ensure that the process should be continued. To-day Roxborough Castle, like many another great Irish mansion, lies untenanted, but the blackened head, an ugly splotch on the white front, still stares down on the stray visitor, driving home a moral, perhaps, other than the one the third Earl of Charlemont intended.

Though Disestablishment is now admitted on all hands to be the best thing that ever happened to the Irish Episcopalian Church, its success has done nothing to modify opposition to later reforms. On the contrary, with each new advance the cry of "Religion in danger" rises in an ever-swelling crescendo. Thus the Land Acts instead of being introduced to benefit the tenants were represented as a subtle scheme to rob Protestants; and Home Rule, of course, was meant to grind them to powder. Nor is it only in purely Irish measures that the cloven hoof is detected. I have a vivid recollection of a meeting held in Belfast, shortly after the death of King Edward, to protest against any change in the Coronation Oath. By the time the meeting took place it was obvious that Parliament would not persist in compelling King George to label millions of his subjects blasphemers and idolators, and it was not the fault of the divines who lashed themselves into a fury on the platform, if the audience did not leave the hall with the conviction that the British Constitution had become only a historic memory.

There are people to whom this attitude of mind betokens a crazy obsession, a hallucination that just stops short of maniacal possession. Facts in abundance can be found to justify this view, but it is more profitable to treat the case as one of arrested development. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to get English parties to take sides to-day on the question

of Roundheads and Cavaliers. But to the Ulster partisan the theology of Calvin and Knox is well nigh inseparable from the political theories which that theology imposed on Ireland three centuries ago. He is fighting for the same ideas as the original Planters, and has no scruples about using the same weapons. As a matter of fact he will, in words at any rate, go one better. Colonel Saunderson, the Orange leader in the agitation against the Gladstonian Home Rule Bills, used to tell of a lecture on Cromwell he gave at Portadown. To his amazement, after he had finished his address, a veteran Orangeman rose in the body of the hall, and said that whatever the Colonel might tell them he for one had no opinion of Cromwell. "What's your objection?" asked the bewildered lecturer. "Well, you see, Colonel, I'm not denyin' that Cromwell meant well, but he spoiled himself when he gave thon Catholics the choice between Hell and Connacht." It was a shock, but Saunderson's wit was equal to it. "My friend," he said, solemnly, "did you ever see Connacht?" and he sat down amidst the cheers of an audience convinced that Cromwell knew his business.

In the old days Orangemen believed that their racial supremacy was in itself a justification of their religion; a good many of them still feel in their hearts that the creed they profess ought to give them a title to exercise ascendancy. They have evolved a theory that they are the leaven in the flabby dough of Catholic Ireland, or rather a remnant amongst the heathen who have kept a light burning in the dark places of the earth. According to their apologists, their deepest desire has been that righteousness and peace should prevail; and history, as written in Ulster, is a long and tearful record of the sorrows and sufferings of godly men whose message of good-will was spurned by a stiff-necked and unregenerate race,

Unfortunately when one turns to history these godly men are discovered to be as legendary figures as Cuchulain and Ferdia. Their descendants drape the original Planters in a mantle of saintliness that hangs incongruously on those hard-bitten adventurers. Contemporary records by men whose impartiality is unquestioned provide a truer, if less edifying, picture.

Patrick Adair, who was a minister of the Irish Presbyterian Church from 1641 till after the Revolution of 1688, declares in his *Narrative* that " the most part " of the Scottish Settlers who crossed to Ulster " were such as either poverty or scandalous lives, or, at best, seeking better accommodation, did set forward that way." The excuse for the invasion was, in Adair's words, " The Irish remaining not only obdurate in their idolatry, but also in idleness and rudeness " ; yet he is frank enough to add of those whom he describes as the " first essayers " : " little care was taken by any to plant religion. As were the people, so, for the most part, were the preachers." If Adair is to be believed, up till the Rebellion of 1641, instead of the Settlers influencing the natives, the natives influenced the Settlers. "There was sinful mixing with the Papists," according to him, " in all things, except the outward form of public worship; Protestants being equally profane and godless in their carriage with Papists, and in their religion coming towards the Papists ; leaving off the former sincerity and soundness in their doctrine and worship, which sometimes had appeared amongst the conformable Protestants, both clergy and people in Ireland, in opposition to Popery ; and the public generally becoming unconcerned in religion ; conforming ministers and Popish priests using all familiarity together, and that even on the Sabbath days after their Service and Mass, drinking together

and spending the time idly; which the people also followed as occasion served."

Andrew Stewart, a son of one of the original Planters and himself Minister of Donaghadee, is quite as outspoken. "From Scotland came many," he writes, "and from England not a few, yet all of them generally the scum of both nations, who, for debt, or breaking and fleeing from Justice, or seeking shelter, came hither, hoping to be without fear of man's justice in a land where there is nothing, or but little, as yet, of the fear of God. . . .

"Thus on all hands Atheism increased, and disregard of God—iniquity abounded, contention, fighting, murder, thieving, adultery, etc.—as among people who, as they had nothing within them to overawe them, so their ministers' example was worse than nothing, for, from the Prophets of Israel, profaneness went forth to the whole land."

In another place Stewart tells us "going for Ireland was looked upon as a miserable mark of a deplorable person—yea, it was turned to a proverb, and one of the worst expressions of disdain that could be invented, to tell a man that Ireland would be his hinder end."

The difficulties and dangers that beset the Settlers, instead of hastening degeneration, evolved in no long space of years the qualities that distinguish a ruling race. Courage, capacity, and inflexible determination became typical Ulster virtues, but these virtues were cultivated by a minority at the expense of a majority. One recalls Sir Walter Scott's shrewd remark, "The Irish Protestants are a fine race but dangerous to the quiet of a country. They remind me of the Moors in Spain or of the Spaniards in Mexico." It is true that the Ulster Presbyterian tasted persecution himself, but if he did not relish being beaten with whips he endured it as a condition that Catholics should be chastised with scorpions. So long as Protestantism

was on top he submitted tamely enough to the denial to his peculiar variety of Protestantism of place and power. The records of his creed are one long indictment of the grinding tyranny of the Establishment, yet with magnificent hardihood he proclaims that Protestants alone know and practice tolerance.

The hand of the Ascendancy lay heavily on Irish Nonconformists not only in the days when Swift scoffed at Presbyterianism as "an angry cat," when Dissenting Ministers were haled to prison for preaching in their own meeting houses, and their elders fined for living in sin because their marriages had not been solemnized according to the rites of the Established Church. It is possible there are Presbyterians still alive who in the eyes of the law were born out of wedlock, because their parents had been married by a Presbyterian Minister instead of by a priest in holy orders. As late as 1840 an Episcopalian who was arrested for bigamy put forward the defence that his first marriage had taken place in a Presbyterian Church, while the second was celebrated according to the rites of the Church of England. The Irish Chief Justice, in pronouncing the first marriage invalid, declared "the law of this country does not recognise the orders of the Presbyterian Church because it is not episcopal and conformable to what the Act of Uniformity had before made the law." This view was confirmed by the House of Lords, where the Bishop of Exeter denied that "there was any Presbyterian Church in Ireland at all, and that if any body was so called it was in violation of the canons." The Irish Episcopalian bishops and clergy flung themselves into the fray with exultant war-whoops; and the Primate actually paid out of his own pocket the cost of the law-suit against the Presbyterians, which, according to Rev. C. H. Irwin's *Presbyterianism in Dublin*, amounted to £6,000. For four long years the struggle

raged, until in 1844, after interminable negotiations, a Bill was passed through Parliament legalising Presbyterian marriages, and authorizing Presbyterian ministers to celebrate marriage between Presbyterians and Episcopalians.

Mr. Irwin states, "if the British Parliament had supported the British judges and the bigoted bishops it is hard to say how it might have fared with British rule in Ireland." Yet in 1842, while Irish Presbyterians lay under the intolerable stigma, as Professor Witherow put it, "that in the eye of British law they and their wives were regarded by the State as living in fornication and their children in bastardy," the two hundredth anniversary of the constitution of the first Presbytery in Ulster was commemorated with appropriate pomp and ceremony. M'Comb, known as "the poet of the Church," hymned the auspicious occasion in lines of which the following stanza is a good example of the fatal obsession of official Presbyterianism. The Pope had no power to pass Marriage Acts in Ireland, yet it was the Vatican and not the House of Peers that the Lord was called upon to reform.

"Two hundred years ago the hand of massacre was nigh;
And far and wide o'er Erin's land was heard the midnight cry;
Now Presbyterian Ulster rests in happiness and peace,
While crimes in distant provinces from year to year increase;
O Lord! their bondage quickly turn, as streams in south that flow,
For Popery is what it was two hundred years ago."

I wonder whether it struck any of those who applauded these sentiments that if Popery had not

changed neither had the Episcopal Church, and that its bigotry and narrowness had been for two centuries the worst stumbling-block in the path of M'Comb's "Presbyterian band," who

> "Planted on the castle wall the Banner of the Blue,
> And worshipped God in simple form—as Presbyterians do."

Irish Presbyterians, though the present generation seems to have forgotten the fact, fought as furiously amongst themselves as they ever did with professors of rival creeds. Reid's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* is an illuminating commentary on the Psalm which is sung at the opening of every General Assembly :—

> "Behold how good it is and how becoming well
> Together those that brethren are in unity to dwell."

From the beginning of the eighteenth century Reid's pages record the furious controversies of Old Lights and New Lights, Burghers and Anti-Burghers, Seceders and Covenanters, until the long struggle comes to an end over one hundred years later in the amazing duel between Cooke and Montgomery, which resulted in the expulsion of the Arians and the formation of the Remonstrant Synod. Of all these sects the remark made by a Presbyterian historian about the Burghers and Anti-Burghers holds good—"Ministers and members seemed more tolerant towards Christian bodies more widely separated from them in origin and creed than they were towards one another."

The depth of the feud between Burgher and Anti-Burgher may be gauged from an incident recorded in *The Scot of the Eighteenth Century.* The daughter of

an Anti-Burgher had married a Burgher minister, who at a Synod meeting expelled his wife's father and uncle from the fold as "anti's." When at last he broke the news to his wife he was met with the declaration: "You have excommunicated my father and my uncle! You are my husband, but never more shall you be minister of mine!" Cynics will be gratified to learn that all the pother arose over the question of an oath which the burgesses in some Scottish towns were compelled to swear. No such oath was imposed in Ireland, yet the feud between Burgher and Anti-Burghers in Ulster was extraordinarily deep and rancorous. The quarrel was even carried across a thousand leagues of salt water to America, where, as one Presbyterian writer relates, a leading Anti-Burgher, towards the end of the eighteenth century, asserted "he would rather commune with the devil in hell" than with a Burgher.

CHAPTER VI.

A PRESBYTERIAN POPE.

The Subscription controversy raised more important issues than the Burgher schism, and was threshed out with even greater bitterness. It was Cromwell who appealed to Presbyterian ministers: "My brethren, in the name of Christ, I beseech you to think it possible you may be mistaken." Two centuries after Cromwell the positiveness of the tribe was as strongly marked as ever; and a dispute which everybody to-day is agreed could have been solved had the combatants possessed even a measure of sweet reasonableness was permitted to rend the Church into warring factions and to do irreparable damage to Irish Presbyterianism.

The issue may be summed up in a few sentences. As a result of the "Conflict of the Seven Synods," which lasted from 1720 to 1726, the Moderates who refused to subscribe to a creed, because, in the words of their representatives, "they in their judgment are against all authoritative decisions of human tests of orthodoxy," had so far prevailed that at the beginning of the nineteenth century subscription was compulsory in only five of the fourteen Presbyteries in the Synod of Ulster. As the choice of ministers rested with congregations the people themselves had it in their power to penalise professors of unorthodox opinions, a power which they certainly were not slow to use. According to Presbyterian historians, there was a steady popular drift towards Evangelicalism, and the Moderates found it increasingly difficult to secure pulpits. The process was not swift enough, however, for the more vehement

Evangelicals and particularly for their leader, Henry Cooke, who, though now well nigh forgotten outside his native province, was as potent an influence in the religious and political life of Ulster as Daniel O'Connell was in that of Catholic Ireland.

It is amazing how rarely in its history the Irish Presbyterian Church has produced a leader capable of making any appeal to the imagination. For the most part its spokesmen have been wofully stockish persons, who said what they were expected to say in the dullest fashion possible. They appear to have regarded originality either of matter or style as a dangerous heresy, and whether in the pulpit or out of it, did their best to cloak their individuality beneath the stiff folds of their Geneva gowns. Cooke's real fame has suffered through the pious devotion of a son-in-law, whose biographical labours, unmindful of Boswell's example, were directed towards transforming a tiger into a tame cat. Yet even Dr. Porter's vapid narrative cannot wholly eliminate the dæmonic force which enabled Cooke not merely to sway Irish Presbyterianism to his will more completely than any leader before or since, but to mould Ulster politics so masterfully that even Sir Edward Carson, whom his admirers applaud as a great innovator, is really no more than a doorkeeper of the structure which Cooke designed, founded, and built.

Cooke, who was born in 1788, entered on public life at a critical stage both in the theological and the social history of the province. Presbyterians were beginning to discover that the unreformed Parliament of Great Britain was no better, and in most things that concerned them was even worse, than the unreformed Parliament of Ireland. The reactionary England of the years that followed Waterloo, which suppressed relentlessly the demands of her own people for reforms, was in no mood to listen to the appeals

of Irish Dissenters whom her rulers, with keen memories of the '98 Rebellion, regarded as the most dangerous Jacobins and Republicans in the Three Kingdoms. Powerful as was Toryism in England, it was still more powerful in Ireland, where the State and Church of a privileged minority exercised a tyranny as cruel as it was relentless. One incident will show the attitude of the Government towards the Presbyterian community. With the laudable desire of educating their divinity students at home instead of in Scotland, the Presbyterian Church decided to endow a chair of Theology in the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast, which had been opened in 1815. A year later two masters of the Institution at a dinner in honour of St. Patrick's Day committed the heinous offence of drinking the toast of "America, the land of liberty and asylum of the oppressed." Little foreseeing that a century later the United States would be to Great Britain against Germany what Germany was then against France, Lord Castlereagh withdrew the Parliamentary grant from the Institution, and announced that the appointment of a Presbyterian Professor of Divinity would be looked on as an act of hostility by the Government. It can hardly be regarded as unnatural that methods of this kind should revive envious memories of the principles of toleration and equality preached by the United Irishmen, though it was unfortunate for the peace of the Church that the men who desired reform in politics should have stood also for liberalism in religion.

To Cooke one demand was as abhorrent as the other. Nature meant him for a dictator; fate, having placed him in a church which asserts the equality of all its ministers, he had to content himself with being, as his enemies said, "a Presbyterian Pope," and in the struggle to assert his authority he

shook the fabric of Irish Presbyterianism to its foundations. To compare small things with great he was in his way a Bismarck who, if his field of operations was limited to parishes instead of empires, dominated it as autocratically, insisted as firmly that old traditions must prevail over new ideas, and dealt as mercilessly with his opponents. Like Bismarck he had plenty of humanity, and a biting wit that did not always respect the *convenances* of a formal age. His energy and vividness of phrase may be gathered from a sentence recorded by Mr. Woodburn in which, denouncing the proposal to establish a Presbyterian College in Derry, Cooke declared that " within a few years the foxes of Innishowen would be grinning from its deserted windows." A great pulpit orator, he was still more formidable in debate; and in Ireland, North and South, the master of debate obtains prestige akin to that of a Spanish matador. Like Dr. Johnson, Cooke thoroughly enjoyed " goring and tossing " opponents, and controversy was the breath of his nostrils. He first came into public notice by his crusade against an English Unitarian missionary, whom he hunted from pillar to post throughout Ulster, bombarding him with arguments, sarcasm, and abuse. In later life he never shirked a challenge; and on one famous occasion, having been carried from a sick-bed to the platform, as Chatham was on his last appearance in the House of Lords, Cooke, rising shortly before midnight, spoke for five hours by the clock, and after his opponents had replied concluded another long oration as the dawn of a March morning brightened the windows.

One of Cooke's dearest ambitions was to measure swords with Daniel O'Connell in a public discussion. It is a thousand pities the duel never took place, for if Cooke carried less heavy metal than O'Connell he was the one man in Ireland who could have met the

Liberator in controversy on something like equal terms. On the occasion of O'Connell's visit to Belfast Cooke issued a formal challenge, but O'Connell declined it; and to this day good Presbyterians are convinced that it was fear of their champion that led to the refusal. Amongst old-fashioned Orangemen "the Cooke that dished Dan" is still a favourite toast. If O'Connell avoided battle at close quarters, he had to submit to a long range bombardment; and the following extract taken almost at random from one of his numerous anti-O'Connell tirades is a good example of the style of invective in which Cooke excelled. "You argue for civil and religious liberty! Like the 'Amen' in the throat of Macbeth, the very words would endanger strangulation, and would so vividly conjure up before you the foul mysteries of the Confessional and the horrid rack of the Inquisition that you would shrink from the cause you had proposed to advocate, and become the convert of that Protestant liberty you have hitherto laboured to destroy."

It is not surprising to learn that one of Cooke's treasures was a ring with the motto *Nulla pax cum Roma*, presented to him by an adoring lady, whose contempt for Romish superstition seems to have extended to the language of its ancient inhabitants. In the letter accompanying the ring this lady declared, "the Lord has graciously given me the principle of 'No Peace with Rome,' together with a sincere desire to act it out in every possible way. But to you He has vouchsafed both opportunity and power to wage a war against His accursed foe." Popery was not more repellent to Cooke than Liberalism. In his view, indeed, as he declared in a famous address, "the priesthood and clergy of Rome, the Socinian, and the Infidel formed a threefold cord which is not easily broken." On another occasion, contrasting the de-

generate Presbyterians of 1830 with their stern and unbending ancestors, he asserted, in words that would have delighted Lord Eldon and the framers of the Six Acts, " the spirit of Liberalism has infected many of them like a leprosy ; and they must have it scourged out, or turned out, for it will not go out." To scourge this taint out of the Presbyterian Church was in Cooke's eyes a holy mission to which he devoted himself with the ardour of a crusader. No one who studies his career with unbiassed mind can doubt that his determination to compel his fellow-ministers to subscribe to a formal creed was inspired by a sincere religious conviction ; but it is also clear enough, to my mind, that the fact that the opponents of subscription were in the main Whigs, if not Radicals, whetted his appetite for the work.

The Arians, as they were termed, though many of them were in no sense Arians but Presbyterians who held that subscription to a creed was contrary to the tenets of their faith, did not submit without a struggle. They found in Henry Montgomery, the pastor of Dunmurry, a leader who equalled Cooke in his genius for debate, and surpassed him as a master of stately eloquence. The rivals, who for three years fought battle after battle in the Church courts, had in their 'teens been fellow-students at Glasgow University, but even then a wide gap divided them. Cooke's political creed, according to himself, was fixed by the sight of the soldiers burning a neighbour's house in 1798, and fixed in opposition to what he loved to call the " pernicious principles " of the French Revolution. " Atheism and infidelity," his biographer states, " were boldly avowed by the leaders of the United Irishmen, while the loyalists were in general Orthodox." Montgomery, on the other hand, always declared that " the Rebellion was in its origin, and almost to its end, an Ulster Rebellion

and a Presbyterian Rebellion." House-burning had also its effect on Montgomery's principles, though, unlike Cooke, he did not learn at the expense of a neighbour. After the battle of Antrim his father's house was first looted and then fired by Orange yeomen, and the whole Montgomery family were left with nothing but the clothes they stood in as a punishment for "merely asserting," as Montgomery wrote half a century afterwards, "those ordinary human rights and self-evident principles of Government, whose advocacy has since commanded the applause of senates, and secured the respect of the world."

While Cooke was never weary of sounding a call to arms against what he described as "fierce democracy on the one hand and more terrible Popery on the other," Montgomery was an avowed democrat, and so strenuous a supporter of the Catholic claims that at a meeting in favour of Emancipation held in Donegall Street Chapel, Belfast, in 1829, he addressed the gathering from the altar with the Catholic Bishop standing by his side. In returning thanks for the welcome accorded to him, Montgomery expressed a sentiment which, had it been made a rule of action by those in authority, might have changed the whole history of Ireland. "When even the expression of common sympathy," he said, "produces such a demonstration of grateful and kindly feelings, it ought to be a lesson to our legislators, and prove to them what they might expect from the Irish people if they treated them as justice and sound policy would dictate."

Montgomery was one of the first champions of Ulster tenant-right, and his letters on the conditions prevailing on the Hertford Estates in Antrim, where Protestant farmers were as shamefully rack-rented as the Catholic tenants of Munster or Connacht, constitute a notable chapter in the history of the Land Question. Here again his

views were sharply in conflict with those of Cooke, to whom the idea of tenant-right was, in his own words, "rank communism." When a speaker in the Synod of Belfast, as late as 1850, dared to protest against the iniquity of a system under which a small minority swallowed up the profits and property of nine-tenths of the province, Cooke burst into a furious tirade against the preaching of Socialism in Church Courts. Pressed by hisopponents to define Socialism, Cooke's reply was, "attacks on the nobility and aristocracy of the land, thus violating the Word of God which says 'Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of My people.'"

At a time when Presbyterians were forced to pay tithes to enrich a Church which had persecuted them for two hundred years, and were robbed of their rights by landlords for whom they had nevertheless to vote at the polls under threat of eviction, when the social boycott was so strong that a Presbyterian candidate had no chance in an Ulster constituency, and their wealthiest merchants and manufacturers in Belfast were excluded from the Commission of the Peace, Cooke had the hardihood to declare that "the real blood-shedder in Ireland is agitation." "The insatiate Moloch," he proclaimed, "demands the sacrifice, and the blood is shed by his worshippers to appease his appetite."

Yet Cooke won the battle all along the line, and his victory is in the real sense a triumph of personality over reason. By the expulsion of the non-Subscribers in 1829 he drove the Liberal and cultured element out of the Presbyterian Church, paving the way for that political union with the Ascendancy which was the end and aim of his policy. "Protestant union and co-operation" were his favourite mottoes; and in a speech at Hillsborough in 1834 he published what he declared to be "the

banns of a sacred marriage" between the Irish Protestant Churches. This union had an offensive as well as a defensive significance. It was intended, in Cooke's own words, not only to "satisfy the reasonable and the loyal," but "to awe the destructive and the factious." In blunter language, it proposed to modify for the benefit of Protestant Dissenters alone the eighteenth century policy, under which, as has been said, "A privileged controversy and a privileged church tyrannised over the Protestant population and the Protestant Dissenters, who, by way of recompense for their submission, were allowed to tyrannise in turn over the Roman Catholic community."

Episcopalian bishops and clergy cheered Cooke to the echo while he was fighting their political battles; when he ventured to claim, on behalf of Presbyterianism, religious equality with the Establishment they were as outraged as would be a patron of the ring should a professional pugilist seek to thrust himself into his family circle. At the zenith of Cooke's fame in 1848 a parson more liberal than his fellows invited him to preach a charity sermon on a week-day in the parish church of Termoneeny, Donegal. Immediately a furious outburst arose that a mere "Presbyterian teacher," as he was described, should have dared to invade "a consecrated edifice in which the rites and ceremonies and public ministrations of the United Churches of England and Ireland are, or ought to be, conducted, as by law directed." The luckless incumbent was warned by the Bishop of the diocese of the risks entailed in such an infringement of the canon law; and, according to a letter which was published in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Journal*, hastened to signify "his sorrow that he had been induced to act in any way contrary to the usages or laws of the Church."

If Cooke's schemes triumphed in the long run the communion to which he was devoted did not escape scot free. It was not a Catholic, not even an Arian, but an orthodox Presbyterian minister who had the courage to assert, while Cooke was still the virtual dictator of the Church: "I look upon Dr. Cooke as having done more to injure Presbyterianism by dragging it through the mud of party spirit than the next fifty years will see remedied." The same critic, in a striking passage, written in 1861, put his finger on the root of the evil: "To us all other causes of the moral paralysis which seems to have seized the Presbyterian Church in working out a better day for Ireland sink into insignificance when placed beside one cause, namely, the one-sided party interpretation of certain passages of the Bible, making them apply solely, definitely, and prophetically to the Roman Catholic community. The expressions—'Man of Sin,' 'Mystery of Iniquity,' 'Scarlet-clothed Harlot'—are by every itinerant orator applied to the most venerable of European religious organisations. Seeing the effects produced by such interpretations and such preachings might have led thoughtful men to pause and examine their Scripturality—seeing that ideas which bring punishment on poor shivering wretches were first employed and taught from the pulpit, and used to bring down immense applause even in meetings of the General Assembly—seeing that multitudes even in the metropolis of Ulster are only prevented by military force from imbruing their hands in each other's blood, should make Presbyterian Ministers doubtful of the divine origin of such ideas as part of a holy religion. But if it should turn out that these interpretations are false . . . what repentance for past folly, what deep sorrow for a misused Bible lie before our Church!"

The warning fell on deaf ears at the time, and has

remained unheeded ever since. It is true, and it should not be forgotten, that there have always been Presbyterian Ministers who were less concerned about the sins of the Vatican than the shortcomings of their own communion. They sought to be pro-Presbyterian, not merely anti-Catholic, and declined to be deterred from advocating measures that would benefit their flocks because these measures were demanded by Nationalists. Even Cooke's influence was not strong enough to prevent Synods and General Assemblies adopting resolutions in favour of tenant-right; and, in spite of all the thunders of the Carson campaign, the number of ministers who supported the Third Home Rule Bill was much larger than those who ventured a timid approval of the Gladstonian measures. But, at the best, these are a tiny if an influential minority, and the policy of Cooke is still on all great issues the policy of the Church. One consequence of this is that Presbyterianism can rarely rise above a sectional appeal. Cooke, who held himself to be "a Minister of the Church of Scotland in Ireland," was, in his own view, as much a member of a garrison in the ecclesiastical sense as Tory landlords were in the political sense. Nowadays we hear more of "the Presbyterian Church in Ireland," but unfortunately, the Cooke tradition that it is "in" Ireland and not "of" it remains unbroken; and political events of recent years have accentuated its aloofness and stereotyped its provincialism.

The proof that the purge of Arians and liberals, and the new orientation given to Presbyterian policy by Cooke, had resulted in an increased fervour and a deeper spirituality is generally held to be the extraordinary outburst of religious enthusiasm known as "The Revival of 1859." Cooke was still the strongest personality in the Church when the Revival took place; and though he gave it his blessing, and it

appeared to many to be the crown and coping-stone of his labours, no reference to it, singularly enough, appears in his official biography.

To the rank and file of Ulster Presbyterians the Revival was, and still is, the most momentous religious event of the last century; but their leaders and guides, if thrilled, were also perplexed, as may be seen by the utterances of the General Assembly held in July, 1859, when, after expressing in one resolution "profound thankfulness" for this outpouring of the Spirit, three supplementary resolutions were carried, warning their flocks against "mistaking bodily impressions or even conviction of sin for genuine conversion," and entreating "ministers and members to watch against the introduction, from any quarter, of error in doctrine or practice, lest Satan should get an advantage over us, and the Spirit of truth be forced to withdraw."

This perplexity was, I admit, natural enough. Ulster Presbyterianism, as might be expected from its Calvinistic bias, has always been suspicious of emotionalism in religion. When the rank and file of its congregations took to dreaming dreams and seeing visions its leaders found themselves in much the same predicament as an Anglican bishop would be if his flock insisted on accompanying the responses by banging tambourines, and punctuated his sermon with groans and ejaculations. The origins of the Revival have never been satisfactorily analysed, but contemporary accounts leave little doubt that the impulse came from the pew rather than the pulpit. Converts were the most energetic missionaries; and in districts where the enthusiasm blazed up most fiercely it is clear enough, to my mind, that many of the clergy felt their influence and authority were being gravely impaired.

In a pamphlet entitled *The Year of Delusion*, issued as a counterblast to the *Year of Grace*, which embodies the official record of the "Awakening" —as the Revival was called—Rev. Isaac Nelson challenged the orthodoxy of the whole movement from the point of view of Presbyterian theology. He was particularly critical of the physical manifestations which played such a part in the Revival. When one scans the literature of the time in which these physical manifestations are described, one ceases to wonder why scenes and incidents of the Revival still haunt the memory of an older generation in Ulster. "I witnessed," wrote a Scottish clergyman from Portrush, in 1859, "the smiting down in every phase of its development—from the simple swoon to the prostration accompanied by the most fearful convulsions of the bodily frame, and overwhelming mental anguish, venting itself in piercing cries for mercy or wailing notes of despair." At one meeting some two hundred men were "stricken down" in the space of a few hours. What the process of being "stricken" entailed may be gleaned from an account by the Rev. Thomas Y. Killen, of Ballykelly, of the conversion of a man who had scoffed at the Revival, and was afterwards discovered prostrated on his own floor. "His friends heard his cries, and came and found him writhing on the ground. For three-quarters of an hour he was dreadfully convulsed while it required several strong men to hold him. His first cry was 'A knife! A knife!' then, 'It's too late! It's too late.' Then, 'He's dragging me down!' And at last, 'Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, save me.' . . . When he got somewhat better he said Satan coiled himself round him and was dragging him down to Hell, which seemed like the crater of a great volcano." In another case, this time of a little girl, we are told "It took four men to hold

her. She had seen the Lord!" These child converts became missionaries in their turn, and their platform displays were, I suspect, not always to the liking of the official preachers.

In his *Home Life in Ireland* Mr. Robert Lynd tells us, on the authority of a lady who attended many revival services that "women used to be carried out from the churches into the open air with all and sundry dragging at the hoops of their crinolines." It was not only in churches that prostration occurred. Children at their desks in school would suddenly be seized with exaltation; in several places mills and factories had to be closed down for days; and on one occasion compositors, a class not ordinarily given to hysteria, were so overcome by religious fervour that the publication of a Coleraine paper was held up for twenty-four hours.

From a contemporary narrative by the Rev. William Magill, of Dundrod, Co. Antrim, I extract what seems to me the best impression of the manner in which the Revival spirit worked in country places: "When I visited the district," this minister says, "I found that all labour was completely suspended, and that all the people were running in groups from house to house. The mourning was in its extent, if not in its nature, like that of Egypt. In some houses at one time I counted more than a score, old and young, more or less affected. The people here seemed 'to take it' with wonderful rapidity. The graveyard is filled with groups, singing and praying around the prostrate bodies of men and women. Some are as in a trance, others crying for mercy. Some are still falling into the arms of friends, and sinking as into a swoon. Some stagger to a distance and drop on their knees to pray over the graves of the dead; and a few rush to the gates and flee in terror from the scene. The

converts are flying from group to group, and raise the loud shout of triumph as one after another, like the Jailor of Philippi, is seen to be trembling, and heard crying, 'What shall I do to be saved?' Up to this evening the work had gone on chiefly among the females. Soon, however, the men were impressed; and I shall never forget the look and shout of joy with which one of these females proclaimed the triumph of the Lord, when strong men were writhing in agony, or stretched out still and calm, but with clasped hands and heaving heart, on the graves around. I think I see her now—her bonnet hanging behind her head, her Bible in her hand above her head—and I still hear her shout 'The men are coming now! The men are coming now!' For ten days more the whole country was in a state of intense excitement. There was a regular chain of meetings kept up night and day."

From the North of Antrim, where the first manifestations were displayed, the fire spread rapidly south, until by midsummer, 1859, practically the whole of Presbyterian Ulster was ablaze. The enthusiasm was even more vehement in the towns than in the rural districts. Rev. William M'Ilwaine, an Episcopalian clergyman, who does not conceal his dislike of the movement, has drawn a curious picture of the "Awakening" in Belfast. "Multitudes of terrified people," he writes, "hastening under an unknown influence . . . 'to receive the Revival' (that was one of the phrases employed), screams of the most unearthly description proceeding from places of professedly Christian worship at all hours of the day and night, girls with dishevelled hair and pallid faces conveyed to all parts of the town, supported in the arms of young men and young women, to their homes from the churches where they had been struck—these were some of the phases of that

Revivalism which all were commanded to believe as from above, under pain of being unchristianised and publicly prayed for as heathen."

One change wrought by the Revival, unfortunately, did not prove lasting. According to Dr. Killen, "in 1859 the Twelfth of July—the great political anniversary of Ulster Protestants—was kept in a way which it had never been kept before. Even in Sandy Row—a portion of Belfast long noted as the grand theatre for the orgies and broils of Orangemen—that day passed without disturbance. No drums were heard; no drunken Protestants were seen staggering through the streets cursing the Pope and breathing out threatenings and slaughter against Romanists; but in many of its dwellings were heard the notes of grave sweet psalmody and the voice of prayer."

It was in the towns as a rule that the strangest phenomena of the Revival were encountered. These were cases of the "sleepers," as they were called, who fell into death-like trances, having given warning beforehand of the hour at which the seizure would take place, and the hour at which they would again recover their senses. The best analysis of this side of the movement is to be found in a pamphlet, *The Work and the Counterwork* by Archdeacon Stopford of Meath, who visited Belfast expressly to investigate the seizures. Archdeacon Stopford was an impartial as well as a singularly acute observer, as one would expect from the father of the distinguished historian, Mrs. J. R. Green, who told me that this was one of the few works on the shelves of her father's library which as a child she was not permitted to read. The first thing that struck Archdeacon Stopford in Belfast was that the cries uttered by those who were "stricken" exactly reproduced the unearthly wail of Edward Irving's prophetess, which had thrilled him

so strangely in London years before. He insists, in contradiction to what is now the orthodox view of the movement, that "bodily illness came to be co-extensive with the Revival." "Almost every girl," he says, "struck down in Belfast has visions. She would be greatly disappointed if she had not; she would think it only half done, and would probably pray to be 'struck' again." One unfortunate girl who suffered seventy seizures, and sometimes had as many as seven in a single day, lost her speech and the use of her limbs. Although the Presbyterian Church professed not to lay stress on physical manifestations, Archdeacon Stopford's investigations convinced him that some Revival preachers had carefully studied how to produce hysteria, and worked deliberately to this end. They boasted their toll of "stricken" converts as proudly as a Red Indian flourished his scalps.

In addition to the "stricken" and the "sleepers," there were also well authenticated instances of converts on whose bodies were imprinted strange signs and symbols which the common folk implicitly believed to be the work of supernatural agency. Presbyterian clergymen did not hesitate to accept stories such as that of the militiaman who, profanely throwing bullets on the road for a bet in liquor—a favourite pastime in Ulster country districts—had his arm withered by his side; or revelations like that recounted by Rev. John Whitsitt of a prayer meeting at Drum, County Monaghan, where a dark cloud gathered on the ceiling from which forms burst forth, one of them "of a human appearance which passed and repassed across all the lights and descended to the pew in which a young girl was rejoicing." Nor did the ministers shrink from tackling the job of casting out devils, as may be seen by this extract quoted by Archdeacon Stopford from a sermon which

he heard at Belfast at the climax of the Revival. "I was called two days after," said the preacher, "to see a little girl who had been dumb for three weeks. She had been using her tongue in idle and rash talking, and thus had God punished her. It was a dumb devil that possessed her. Had you but seen how she struggled and how she screeched and how the devil tore her, you would have known it was a dumb devil that went out of her at the prayer of faith." The stigmata, however, were too much in the tradition of Catholic miracles to be palatable to the orthodox Presbyterian mind, and to admit them would have created an extremely awkward precedent. Once they began to be common official Presbyterianism began to hedge, and it has been hedging about the Revival ever since.

The only parallel to the '59 Revival in Ulster history of which I am aware is to be found in the records of the first generation of settlers. In 1625, at Oldstone, near Killead—the native parish, by the way, of Montgomery, the Arian champion—a movement was originated by the Rev. James Glendinning, who, "seeing the great lewdness and ungodly sinfulness of the people, preached to them nothing but law, wrath, and the terrors of sin," with the result, as Stewart of Bangor states, that "I have seen them myself stricken and swoon with the Word—yea, a dozen in one day carried out of doors as dead, so marvellous was the power of God smiting their hearts for sin, condemning and killing." Glendinning, however, was, if his contemporaries are to be believed, "a man wh never would have been chosen by a wise assembly of ministers, nor sent to begin a reformation in this land, for he was little better than distracted." Certainly some of his "conceits" were weird enough. He evolved a theory that "he or she who, after having slept a little in bed, turned from one side to the other,

could not be an honest Christian ;" and proclaimed that " whoever would join with him in a ridiculous way of roaring out some prayer, laying their faces on the earth, would be undoubtedly converted or saved."

Blair, the minister of Bangor, who was sent for on one occasion to wean Glendinning from his " erroneous conceits," had a curious experience. " After supper, they being alone, only his wife sitting by, he (Glendinning) asked Mr. Blair if he would believe he was in the right if his foot could not burn in the fire. Mr. Blair answered if he offered to do so he would be still more confirmed that he was a deluded man, but before Mr. Blair had spoken the words his foot was in the midst of the fire, he holding the lintel (of the fireplace) with both his hands ; but Mr. Blair pulled so hard that both were thrown into the midst of the floor."

This did not end Blair's adventures on this memorable occasion. The fanatic insisted that his visitor must share his bed with him. " Being laid, he presently fell asleep, but Mr. Blair, though having fasted all day, yet, remembering the condition was short, continued fasting and praying. There was not one hour past when his wife, who lay in another room, came in muttering that the matter was revealed to her, and that the Day of Judgment was presently coming. Mr. Blair, who had not so much as warmed in the bed, being somewhat astonished, did rise also, and got courage to encounter these deluded enthusiasts, and set them to open their revelations, not doubting to find absurdities and contradictions therein ; they in the meantime being so confident as to desire him to write to carnal friends lest they should be surprised at the coming of that Day. . . . He, inviting Mr. Blair to pray, did begin himself. Mr. Blair stood to see his new way (formerly mentioned) whereby he hoped to convert Mr. Blair. When he had seen and

heard the absurdities thereof, in their idle roaring repetitions, he requiring him in the Lord's name to be silent, kneeled down and prayed with humble confidence, hoping to be heard. . . . When Mr. Blair had ended, Mr. Glendinning took him apart and confessed that he saw how he was deluded, and entreated Mr. Blair to see how the matter might be covered and concealed."

The cure, however, was not permanent. Adair tells us in a tantalising sentence that Glendinning, "falling from evil to evil, did at last run away to visit the Seven Churches of Asia." Most readers will agree, I think, that we could well have spared some of the parochial details in which Adair revels for a glimpse of Glendinning and his wife—I assume she took part in the pilgrimage—introducing eastern Christians to their new method of prayer.

Blair, as might be guessed from his dealings with Glendinning, had little sympathy with what Huxley called "corybantic religion." To him the convulsions and the striking down of converts were simply devices of Satan who, "playing the ape upon some ignorant person, did counterfeit the work of the Lord." To quote Adair again: "One of Mr. Blair's charge, in the midst of public worship, being a dull and ignorant person, made a noise, stretching her body incontinent. Mr. Blair rebuked that lying spirit which disturbed the worship of God, charging the same, in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, not to disturb the congregation; and, through God's mercy, they met with no more of that work." Seventeenth century pastors dealt much more drastically with enthusiasts than their Victorian descendants, who regarded criticism of the extravagances of 1859 as something little short of blasphemy. It was not till the last Revival was flickering out that the cold fit followed the hot; and the extent of the reaction

may be gauged by a comparison of the reports of ministers of actual happenings in their congregations with the discreetly sub-edited narratives embodied in *The Year of Grace*.

The orthodox policy is now to minimise the "physical excitement," and lay stress on cases where the process of conversion was "a purely spiritual one carried on in the sanctuary of the mind." Such cases were common enough, and this type of convert proved, as a rule, a better asset to the Church than those whose changes of heart had taken place under more melodramatic circumstances. But it is obvious to any student of the episode that it was the physical manifestations that gave the Revival its driving force, and awed all classes, in the words of a Presbyterian historian, "by the presence of a great and mysterious visitation." The more closely I study the origin and developments of the movement the stronger becomes my conviction that the exhibitions which detracted so much from the moral influence it undoubtedly exercised on the popular mind, would have been, if not utterly suppressed, at least restrained had the liberal and cultured wing of the Presbyterian Church not been banished from the fold by Cooke. Men like Montgomery and his fellows would not have feared to urge the importance of moderation and sanity; as a matter of fact they did urge it, but, of course, they could speak only as outsiders. It was the inability not only of the rank and file of the ministry but of its responsible leaders to distinguish between charlatanism and evangelical fervour that makes the Revival anything but a glorious episode in the history of the Irish Presbyterian Church.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHURCH MILITANT.

On the occasion of the Jubilee of the "Awakening" in 1909 it was proclaimed that the fires of 1859 were to be rekindled. Resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly, and bands of ministers held weekly prayer meetings in Belfast to ask for a sign. But the attempt was at the best half-hearted; and it was plain that if some genuinely desired a second religious upheaval, others feared its drawbacks might outweigh its benefits. In any case there was not even a hint of a popular response: and with a change of front, amazing to anybody who does not know Ulster, the ministers in a ludicrously short time transformed prayers for a Revival into prayers for the "Present Crisis," and were more concerned about the defeat of the Home Rule Bill and the triumph of Sir Edward Carson than about a new awakening of religious fervour. This transformation seems to me typical of the whole attitude of the Presbyterian Church since Cooke's strong hands shaped its policy. Probably it was inevitable, in the existing state of affairs in Ulster, that the energies of its leaders should become more and more absorbed in politics; and, I freely admit, that with the overwhelming majority of its ministers this absorption springs from a conviction no less honest than fervent. But it has led to results which are not a little disconcerting to good Presbyterians. Like other Protestant denominations, the Presbyterian Church has not found it an easy problem to maintain its hold in industrial centres. The very qualities that were the strength of Calvinism in the past—its fine austerity, its relentless logic, its lack of

ornament—weaken its appeal to a population nourished on the emotionalism of the music-hall and the sensational Press. It is a creed that needs country soil if it is to strike its roots deep, and it does not take kindly to the dust and din of cities. Nor can its stern simplicity be reconciled with the desire for display that is typical of money-making communities all the world over. The whitewashed, barn-like meeting houses of rural Ulster possess character if not beauty, and by association have become part of the landscape ; but the Gothic atrocities in red-brick that disfigure the streets of Belfast are less temples than tombs of a faith. In vain are the efforts of a newer school of Presbyterian ministers to brighten up the services with boisterous hymn-tunes and " stunts " adapted from American revivalists. Calvinism tricked out in such trimmings cuts as incongruous a figure as would a precise Victorian lady in the billowing skirts of a columbine. These shepherds may pipe with might and main, but their flocks do not dance, or if they feel in a dancing mood they resort to pipers who provide more sprightly music.

Ulster Presbyterianism had learned to resign itself to the defection of a section of its wealthier members who imagine that adhesion to the Episcopal Church improves their social standing, but the weakening of its hold on the working classes in industrial centres is a much more ominous sign. In modern times at least it has never been the Church of the poor, a fact which, strangely enough, some of its leaders appear to regard as a merit instead of a damning defect. Thus Killen, in his continuation of Reid's *History*, points with enormous complacency to the statistics of Irish pauperism to demonstrate the superior respectability of Presbyterians to Episcopalians and Catholics, and data of the same kind were freely employed in all the Home Rule campaigns. Whatever

value they may have had as political propaganda, a doctor of divinity, even in mid-Victorian days, should have seen the absurdity of adducing them as a proof of religious vitality. At this rate the Scribes and Pharisees might have laid far more convincing figures before Pilate to prove the superiority of their belief to that of the ragged followers of the Nazarene. A religion which makes a virtue of a purely middle-class appeal is a strange hybrid to spring from the doctrine of Him Whom the middle-class of His day denounced as "gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

If the views of its spokesmen are to be accepted, it is now with the lower middle-class—to use a hateful term—that Presbyterianism is losing its influence. At every General Assembly there rises a louder wail over the lapsed masses in the cities who are Presbyterians only for the purpose of the census returns; and the evil, though many plans have been proposed to deal with it, grows more formidable with each succeeding year.

In country places the old rigid orthodoxy still holds sway, as was shown by a curious incident at Castlecaulfield, County Tyrone, in the summer of 1917. As a protest against the introduction of instrumental music and hymn-singing, a dozen members of the congregation, mainly well-to-do farmers, forced an entrance into the Presbyterian church one Sunday before morning service, carried off a portable organ which had been installed under the pulpit, flung it on a tombstone in the graveyard, and battered it to pieces with a hammer. "Then," according to the *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, "they sat on the wall until a few minutes before the service started, when they entered the building quietly and took their pews. The service commenced at twelve noon with the singing of a hymn. On a given signal the objectors rose and left the building as a protest against the singing of hymns."

The Cromwellian spirit is not so easily aroused in the towns over questions of ritual, and on still more important issues there are signs of a growing laxity. I can scarcely imagine a Presbyterian leader nowadays solemnly arraigning a fellow-minister on the score of Sabbath-breaking as Cooke did Montgomery for having read a newspaper on a Sunday, and for the still more heinous crime that, on another occasion, " following the meeting of the Synod in Coleraine in 1825, he spent the day in admiring the sublime and beautiful in nature amidst the picturesque scenery of Downhill instead of attending Sabbath worship in the nearest Presbyterian meeting-house."

In theory there is still adhesion to the ideal of the *Shorter Catechism* that " the Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship." Quite recently a letter appeared in the Belfast papers tracing all the crimes of Prussianism to the fact that " Germany kept no Sabbath day." Not so long ago it was the French against whom such zealots thundered for tolerating the abominations of " the Continental Sunday," but a certain type of Calvinistic theologian does not scruple to fling logic to the winds if by discarding it he can score a point in controversy. Thus, in one breath, we are told that in the matter of Sabbath observance there is little to choose between Belfast and Berlin, and, in the next, that Ulster Presbyterianism has been divinely appointed to chastise, and finally overthrow, German Atheism. I notice, also, that German " ruthlessness " has become a good stick wherewith to assail German "Higher Criticism," which has always been a bugbear to the orthodox in Ulster as elsewhere. " By their fruits she shall know them," is the text of a good many

sermons from Presbyterian pulpits nowadays, but I would be more impressed by their reasoning if I did not suspect that had France and Italy been ranged against Great Britain we should have been hearing from the same people that not Biblical criticism but Catholicism was the real menace to European civilisation. As it is, Catholicism has not escaped scathless. The Vatican came in for as much abuse from the divines as the Wilhelmstrasse got from the politicians ; and whatever the experts may say in future about the causes of the Italian defeat at Caporetto, Ulster Unionists had no hesitation at the time in attributing it directly to the machinations of the Pope.

To the outsider Belfast is till a great citadel of orthodoxy, where the church-going habit is probably stronger than in Glasgow or Aberdeen. But those who know it intimately are well aware that the jeremiads of its pastors over the decay of enthusiasm are not mere scaremongering. Relatively to other centres it may hold its own ; as compared with its record of a generation ago there has been a sad falling away from grace. Even as late as the 'nineties it was the pleasant habit of the youths in Unionist quarters to bombard Sunday trains with volleys of stones on the assumption they were bound to hit a Nationalist since no good Protestant would break the Sabbath in this fashion. Nowadays it is Protestants who do most of the travelling, and parsons themselves patronize Sunday trams, against which in my young days they hurled anathemas that would not have been too strong had the target been the Car of Juggernaut itself.

To be a Sabbath breaker was not so long ago only one degree worse than to be a theatre-goer. Cooke, though he swayed his congregations by his mastery of the actor's art, held the stage in abhorrence : and a contemporary has given a vivid

impression of one of his famous addresses on "the sin of theatricals." "The doctor," we are told, "entered, dressed in his Geneva gown and bands, and ascended to the pulpit with all the dignity of a monarch mounting the steps of a throne, and all the stern gravity of a judge about to pronounce sentence of death; and the people, for lack of room, crept quietly up the stairs after the preacher till they gained the summit, and outside the pulpit door stood on a level with himself." According to the narrator, "the burning flood of fiery declamation was as irresistible as a cataract from the hills," and "theatricals in Belfast received a shock that evening from which they have not yet recovered." The boycott of the theatre still remains in force, but official Ulster Presbyterianism, if it jibs at Shaw and Synge, has taken the kinema to its heart, and on Saturday nights turns its Church House into a picture palace, where cowboy dramas and sentimental "scenas" are cheered by larger audiences than attend the sederunts of the General Assembly.

If theological laxity is increasing, Belfast politically is as furiously Protestant as ever. Practical separation from the Church appears, amongst the poorer classes at least, to increase rather than diminish enthusiasm for its abstract principles, a state of affairs as bewildering to outside observers as it is disturbing to the heads of the various Protestant denominations. Yet the phenomenon is not new in Ulster history. A century ago Canning, who had enough Ulster blood in his veins to know what he was talking about, laughed at Orangemen as fanatics "who damn the Pope and never darken a church door." The remark has even more point to-day than when it was first uttered. "Twelfth of July Protestants"—men whose attendance at church is limited to the Sunday preceding the great Orange festival—

are continually denounced from Orange pulpits, yet their number steadily increases. Nor, to my mind, is the reason difficult to find. I am convinced it is part of the price paid for the triumph of the policy, initiated by Cooke and developed by his successors, of making the Church a formidable political instrument.

This tendency became a fixed determination, or, it would be more accurate to say, an obsession, in the days of Sir Edward Carson's campaign. Not fear of God, but hatred of the Pope and the Nationalists, was proclaimed to be the beginning of wisdom ; and the test of orthodoxy became less adhesion to the tenets of the Shorter Catechism than to the principles of the Ulster Covenant. If this had its tragical side in the rigid boycott of pastors and laymen who had the temerity to object, it had also its ludicrous aspects. At a time when Ulster's energies were supposed to be absorbed in winning the war it became necessary to appoint a new Professor of Hebrew and Biblical Criticism in the Presbyterian College, Belfast. Forthwith a furious newspaper controversy broke out and raged for weeks as to the orthodoxy of one of the candidates not in the theological but in the political sense. I cannot refrain from quoting one delicious sentence which gives the pith of the controversy. "The amount of Hebrew required by the average divinity student of the present day is very small, and profound acquaintance with that language is much less important than sound political and religious principles." This letter was written not by a Shankill Road Orangeman, but by a man who had been for a generation headmaster of one of the leading public schools in Ulster. As a cynic remarked at the time the real solution would have been to set up in place of the chair of Hebrew a chair of politics with a professor appointed by Sir Edward Carson.

It has been argued, and the charge is repeated by Mrs. J. R. Green in her pamphlet *Ourselves alone in Ulster*, that ministers flung themselves into the Carson crusade all the more vehemently because it held out the promise of filling the empty pews in their churches. This, undoubtedly, was true of some, but the majority, I am certain, were as zealous as the most fiery laymen. In ferocity of language they were undoubtedly an easy first, as anyone must admit who has the patience to wade through the seas of anti-Home Rule oratory which swamped Belfast Unionist papers in the years preceding the outbreak of war.

The determination to make Protestantism synonymous with Unionism has had an effect which those who advocated it most fervently did not foresee. If, from the point of view of the pulpit, to be a good Protestant is to be a good Unionist, then, from the point of view of the pew, to be a good Unionist is to be a good Protestant, even if one leaves pastors and churches severely alone. This theory may not be proclaimed in so many words, but that it is extensively practised is notorious to everyone in Ulster who is not duped by official facts. The late T. M. Kettle, from his own experiences as a barrister, used to tell a story which, better than any laboured analysis, reveals the strange results that follow when political dogmas become articles of faith that alone are necessary to salvation. In this instance an Orangeman had been called as witness to the peaceable disposition of a friend. "What sort of a man," asked the counsel, "would you say Jamie Williamson is?" "A quiet, decent man." "Is he the sort of a man that would be likely to break windows?" "No man less likely." "Is he the sort of man you would expect to find at the head of a mob shouting 'To Hell with the Pope?'" Witness, with great emphasis, "No. Certainly not. Jamie was never any ways a *religious* man."

That is, of course, an extreme case, but it shows the tendency, and, startling as it may seem to outsiders, the development is both logical and natural. The parson on Sunday merely preaches what the loyal Covenanter has been practising during the other six days of the week; and a good many of the rank and file have the sub-conscious feeling that to have donned the khaki of the Ulster Volunteers to fight Home Rule absolves them as true defenders of the faith from listening to academic lectures on the subject. The churches, for all their efforts, could not hope to compete in the matter of thrills with the week-day oratory of the platform. The drumhead services of the Volunteers, with massed bands playing hymn tunes and piled drums draped with the Union Jack, behind which the clergy took their stand, were, it is true, an excellent invention, especially if Sir Edward Carson could be induced to grace the proceedings with his presence. At the outset, indeed, Sir Edward Carson did not bang the Protestant drum as loudly as some of his followers expected. Judged by the Orange standard, he is, I suspect, rather a Laodicean on this question, and he obviously feared the effect on English opinion of the exuberant demonstrations of the true-blue Orangemen for whom Lord George Gordon is still the ideal hero. But having discovered that the Protestant drum must be banged in no half-hearted fashion if the temper of Ulster was to be kept at fighting pitch, Sir Edward Carson speedily mastered his brief, and, before campaign was very old he could trot out the right phrases about "Derry Walls," "the massacres of 1641," and "the open Bible" with a fluency and fervour that even a Grand Master of the Order might envy.

Undoubtedly Sir Edward Carson's most brilliant tactical stroke—I question if the idea sprang originally from his brain—was to term the pledge by which

Ulster Unionists bound themselves to resist Home Rule—the Solemn League and Covenant. Technically the movement was unsectarian, but the name was a trumpet-call to fire Calvinistic blood. While Ulster women were adjured to win fame as unending as that of Jenny Geddes and Alice Lisle, Ulstermen had a new vision of themselves as the persecuted "saints" of the moss-hags, hemmed in by the fierce dragoons of Claverhouse and the bloodthirsty Highland Host. "The holy text of pike and gun" became doubly holy with this precedent to justify it. As a writer in the *Times* put it—this was before the British Press began to reprove the Kaiser for blasphemy—"Ulster seemed to enter into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Deity." For Ulster indeed this would still be regarded as a plain statement of fact, if not actually an understatement. Nor is this attitude merely bluff and hypocrisy, as some critics assert. There may be leaders of the Covenanters who utter such sentiments tongue in cheek; but the rank and file accept them with deadly seriousness.

The seriousness, however, has its comedy side, as most serious things fortunately have in Ireland. Thus, on the occasion of the signing of the Covenant, a prominent Unionist gave notice that, after the manner of his Scottish ancestors, he would sign his name in blood. The promise was duly fulfilled, but even Belfast could not resist a chuckle when it learned that the fire-eater arrived at the City Hall attended by his family doctor, who extracted a few drops of blood with a carefully sterilised hypodermic needle. Apparently to this Covenanter readiness to challenge the world in arms was a light thing compared with the risk of offending obnoxious bacilli. On the same occasion Sir Edward Carson himself did not wholly please his more old-fashioned adherents by his con-

cession to another modern tyranny. Having first signed the Covenant in earnest, he had then to strike a melodramatic gesture, pen in hand, and pretend to sign the pledge again amid the rattle of serried batteries of kinematograph machines, and in the blinding glare of electric lamps of 39,000 candle power which were suddenly switched on to illuminate the scene.

The Covenant stands now in Ulster for the maintenance of the Union ; but it is a curious fact that in the days when Wolfe Tone was organising the province for rebellion it was used as propaganda for an Irish Republic. In his *Annals of Ulster* McSkimin records that the United Irishmen of Rasharkin appointed two of their members to read and explain to the brethren in Antrim and Derry the Prophecies of Alexander Peden, the Scottish Covenanter, which were described as being " useful to the people in the making of our laws." Peden was meant to appeal to the Presbyterians, while acceptable fare for the Catholics was provided in the predictions of Thomas the Rhymer, " an unintelligible worthy of the olden time," whose sayings, according to McSkimin, " appear to relate chiefly to the Union between England and Scotland."

The members of the Covenanting Church in Ireland, " reproachfully known as Mountainmen," to quote one of their own manifestos, were strongly suspected of favouring the doctrines of the United Irishmen. Dr. McNevin, who describes them as " republicans by religion and descent," states in his *Pieces of Irish History* that they were " the most active promoters of the system." One of their ministers, Rev. William Stavely, served as captain of the Drumbracken Volunteers, and was commander at a review held outside Belfast ; another named Gibson, whose services " seldom concluded in less than six hours," drew hearers in thousands all over Antrim ; and if he at

times "so far forgot himself as to relapse for a moment into his holy hatred of Popery," he was, McSkimin declares, "afterwards sure to make amends by pointing out the immediate destruction of the British Monarchy."

The more moderate members of the sect, feeling it necessary to clear themselves of complicity in these proceedings, issued a proclamation in which they expressed "their highest abhorrence and detestation of all tumultuous and disorderly meetings . . . where anything is said or done that is prejudicial to the peace, the safety, or property of any individual or society." The resolution, however, had no effect on the itinerant preachers, several of whom in the reign of terror that followed '98 were arrested and exiled to America. The execution of a Covenanter named Daniel English made a deeper impression than most of the hangings of that dreadful period, and the memory of it still lingers in local tradition. English was marched four long miles from the guard house at Ballymena to the gallows on the bridge of Connor, dressed in his grave-clothes and attended by a great company of his co-religionists, who, as the procession wended its way amongst the hills, joined together in singing the 119th Psalm.

A hundred years later the Covenanters or, as they now style themselves, the Reformed Presbyterians, were the only Protestant denomination in Ulster which held aloof from Sir Edward Carson's campaign. This attitude was not due, as some might imagine, to a belief that the Unionist leaders were going too far, but to a firm conviction that they did not go half far enough. To these stalwarts the Ulster Unionist creed, which seemed to most people the apotheosis of all that is stern and unbending in Protestantism, was Laodiceanism of the most hopeless kind, and the Solemn League and Covenant a weak and futile

imitation of the real thing. No more extraordinary political document was issued in the course of the controversy than that in which the Reformed Presbyterians justified their refusal to sign the Ulster pledge, and arraigned Sir Edward Carson and his advisers as miserable compromisers and trucklers to the unclean thing, who could contemplate a political system under which Papists, Jews, and Atheists would, nominally at least, possess equal rights with true believers. This is not an extravagant development of the Covenanting creed but its fundamental principle. Until the Covenant—not Sir Edward Carson's variation, but the true original—is imposed by law on the whole Commonwealth from the King to the poorest voter, "such as are in ecclesiastical fellowship with us," a proclamation of the Reformed Presbyterian church declares, "cannot without a breach of their testimony hold fellowship with the civil government . . . neither can they compose a part of the executive government by holding offices under the crown, civil or military." Nor do the Covenanters hesitate to act up to their principles. I remember several elections in North and East Tyrone —districts in which the adherents of the creed are exceptionally strong—where the Covenanting vote would have turned the scale in favour of the Unionist candidate, yet, in spite of protests, appeals, and even threats, Covenanters resolutely abstained, with the result that the seats were captured by the Nationalists. It is easy to smile at this as an example of *odium theologicum* run mad, but it is after all only a logical extension of the orthodox Ulster view that if the tail cannot wag the dog, neither shall the dog be permitted to wag the tail.

Sir Edward Carson, I should imagine, was not deeply perturbed by the anger of the Reformed Presbyterians. They are at the best a tiny minority

whose opposition is politically of no significance, and to find himself arraigned on the score of his moderation must have been for the Unionist leader a new and not wholly unwelcome experience. It would not be surprising to learn that, as a good Churchman, he was more concerned about the effect on his fellow Episcopalians, and especially on the heads of the Church, of a name so ominous as that of the Solemn League and Covenant. Sir Edward Carson had publicly addressed Dr. Crozier, the Lord Primate of the Church of Ireland, as " a brother rebel," but a rebel in a shovel hat was not likely to feel altogether at ease under a flag first raised to proclaim that " Government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, deans and chapters is evil and justly offensive and burdensome to the kingdom, a great impediment to reformation, and very prejudicial to the civil government."

The Church, however, came to heel obediently, and swallowed the Covenant without even a grimace. At the instance of Sir Edward Carson, the Episcopalian bishops of Ulster, headed by the Primate, actually issued a joint pastoral appointing "a special form of prayer with suitable Lessons and Psalms " for the Sunday preceding the first anniversary of the signing of Ulster's pledge. There was a mutter of protest from one or two indignant Churchmen that Sir Edward Carson in taking this course was acting as if he were already Temporal Head of the Church, but the rest of their fellows, clerical and lay, bowed their necks to the yoke as if they liked it.

One effect of Carsonism which has been strangely ignored by all the commentators is that it definitely established Presbyterianism as the dominant political force in Irish Unionism. Men yet on the right side of forty can remember when the Ulster Party, though elected largely by Presbyterian votes, included very

few Presbyterians in its ranks. It drew its leaders, as it had always done, from militia messes and rent agents' offices, where traditions of the Pre-Disestablishment era so far prevailed that the social standing required for a Parliamentary representative was supposed to be the special prerogative of members of the Church of Ireland. Not so many years ago a Presbyterian Unionist Voters' Association was formed to insist on equal rights to place and power with Episcopalians; and I remember vividly furious squabbles over Parliamentary seats between the rival creeds, and still more furious diatribes against the practical monopoly by Episcopalians of the rewards and dignities which Governments confer upon their faithful adherents.

Within the last five or six years all this has been changed, and the adoption of the Solemn League and Covenant marks definitely the turning of the tide. The Church has now to content itself as best it can with an affectation of social superiority, and with the knowledge that it still flings a spell over the richer class of Presbyterians. In theory its members admit that Disestablishment gave it a new lease of life, as, indeed, is shown by the fact that whereas Presbyterianism in Ulster during the last half century has, at the best, held its own relatively to other creeds, the percentage of Episcopalians in the province has increased. In practice, not a few Churchmen instead of looking boldly to the future still sigh regretfully for the privileges that were their peculiar monopoly in the past, and dream dreams, as foolish as those of the *émigrés* of the old *régime*, who flattered themselves that some miracle would happen to wipe out the effects of the French Revolution. Even yet Churchmen do not realise that what was attacked in 1869 was "an endowed party rather than an endowed system of religion;" and they echo the plaintive

cri du coeur of the late Primate Marcus G. Beresford, as if it were an announcement of the end of all things, " the people of Ireland used to mean the Protestants ; now it means the Papists." This is an artful attempt to insist that religious equality in Ireland can be maintained only by a denial of majority rule, and its specious logic has been for two generations the stock argument of those whose policy it is to marshal Irish Episcopalians in opposition to democratic ideals.

In Ulster the reactionaries have met with a measure of success almost beyond their hopes, for the Northern bishops and clergy are committed, irretrievably it would appear, to the Covenant and all that it implies " We have sworn a most solemn and binding oath," declared the Rev. T. L. F. Stack in an Orange sermon at Omagh in July, 1917, " to resist Home Rule to the very death. We mean to keep ' the Covenant of God.' Break God's Covenant, court disaster." And this light of the Irish Church goes on to declare, in words that show how some Ulster loyalists interpret their loyalty—" So long as the Covenant stands our duty is to reject Home Rule, even if proved the only salvation of the Empire." The real significance, however, of Mr. Stack's declaration of faith is that it is directed not against Nationalists but against the Ulster Unionist leaders for their acceptance of the Partition proposals. " At the first summons," he cries, " the Council yields—abandons four-fifths of Ireland, including one-third of Ulster with its Covenanters, casting them to the wolves, if only six counties may escape. . . . . The Sinn Feiners are honest ; they never concealed their faith, but fought and died for it. Ulster surrenders hers without a blow."

Mr. Stack forgets that the Covenant itself was so framed that all Protestants outside the nine northern counties were, in his own phrase, " cast to the wolves."

And quite naturally Southern Episcopalians, though they were warned by their leaders to make no protest, did not, and do not, like it. In some of them this desertion aroused an anger akin to that of Mr. Stack; in others it has awakened, as might have been foreseen, a desire to arrange a compromise on their own account. This is strictly in accordance with historical precedent. The cry of Home Rule came first from Protestant not Catholic lips, and the movement which, north of the Boyne, is held to be the creation of the Vatican equally with the Devil, received its driving force originally from Churchmen who, having fought and lost the battle of the Establishment, decided it would be better in future to trust to the goodwill of their fellow-countrymen of all creeds than to the pledges of English statesmen. To-day similar causes are producing similar results. Ulster made its bargain with a frank disregard of Southern Unionist claims, and, having used "the persecuted brethren of the South and West" as its best propagandist asset, left them when the real crisis came to shift for themselves. The Carson lifeboat was designed to accommodate only Ulster Unionists; others who sought to scramble aboard were promptly beaten off by the crew with oars and belaying pins. Better some should be saved than all should sink was the cry, an argument which might be logical, but was cold comfort to those who were so callously abandoned to their fate.

The majority of Southern Protestants never disguised the fact that they regarded the Covenant simply as a device to wreck Home Rule, and had not bargained for Ulster using it to achieve what they considered, pardonably enough, to be purely selfish ends. It is notorious that some Churchmen, even inside the six counties, view with none too favourable an eye the creation of a Protestant enclave in which the dominant influence

is bound to be Presbyterian. Such a development threatens to prove too complete a reversal of historic traditions; and even were it possible to capture the excluded counties, the triumph would not satisfy the best minds amongst the Episcopalians. These have long since abandoned the futile dream of a supremacy buttressed on alien bayonets—nature is as likely to bring back the mastodon as to restore the Establishment—but they do sincerely believe that the mission of their Church is national and not merely provincial.

In any case the most bigoted Southern Churchman is at last aware that, whatever happens in Ulster, he will have to live in future in an Ireland governed by majority rule; and the question for him is whether he will chose to be an expatriate or a patriot. He may, if he likes, hold aloof, brooding sullenly over the vanished glories of his caste, but if he elects to come in with his countrymen he must come relying on his merits as an individual, not on his fancied prestige as a member of the "garrison." Prominent Churchmen like Bishop Gregg of Ossory and Bishop Plunket of Tuam have warned their co-religionists more than once in this sense; and one Ulster prelate at least does not hail the prospect of civil war with the "frolic welcome" of some of his brethren. Dr. Day of Clogher, speaking at Clones, in October, 1917, said a Convention settlement might not give them in Ulster "a system such as they desired, but, in the words of the preface to the Prayer Book, 'that which is imperfect with peace is often better than what is otherwise more excellent without it.'"

How far these views represent the opinion of the mass of Episcopalians remains for the present a mystery. The communion includes the most bitter section of ascendancy partisans, extremists who are aptly described in a characteristic Ulster phrase, "If you cut them they'd bleed Orange."

Such people are not likely to agree easily to a compromise, however reasonable, and may be trusted to do their best to make a political arrangement wear the appearance of treason to a religious creed. But it is obvious that if Ulster stands by the Covenant Protestants outside Ulster will be forced in self-defence to make terms for themselves. Apparently the Covenanters do not see that by compelling Southern Unionists to adopt this course they deprive themselves of their main argument—nowadays in fact their only argument—that Home Rule means intolerable religious tyranny. If the feeble and scattered minorities of the South and West can obtain conditions that will satisfy their sectarian scruples, the shuddering horror with which the compact Ulster *bloc* professes to regard self-government, as sounding the death-knell of Irish Protestantism, is not so much impressive as absurd. As a matter of fact in the eyes of the vast majority of Irish Protestants outside the new Ulster enclave, and of many inside it, Sir Edward Carson is a greater menace to the welfare of Protestantism than either Mr. De Valera or Mr. Dillon. The *Irish Times*, which claims to speak for the Southern Unionists, opposes Partition specifically on the ground of its blighting influence on Irish Protestantism. "The Church of Ireland," it declares, "will be the first to suffer; soon we may have two shabby provincial churches instead of one national Church. In a hardly less mischievous degree Southern Presbyterians and Methodists will find themselves separated from their fellow-churchmen within the six counties." It is not the least fantastic of Irish paradoxes that Popery and its machinations should haunt the waking dreams of men who never encounter a Catholic from year's end to year's end, while Protestants, who live in districts where they are outnumbered a hundred to one, sleep peacefully o' nights

undisturbed by visions of Vatican plots to destroy their faith.

It is undeniable that the churches have been a great asset to the Ulster politician ; whether politics have helped the cause of religion, which the churches, nominally at least, exist to advance, is a much more debatable question. Presbyterians have no doubt on the subject when the politics preached are not those which it is now the fashion to advocate in Ulster pulpits. Dr. Killen, in his continuation of Reid's *History*, attributes what he calls " the dark night in the history of Irish Presbyterianism " to the action of clergymen who in the last decades of the eighteenth century " compromised their religious consistency by merging the pastor in the politician." With horror he relates that "in 1783 the results of political meetings held in places of Presbyterian worship on the Lord's Day were regularly published in the newspapers by the parties themselves." What was at that time, according to him, a practice " condemned by the evangelical ministers," became in the days of Sir Edward Carson's crusade as much a matter of course as the taking-up of a collection.

If a hundred odd years ago " the military ardour displayed by Presbyterian ministers only proved they were not sufficiently devoted to their profession," and " the zeal with which they engaged in the political struggles of the period betrayed a sad want of spirituality of disposition," I wonder what the official historian of Irish Presbyterianism will say fifty years hence of the part played by his Church in the Home Rule struggle. In the days of the first Volunteer movement many clergymen, if Killen is to be believed, held aloof. When Sir Edward Carson summoned his Volunteers, Moderators and ex-Moderators to a man hastened to give them their blessing, and ministers who stood aside, even if they did not actively oppose,

were pilloried not merely as slackers but as traitors. No sermons had savour except they smacked of gunpowder, and churches were transformed from places of prayer into recruiting-stations for Ulster's army.

The official Unionist answer to this is that Home Rule is not a political but a religious question. "A Home Rule Government," in the words of one parson, "means liquor legislation, Sabbath profanation after Mass; it means education under the management of the 'religious orders'; it means no marriage ceremony legal but those celebrated by priests; it means public processions with an 'elevated Host,' in the presence of which we would have to uncover or be bludgeoned." The eighteenth century Volunteers also professed to believe that they were fighting for more than mere political advantages, and insisted that their demand for freedom of conscience and equality of treatment for members of all creeds made them not rebels but true crusaders. Yet, according to the official view of the Church, as expounded by Killen, "their history is an admonition to all ministers of Christ to beware of shipwreck on the barren rock of political agitation." So strangely constituted is human nature that this verdict is endorsed to-day by men who have for years past been preaching the doctrine of armed resistance to Crown and Parliament as if it summed up both the Law and the Prophets.

Primate Alexander, a Unionist whose Unionism did not blind his insight or destroy his sense of humour, was fond of telling a story with a moral of the universal identification of politics with religion north of the Boyne. Shortly after he was appointed to the See of Derry he met in the street a Catholic shopkeeper with whom he was acquainted. "I wish you every blessing, my lord," said the Catholic. "I like to think you will follow auld Ponsonby, whom

you knew so well. He was twenty years here, and a better Christian we never saw. Sure no man ever heard a word of religion out of him." "This seems a strange encomium on a bishop," Alexander remarks, "but religion was here used in the secular sense—aggressive and alas! political!" Had "auld Ponsonby's" rule been the rule of all prelates and presbyters, there might have been as much politics in Ireland to-day, but, assuredly, there would have been more real religion.

Unfortunately, the fundamental principle of Ulster Protestantism is that those who hold its creed are a "Chosen People." As one of their popular songs puts it:—

> "We are the true-born sons of Levi,
> None on earth can with us compare;
> We are the root and branch of Jesse,
> The bright and glorious morning star."

As with the Israelites of old, the theory leads to strange conclusions. I have heard a clergyman in an address designed to show that at every crisis God had miraculously intervened to save Ulster Unionists, quote as a proof of his argument the fact that when the whole world believed Home Rule to be inevitable Germany marched her forces across the Belgian border. To drench continents in blood in order to save the political prestige of a fraction of the population of an inconsiderable province does not strike the ordinary mind as a miracle of grace, but it is an excellent example of how the theory of a "Chosen People" works out in practice.

The Belfast City Council some years ago banned Nietzsche from the shelves of its public libraries on the score of the immorality of his doctrines. Yet Nietzsche looked to the coming of the Superman only as a hope of the distant future; whereas, if Ulster

clergymen are right, the Superman has already arrived in the person of the Ulster Protestant. It is true they trick out the "blonde beast" in the steeple hat and bands of the Puritan, but this Calvinistic gloss is merely surface polish. Nietzsche proposed to demolish the Christian creed in order to build a new philosophy of life on its ruins; with greater art, if with less honesty, a good many leaders of religion in Ulster keep the form of the creed, and pervert its spirit by making its central doctrine not the humility of its Founder but the spiritual arrogance of the Pharisee.

It was of an Ulster bishop the lines were written :—

> "He knew no mercy, was not meek—
> 'The meek are blessed,' saith the Lord—
> If one should smite him on the cheek,
> He'd turn—but turn to draw his sword ;"

and the verse sums up admirably not only the spirit of the episcopal bench, but of Ulster Protestantism in general. "Our loyalty," declared another prelate, "is inextricably entwined with our religious faith." But the union is that of the ivy and the forest tree, and the more aggressively loyalty of this kind flourishes north of the Boyne the more rapid is the decadence of religious faith in the true meaning of the word.

END OF PART II.

III.—Orangeism.

CHAPTER VIII.

"OLD BONES AND ROTTEN RAGS."

The Orangeman does not lack honour in his own country, nevertheless it is one of the grievances of Ulster Unionism that the outside world should persist in making his aggressive figure the sign and symbol of all it professes to represent. Its leaders prefer to regard him as an irregular from whose services it is legitimate to profit, but whose acts they are free to repudiate, much as the Porte in the old days used to disclaim responsibility for the excesses of the Bashi Bazouks. Wilkes declared himself no Wilkite ; in a different sense the Orange leaders are in the main not Orangemen. They hold aloof, not because they dislike the principles, but simply and solely on grounds of expediency. Orangeism in the past has been perhaps even more a trial to its friends than a terror to its enemies ; and though its adherents, from the Unionist point of view, are ideal people with whom to go tiger-hunting, the trouble is that they have no other tactics than those of the tiger-hunt. They are to an Ulster leader forces without whose aid victory is impossible, but whose methods cannot always be reconciled with the laws of honourable war.

To those who saw the situation from the inside, Sir Edward Carson's handling of the Orange Institution during the Home Rule struggle will always rank

amongst his most remarkable achievements. He managed to accomplish what most people regarded as the sheer impossibility of securing for his movement the full driving force of Orangeism without intruding the thing itself too nakedly on his English audiences, to whom the difference between Orangemen and Sinn Feiners is little more than that between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. And while he avoided ruffling unduly British sensibilities, Sir Edward Carson succeeded at the same time in keeping his own extremists obedient to a discipline that if imposed by any other leader would have provoked a furious revolt.

His champions may dispute the view that the Orangeman is wedded to mediaeval ideas, but they cannot deny that whether his ideas are mediaeval or not he takes a mediaeval delight in their concrete expression. To make broad his phylacteries is with him something more than a formal convention ; and the inward and spiritual grace he presumably derives from his creed would, in his opinion, lose half its value were it to be deprived of its outward and visible signs. But it was precisely these signs that troubled Sir Edward Carson. In the Orange spirit he recognised his best asset ; the forms in which that spirit delighted to manifest itself were, he saw, more likely to antagonise than to convert opinion in Great Britain. Therefore, while he loaded the Brethren—as they love to call themselves—with compliments, he took care that in his processions and displays they should not appear too often in their favourite colours. Thus in the early days of the campaign the Lodges marched as Unionist Clubs, without either bands or banners ; at a later stage they were transformed into companies and regiments of the Ulster Volunteer Force. To the outsider this may seem a small thing ; to the true-blue Orangeman it was as distasteful as were to

Laertes the "maimed rites" of Ophelia's funeral. He discarded his regalia as unwillingly as an old-fashioned soldier doffed his red coat for khaki; and found Sir Edward Carson's battle hymn, "O God, our help in ages past," a poor substitute for the vehement rhythms of

> "Sleeter slaughter, Holy Water,
> Scatter the Papishes every one;
> When we go to battle,
> The cannons will rattle,
> The Protestant boys will carry the drum."

Politically the Unionist leader may have been justified, but should his policy prevail the new Ulster will be a much duller place to live in than the old. In the past Unionist politics have supplied not only the thrills but most of the colour of life. The Calvinism of the North has banished aestheticism from religion, and it is Orangeism that largely fills the gap, strengthening its hold on the imagination by the appeal it makes to instincts that lie deep down in human nature. It may seem a sour and unlovely creed, but no one who has studied it at close quarters is likely to underrate the influence its pageantry and symbolism exercise on the minds of its adherents. Whatever we think of Orangeism politically, let it at least be counted to it for righteousness that it brings a gleam of brightness into dull lives. In the early days of July, when arches composed of ropes of coloured paper or festoons of orange lilies and sweet-william—flowers sacred to the victor of the Boyne—are strung from chimney-pot to chimney-pot in all the back streets of the Unionist quarters, Belfast ought to be the happiest of hunting grounds for Futurist painters. A stern ritual dominates the construction of Orange arches, and novelties in design would be regarded as blasphemy. You always

have as a centrepiece a glaring oleograph of King William III., flanked as a rule by portraits of the King and Disraeli. Of late years the tendency is to substitute for these worthies Sir Edward Carson and Colonel Craig, and Lord Birkenhead also gets a show, not as Lord Chancellor of England, but in the more romantic character of "Galloper" Smith. In some streets portentous wooden erections are slung to symbolise the Gates of Derry, and there are the usual devices of the sword laid across an open Bible, Jacob's ladders, and five-pointed stars, with a strange medley of mottoes, from "Civil and religious liberty" to "No Popery" and "To Hell with John Dillon."

These arches are thickest in the streets that abut on Nationalist territory. There the orange lilies are most lavishly spread, the inscriptions are more provocative, and battered effigies of Mr. Dillon and Mr. Devlin dangle in mid air. The din of fifes and drums all night long makes sleep impossible, and youthful braves, like knights before their investiture, keep watch and ward beside bonfires in expectation of a raid. For some years back the Nationalists have held themselves well in hand, but there was a time when skirmishes in this debatable land were the rule, not the exception, during the early days of July, and many a noble structure, portraits, devices, and all, has in the small hours come toppling to the ground in ruins by the primitive agency of an iron bar tied to a rope. There is a story that on the night before Omdurman, when Kitchener's troops lay on their arms behind their frail zereba of thorn bushes, momentarily awaiting a Dervish onslaught, an English soldier who complained of the nerve-racking suspense was silenced by a Belfast comrade with the enigmatical remark, "Man, its naething like waitin' for the Fenians to pull down the arches on the night before the Twelfth."

Every Orange Lodge is then unfurling new banners, as large as the mainsail of a fishing boat, tasselled with purple and gold, and with painted centrepieces blazing with all the colours of the rainbow. The favourite composition shows William the Third, as large as life, crossing the Boyne on a ramping white charger, from whose uplifted forefoot the water drips artistically. Next to this in popularity is the siege of Derry, with the gaunt spectres of the garrison in the foreground staring down the river at the relief ships charging the Culmore boom. There is also a delightful study of a plump Queen Victoria presenting a Bible to a woolly-headed negro clad simply in a loin cloth, the whole bearing the legend, "The Secret of England's Greatness." What the negro has to do with Orangeism I have never been able to discover, but "The Secret," as it is familiarly known, turns up year after year, and never loses its charm. The portraits are as strangely assorted as the historical pictures. I imagine the Duke of Wellington would be as surprised as the late Lord Roberts to find himself figuring as an Orange hero; and Disraeli—a hot favourite for some reason with the "brethren"—never seems quite happy in the company of Johnston of Ballykilbeg, whose title to fame is that he served a term in jail for defying an Act of Parliament prohibiting party processions.

In the matter of barbaric display there is little to choose between the banners and the bands. Of late years, it is true, the Ulster Volunteers have toned them down with a note of sober khaki; but there are still enthusiasts who appear in Highland costume, in the busby and frogged jacket of the Victorian hussar, in "smasher" hats dyed a raw purple, in kepis and red shirts that date back to the American Civil War. As only a short interval divides one band from another, and each persists in hammering out a

different tune, the din of bagpipes, brass, and wind instruments is something to remember. And, to crown all, there are the "Lambeg" drummers, who are to the ordinary Orangeman what the Ghazi fanatic is to the tribesman of the Indian border. They operate in sections of three—two drums to a single fife—but drumsticks are abandoned for long flexible canes, which rattle on the sheepskins with a noise as ear-splitting as machine-gun fire. The point of the game is that each man should do his best to drown his neighbour's efforts, and so furiously do they labour that the blood from their frayed wrists spreads in ghastly stains over the drumheads. I have known a folk-lorist who used to draw elaborate parallels with the ju-ju rites of West African negroes; but what may be natural enough amongst tropical mango swamps is a weird survival when one stumbles upon it in the red brick streets of an aggressively modern city.

I fear that what I have written may leave the impression that the Orangeman is a dark-browed fanatic, who cannot be fitted into the twentieth century. That is what some of those who control his political destinies would like him to be; fortunately, for the honour of human nature, cheerfulness, as with Dr. Johnson's friend, keeps breaking in. He has his dark hours, when, if he is scratched or even rubbed the wrong way, one gets a good imitation of Peter Poundtext or Praise-the-Lord-Barebones. These fits are confined in the main to the great feasts of his Order—the anniversaries of the Boyne and the Siege of Derry—in the intervals he is quite harmless and mixes on friendly terms with those whom in theory he longs to serve as the Israelites served the Amalekites.

Nowadays, indeed, he makes a great parade of disclaiming anything in the nature of ascendancy, and no longer demands.

"The crown of the causeway in market or street,
And the rascally Papishes under my feet."

"Civil and Religious Liberty" is his new watchword, but he does not always resist the temptation to apply it after the fashion of Cromwell's Ironsides, who were all for liberty of religion, and interpreted liberty to mean that there must be no toleration of Romish superstitions. Orangemen—and it counts to their credit—can make a joke against themselves; and it was one of the Brethren who told me the sorrowful tale of the Belfast woman whose son had been persecuted for his religion. The youth, it seemed, in a fit of fiery indignation, smashed the window of a shop where crucifixes and Catholic emblems were displayed, and was sent to jail for a month. "If that," declared his proud and tearful parent, "isn't sufferin' for his religion, I'd like to know what is." The story may be a parable, but it explains many things.

It is simple enough to describe the surface appearance of Orangeism, but by no means so easy to analyse the qualities that give the faith its hold over the minds of its adherents and make it so formidable a political force. No principle which has powerfully influenced the minds of a community has found fewer reputable defenders. Even those who have used it for their own ends, and without its support would have failed to maintain their position for an hour, are eager to wash their hands of responsibility for its actions. If it is to some of its opponents, in the words of T. M. Kettle, "a settled hallucination with an annual brainstorm," its friends, or those whom it might reasonably expect to be its friends, have damned it with even stronger censure. Archbishop Whately, though he held Protestant Ascendancy to be the linch-pin of the Constitution, nevertheless declared: "The very name of Orangeman is a sign chosen on

purpose to keep up the memory of a civil war, which every friend of humanity would wish to bury in oblivion. It is doing what among the heathen was reckoned an accursed thing—keeping a trophy in repair." Curran put it even more succinctly when he described the Orange speeches of his day as resembling "the unrolling of a mummy—all old bones and rotten rags."

Unfortunately these old bones and rotten rags are still venerated as sacred relics, and the difficulty is to induce believers to view them in the light of reason, not with the unquestioning eye of faith. That will not be accomplished, I am convinced, by assuming, as not a few critics of Orangeism assume, that its adherents know in their hearts the idols they worship are rags and bones, and of set purpose blind themselves to the truth. Whatever may be the case with individuals, men in masses never deliberately say, "Evil, be thou my good;" and human nature is so constituted that it can produce moral reasons to justify even the worst creeds. Orangemen may be fanatics; to dismiss them as conscious hypocrites serves, by strengthening their conviction that they are persecuted for righteousness' sake, to confirm them more strongly in their beliefs, and renders impossible anything like reasonable discussion of the fundamental issues that divide great masses of Irishmen.

It is often forgotten that Orangeism is less a clearly defined programme of political principles than the reflection of a state of mind which owes its origin to events whose true significance is largely hidden from those who build their creed upon them. It may be labour lost to attempt to get back to first causes, for the Orangeman, much as he loathes Catholic theology, acts firmly on the principle that in what are to him matters of faith there is no appeal to the logic of reason. Yet I believe that such efforts, even if they

are unsuccessful, hold out at least the promise of better results than a continuance of the acrid and futile controversies that have been the rule in the past. It may be tempting to meet the taunt of "Papist persecutor" with the cry of "Orange thug," but hard words of this kind, far from breaking bones, merely increase the self-esteem of those against whom they are hurled. Burke, as far back as 1792, saw much more clearly than some twentieth century politicians the real difficulty. In his letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe he remarked of the Irish Protestants—"If they could be once got to think that the Catholics were human creatures, and that they lost no job by thinking them such, I am convinced that they would soon, very soon indeed, be led to show some regard for their country."

If Burke's words were true one hundred and twenty-seven years ago, they are still more poignantly true to-day; and their appeal should be taken to heart, not by one Irish party, but by all. While we rightly resent the English imputation of the Irishman's "double dose of original sin," it is in our own family jars just this habit of attributing opposition to original sin instead of to historical causes that complicates so woefully the task of those whose aim is unity, not division. When we begin to realise that far from any side having a monopoly of either angels or devils the majority of all parties are fallible, well-meaning men, we shall have advanced a long way towards a solution of our difficulties. This counsel—unfortunately under existing circumstances a counsel of perfection—ought specially to be borne in mind in any consideration of Orangeism as a force in Irish affairs. The Orangeman is not more deeply convinced of the righteousness of his own motives than he is of the innate malignity of those who oppose him. He will admit that there are two sides to a question, but

only in the sense that one is right and the other wrong, and those who defend what he holds the wrong side do so, he believes, because they deliberately prefer darkness to light.

"An Orangeman who was asked how long his Order had been in existence answered off-hand that Orangeism could be traced back to the Garden of Eden. This was a thoroughly accurate statement. He simply meant to convey that all the essentials of a perfect nature and of an exalted religion were to be found associated in the primal day of our race." This quotation is not, I hasten to say, a bad joke or an invention of the enemy. On the contrary, it is an extract from the introduction to Mr. R. M. Sibbett's *Orangeism in Ireland and throughout the Empire*, the first attempt to give a detailed account of the rise and progress of the Order ; and a work which, apart from the political creed it seeks to expound, is a mine of valuable information about a side of Irish history curiously neglected by the official historians. The author proceeds to develop his "Garden of Eden" theory along lines which to non-Orangemen are simply astounding. The sin that brought about Adam's fall having been purged on Calvary, so runs the argument, "our relationship to the Father of our spirits was renewed, and while we maintained that relationship by faith and obedience no one could take away our inheritance." "That," Mr. Sibbett continues, "was Protestantism, that was Orangeism. Popery, however, obscured the truth, and while affecting to lead man right plunged him into a moral quagmire, into a wilderness of error and superstition." Against Popery's "usurpation of the office of our Redeemer," Orangeism, which is "organised Protestantism," is the only effective weapon ; and so we reach the conclusion that the triumph of Bethlehem depends in the long run on Belfast.

Mr. Sibbett's book, I ought to explain, was published not in the days when Protestant Ascendancy was assumed to be an axiom of Government, but almost simultaneously with Great Britain's declaration of war against Germany. That England should take up arms against another Protestant Empire for the sake of Catholic Belgium would seem a flat denial of the cherished principles of Orangeism, which, if carried to their logical conclusion, mean not so much making the world safe for democracy as making it unsafe for the Vatican. Fortunately Orangemen's hearts are a long way sounder than their heads ; and just as they manage to turn a blind eye to the fact that William of Orange instead of being at daggers drawn with the Pope was leagued with him in opposition to Louis XIV., so the Kaiser, who in the spring of 1914 was hailed in Belfast as a potential deliverer, had been transformed before the summer ran its course into the arch enemy not only of England but of the Protestant cause. I am certain Mr. Sibbett was as strong for the "knock-out blow" as Mr. Lloyd George or even Mr. Horatio Bottomley, and is quite prepared to demonstrate that the overthrow of Protestant Germany is essential to the ultimate defeat of the Papacy. The logic of Orange philosophy bears at times a bewildering resemblance to the logic of the Mad Hatter's dinner party, but, unfortunately its fruits are a matter for tears rather than laughter.

Orangeism in its modern form came into being with the collapse of the Penal Laws, and represented an attempt by the poorer class of Protestants to achieve by mob violence what their ancestors had accomplished by the more decorous method of legislative enactment. The Penal Code, as Lecky points out, "was inspired less by fanaticism than by rapacity, and was directed less against the Catholic religion than against the property and industry of its pro-

fessors." By the time the eighteenth century had entered upon its last quarter the Penal Laws had done the work they were designed to do. The aristocracy, in addition to possessing the supreme control of political affairs, enjoyed a virtual monopoly of Irish land. So strongly had its members consolidated their position that they no longer felt it necessary to rely on the Protestant democracy, to whom, in more troubled times, they looked for support. On many estates Catholic tenants were preferred to Protestants because they were willing to pay heavier rack-rents, and raised no awkward questions about rights or privileges. The extension of the suffrage to Catholics in 1793 gave a great impetus to this movement. Hitherto, possession of the vote had been a strong recommendation in favour of Protestant tenants in the eyes of landlords who knew to a pound the cash value of political influence in the Irish Parliament. When Catholics were placed on a voting equality with Protestants this recommendation disappeared, and in the competition for holdings, especially in Ulster, religion was no longer a bar.

It is a good example of the manner in which sectarian bias prevents clear thinking in Ireland that Protestant farmers, instead of demanding security of tenure from their landlords, should have turned the vials of their wrath on Catholics for taking advantage of an opportunity to bid for holdings on equal terms with members of the dominant faith. So far as I am aware, no landlord suffered for giving preference to Catholics, but Catholics who accepted it were declared to be outside the pale. The Protestant crusade took the form of a holy war, which, in Lecky's words, was unparalleled in Irish history "since the days of Cromwell." This jehad followed the formation of the first Orange lodges in Armagh, and though the modern defenders of the Order protest its innocence,

the whole weight of contemporary evidence refutes their argument. The depredators who sought to better Cromwell's practice by a ruthless expulsion of their Catholic neighbours gloried in the name of Orangemen. Lord Camden, the Viceroy, in a private despatch stated that the Orangemen had established "a system of terror" in Armagh; and Mr. Verner, one of the leading lights of the Protestant party, admitted in Parliament the outrages charged against his brethren, but excused them on the ground of provocation. Verner's line of argument has been improved on by later Orange apologists, who, with even greater hardihood than he possessed, strive to show that while the Orangemen had nothing to do with the business, *razzias* more ruthless than those organised by the Germans in Belgium and northern France were really trifles which only sentimentalists could take seriously.

As usual in Ulster religious fanaticism was so directed as to subserve economic ends. Latocnaye, a French *émigré*, who visited the disturbed areas while the campaign of expulsion was in full swing, discovered that proclamations, containing what was supposed to be a prophecy of St. Columba, were assiduously circulated in Catholic districts. The document stated that "a time will come when war and famine will destroy in this part of the country all those who have not embraced the new errors;" but consolingly added, "the massacre shall not extend beyond the Shannon, where the faithful shall prosper." In addition to working on superstitious feelings, material interests were appealed to, and Connacht was represented as a land of golden hopes where emigrants would live in plenty for next to nothing, and where work at good wages was available for all. If these milder measures did not succeed, the "strong hand" came into play. Houses, in the phrase of the day,

were "papered" or "noticed," the form of the summons running, according to Latocnaye, as follows :—"Peter........ James........, you have ....time to sell your things and go to Connacht or you will go to Hell." The threat was more than empty words. A precise estimate of the number of people expelled from their holdings by this tyranny is not attainable. In a speech in Parliament Curran declared that in Armagh alone 1,400 families, or about 7,000 people, had been driven from their homes, but Lecky is inclined to reduce these figures by half. Lord Altamont, a great Mayo landlord, informed the Castle that 4,000 of these fugitives had taken refuge in Mayo, and "a number that I cannot take on me to compute in other parts of the province of Connacht." Others settled in the Midlands and South, where, in the words of the Lord Lieutenant, "they related their sufferings, and, I fear, have excited a spirit of revenge among their Catholic brethren."

As a matter of fact Catholic indignation was stronger against the authorities, who tolerated if they did not connive at this outrage, than it was against the actual perpetrators. "As to the Orangemen," wrote a Dungannon magistrate whose report Lecky quotes, "we have rather a difficult card to play ; they must not be entirely discountenanced—on the contrary we must in a certain degree uphold them, for with all their licentiousness, on them must we rely for the preservation of our lives and liberties should critical times occur." A Tyrone landlord describing how hatred of the Catholics had increased in his district adds the illuminating sentence : "This change has been wrought within the year—a change fraught with the best consequences to our King and Constitution." In Grattan's phrase, "the Protestant mob naturally conceived itself to be part of the

Senate." It had every encouragement to take this view, for whereas General Craddock, when the reign of terror in Armagh was at its worst, could find no use to which his troops might be put, Carhampton at the same time was stamping out Catholic disorders in Connacht by the simple process of rounding up the inhabitants of disaffected areas and sending them, to quote Lecky again, "without sentence, without trial, without even a colour of legality . . . . to serve in the King's fleet." The Viceroy's comments on Carhampton's kidnapping expedition contrast strongly with his attitude towards the Armagh outrages. "I am afraid," he wrote, "some of the magistrates have been incautious enough not to carry on the measure so secretly as to have escaped the notice of the public. . . . It has, certainly, however, done much to quiet the country, and I shall, of course take care to protect these gentlemen as far as I am enabled with propriety to do so."

Baneful as were the results of these administrative methods on Catholics, they exercised in the long run an even more detrimental effect on Orangemen by convincing them that their campaign of terrorism and outrage was in accordance with the secret wishes of the Government. They had always been accustomed to regard themselves as a class apart; and the failure of the Executive either to impose responsibility or exercise restraint created a tradition from the evil effects of which Orangeism has never been able to free itself. Its adherents to-day have no desire to burn down the houses of their neighbours or drive Catholics to Hell or Connacht; but they still cherish the belief that it rests with them alone to say whether these things should or should not be done. And if they decide to take action, a Government which hampers their efforts is not merely guilty of an error of judgment, but is wilfully sinning against the light.

The mentality of Orangeism in the twentieth century is well revealed in this utterance of an Orange member of Parliament, Captain Charles Craig, on the question of reprisals against Germany. After explaining that "in times of peace ideas of Christianity are all right, but now they are out of date," he went on to tell the House of Commons how the thing could be managed by adopting Ulster methods. "If the person," he said, "who objects to reprisals and who objects to killing a German, although they have been killing Englishmen in Germany, doubts whether it is right or not to do it, let him think that he is the agent of a Higher Power. Let him think that he is the agent of Someone up above, and that will get out of the difficulty."

There still circulates amongst the Lodges a paper drawn up by the Rev. Dr. Drew, of Belfast, a notable pillar of the Order, which bears the title "Twenty Reasons for being an Orangeman." From the declaration of belief I extract two clauses which contain the pith of the Orange gospel, and incidentally demonstrate the accuracy of Mr. Dooley's definition that "a fanatic is a man who acts as he thinks God would act, if God knew the whole facts of the case." These are typical of Dr. Drew's reasons :—

"Because it cannot be otherwise, but that under the downward progress of British legislation God will be made angry, and the nation imperilled, Protestant unity and testimony are therefore required to deprecate God's indignation, and to 'bide the time' of needful resistance.

"Because all truckling to Popery has, in every instance, been attended with renewed clamour for further concessions in violation of pledges given by Roman Catholics."

The theory of insatiable Catholics extorting privilege after privilege at the expense of harassed Pro-

testants colours all Orange thought. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, when the claim was made that religion should no longer be a disqualification for the exercise of the franchise, the Dublin Corporation, then the central fortress of Irish Toryism, issued a protest declaring that "though the liberal and enlightened mind of the Protestant receives pleasure at seeing the Catholic exercise his religion with freedom, enjoy his property in security, and possess the highest degree of personal liberty, yet experience has taught us that, without the ruin of the Protestant establishment, the Catholic cannot be allowed the smallest influence in the State." A generation later the demand to return Catholics to Parliament was met with the argument that as they already possessed votes they could in fairness ask nothing more. Later still, the abolition of the Establishment and the settlement of the land question were fiercely opposed on the ground that Catholics, having been granted equal rights, were now clamouring for special privileges. To-day the orthodox Unionist case against Home Rule is that all Catholic grievances, political, religious, and economic, have been remedied; and therefore only the desire to exercise ascendancy prompts the demand for self-government. Were Ireland to-morrow ruled by Irishmen nothing is more certain than that the men who declared their resolve to resist autonomy "even unto the shedding of blood," would make a virtue of having conceded self-government; and would also use the fact of its existence as a triumphant argument against further readjustments. Unionist advocates, who denounced on platforms and in the Press every Land Act as shameless confiscation, and thought Lord Salisbury put it all too mildly when he described local government as worse than Home Rule, are nowadays quite convinced that these

measures were carried by their agency, though they find it as difficult to convince others as did George the Fourth to persuade his intimates that he had led in person the final charge at Waterloo.

The real true-blue Orangeman, to do him justice, makes no claim of having ever been a reformer. His sentiments are summed up in the words of one of his leaders, now safely ensconced on the Judicial bench, whose contribution to the political thought of his time was a fierce protest in Parliament against " the rotten, sickening policy of conciliation." This policy, the Orangeman holds, is not a thing of to-day or yesterday. It began as far back as the decision to relax the Penal Laws, and has continued with increased force ever since. England's fatal crime in Ireland has not been the denial of freedom, but the overthrow of Protestant Ascendancy, which the remonstrance of the Dublin Corporation, quoted above, defined as " a Protestant King of Ireland, a Protestant Parliament, Protestant electors and Government, Protestant benches of Justice, a Protestant hierarchy, the army and revenue, through all their branches and details, Protestant, and this system supported by a connection with the Protestant realm of Britain." Any whittling down of this is part of the " rotten, sickening policy of conciliation ; " and whether it takes the shape of an Act of Union, Catholic Emancipation, or University reform, Orangemen can be relied on to oppose it tooth and nail.

CHAPTER IX.

TREASON TRUE LOYALTY.

THE creed of Orange Ulster would seem to be one of pure selfishness, but that is not how it appears to its professors. They persuade themselves they are really serving not their own interests, but the interests of Great Britain, and that nothing but the Englishman's invincible ignorance of the realities of the Irish situation blinds him to this obvious fact. Their mission, as they see it, is to save England from the fatal effects of her own weakness; and if, in doing so, they violate the letter of her law it is merely that they may the better preserve its spirit. This is not, as some historians assert, a piece of arrant hypocrisy. In every crisis in Irish politics, from the Rebellion of '98 to Sir Edward Carson's campaign against Home Rule, the minority in Ireland have had behind them the backing not merely of English partisans who openly applauded their tactics, but of English statesmen and officials whose duty it was to enforce the law without fear, favour, or affection. These people, while disclaiming all responsibility for the results of Orange bigotry in practice, and affecting to deplore its survival in a civilised age, are well aware that it is their best political asset, and utilise it for their own ends with an unscrupulousness that takes no account of the real interests of either England or Ireland. I do not say that, lacking their support, Orangeism would have become a negligible factor in Irish affairs. There is, however, no doubt at all, and the closer one studies history the more forcibly is the truth brought home, that English influence is to Orangeism what a detonator is to dynamite. Without

it there might be a blaze, but it would speedily burn itself out; with it there are all the possibilities of a devastating explosion.

It seems to have escaped the attention of the commentators that English reactionaries for over a century never find themselves in difficulties that they do not strive to rally Orange fanaticism to their side. Times and men may change, but the tactics are always the same. The letters of General Knox to Pelham on the eve of '98, in which he advocates the arming of the Orangemen on the ground that it would increase the animosity between the Episcopalians and the United Irishmen, and justifies the proposal by the argument that "upon this animosity depends the safety of the centre counties of the North," differ not at all in sentiment, and very little in wording, from the letters by British officers read at Carsonite meetings on the eve of the Curragh mutiny of 1914. English Tories, who before the war with Germany hailed the Orange legions as shock-troops whose impact would not only break Nationalism but would teach Radicalism and Labour their places, are merely carrying on the tradition of their predecessors who in 1832 plotted to use the Ulstermen to destroy the hopes of the English Reformers.

This movement to defeat by the aid of Orangeism the first timid advance towards popular representation in Parliament is singularly interesting from the similarity of the methods adopted to those which are now regarded as the special monopoly of Sir Edward Carson. Most writers who have dealt with the subject have, in my opinion, wandered from the real point in their anxiety to prove or disprove the charge that the Orangemen of that period were engaged in a treasonable conspiracy to change the succession to the Crown by excluding Princess Victoria in favour of her uncle, the Duke of Cumberland. I shall deal with the

question of the conspiracy later, and the part played in it by the redoubtable Colonel William Blennerhasset Fairman, the Carson of those days. For the moment I wish to concentrate attention on the fact that, whatever hidden designs they may have entertained, Orangemen openly proclaimed, when they saw the imminence of drastic changes in the system of Parliamentary representation, their intention of making their Order a power in Great Britain as well as in Ulster formidable enough to break, by physical force if necessary, the strength of the Reform movement.

On this point the admissions of Fairman, who was elected Grand Treasurer and Grand Secretary for Great Britain in 1831, are conclusive. Shortly after his appointment, in a letter to Sir James Cockburn describing a Twelfth of July dinner in London, he writes: "My own fine fellows who compose the lodges in the capital and its environs, none of whom are Reformers, for upon this vital point I sounded them, are staunch to the backbone. Should it be required of them to muster for the protection of the lives or the property of those uncompromising men who may possess the spirit to brave hostility by an opposition to so monstrous a plan, at my summons they would assemble, and under my command they would place themselves for putting their principles to the test."

Amongst his "fine fellows" Fairman placed the soldiers first. "We have the military with us," he informed the Marquis of Londonderry in a letter written on 30th July, 1832. In another communication urging a more strenuous campaign amongst the troops, he states, "As Orangemen there would be an additional security for their allegiance and unalterable fidelity in times like the present, when revolutionary writers are striving to stir them up to open sedition

and mutiny." The boast was not so empty as some of the vaunts in which Fairman indulged. Orangeism had made rapid headway in the army into which it was first introduced during the '98 Rebellion, English and Scottish militia regiments adopting its tenets from the Ulster yeomen with whom they were brigaded. Orange yeomen and militia, who after the Insurrection volunteered for the regular army, helped to spread the new gospel amongst the forces of the Crown. Lodges were formed in many regiments, and in some cases Orange colours were openly worn on parade. Naturally Catholic soldiers did not take kindly to these displays, and in several camps the practice gave rise to fierce disputes and furious encounters. So high did the feeling run in the Chelmsford Garrison that the Brigadier, Colonel Cockburn, issued an order forbidding any soldiers under his command to wear a badge or mark of party, and directed officers to put under arrest those who displayed party emblems.

Apart from the necessity of preserving discipline, it was obvious that to favour Orangeism in the Army would hopelessly prejudice Irish recruiting at a time when Catholic soldiers were the backbone of the regular regiments. Yet the Chelmsford prohibition was the exception, not the rule; and Orangeism became more powerful than ever when his Royal Highness Frederick, Duke of York, was appointed Commander-in-Chief. He was not only an Orangeman, but was elected Grand Master of the Order in 1821, acknowledging the honour in a letter written from the Horse Guards. It is true he did not retain his exalted office long. The scandal of a Commander-in-Chief presiding over a secret society, whose operations divided his best regiments into hostile factions, was altogether too gross. Moreover, the Orange oath was at this time wholly illegal in England, and the Duke of York was consequently forced to resign his

Grand Mastership. But, according to the author of the *History of Orangeism*, he never severed his connection with the Order; almost his last public act, before his death in January, 1827, was to receive a deputation from the Grand Lodge of Great Britain which desired to thank him for his services in opposing Catholic Emancipation. Though the Duke of York ceased to be Grand Master, the position was not filled till after his death, when his brother, the Duke of Cumberland, succeeded to the office. This strengthens the suspicion that York's resignation was largely for show purposes; and there is no doubt at all that his influence was used, even after his nominal resignation, to spread Orangeism throughout the forces. Cumberland's appointment as Grand Master was followed by a decree remitting in the case of soldiers and sailors the Orange initiation fee; and the report of the Committee of the House of Commons, set up in 1835 to inquire into the Orange Institution in Great Britain and the Colonies, shows that in 1830 lodges existed in some thirty regiments or corps.

The best proof of the policy adopted by the Horse Guards while the Duke of York held sway is the complaint by Fairman that after his death every impediment was thrown in the way of military lodges. This, however, seems scarcely to tally with the facts, for, as the Report of the Commons Committee makes clear, the Duke of Cumberland was continually engaged as Grand Master in issuing new warrants for army lodges. Fairman, in recommending himself to the Duke of Cumberland, boasts of "the most satisfactory testimonials under the hand of the late lamented Commander-in-Chief," and of "the innumerable communications I had the honour of making to him during a series of years, on affairs of vital importance to the safety not alone of his august

family, but of the existence of the Empire, which I might be justified in affirming it was my peculiar good fortune to have been instrumental in rescuing from commotion in more instances than one."

This brings me to the question of Fairman's Plot over which controversy still rages fiercely between Orangemen and their opponents. To fight Catholic Emancipation a new organisation had been established in Great Britain and Ireland, called the Brunswick Constitutional Clubs. Orangeism at that time was under a cloud in both countries, and it was felt that an association free from the stigma of a secret society would make a wider appeal to good Protestants. The object of the Brunswickers, as they were known, was to oppose further concessions to Catholics, or, as one of their members put it, "the evil is the existence of Papist ascendancy; and the only remedy, therefore, must be to secure Protestant ascendancy." Their critics, however, attributed to the Brunswickers even more ambitious designs; and Daniel O'Connell, who had a pleasant habit of alluding to the Brunswick Clubs as "bloodhound kennels," expressed openly in a speech in the autumn of 1828 a suspicion which was widely held in Nationalist Ireland.

"I will now state to you," O'Connell said, "the cause of the origin of the Brunswick Clubs in England and Ireland. The health of his Majesty (George IV.) is much worse than we are allowed to hear. At his time of life, if it be true, as I fear it is, that a fixed dropsy has set in, there is real cause of apprehension for the consequences. The next heir to the throne (William IV.) is certainly a popular character; he also is said to be ill. Now his successor is the Princess Victoria; she is as excellently educated as can be possibly desired; her illustrious mother is in every respect one of the most

estimable of her sex; the breath of calumny has never even dared to attempt to tarnish the character of the Duchess of Kent. The daughter of this excellent lady should be our legitimate Sovereign; but there are those who would like to govern without a Parliament—that faction which is tired of having a Parliament—who are tired of climbing up the ladder of preferment upon the mere strength of their own merits. These know that the Catholics have again become wealthy, and that if a change be made in the dynasty they will come in for more than a proper share of power; and so, to bring about this, they are determined either to alter the succession or compel the Princess to marry her cousin, Prince George of Cumberland."

William the Fourth succeeded to the Throne without any attempt on the part of the Orangemen to effect a *coup d'état*. In the confusion of the Reform agitation the old rumours, however, were again revived, though legally, I admit, the evidence is not convincing that Fairman and his colleagues seriously invited the lodges to enter into a conspiracy to change the line of succession to the British Crown in favour of their own Grand Master, the Duke of Cumberland. Fairman is supposed to have made his proposal in 1832, but the charge of treason was not launched against him until after the publication in 1835 of the Report of the Select Committee, which condemned the Orange Society root and branch. The accuser, a man named Haywood, had kept the secret locked in his breast for three years, during which he remained a member of the Order, and it was only after he had been expelled from his lodge on other grounds that he hurled his bombshell at the Orange leaders. Fairman immediately replied by filing an information against Haywood for criminal libel, a step which Joseph Hume and the English Radicals sought to counter by

demanding the prosecution of the Duke of Cumberland, Lord Kenyon, the Bishop of Salisbury, and Fairman as members of an illegal organisation. Before any action could be taken in the courts Haywood died, with the result that the cases were never heard. In the next session of Parliament, however, the King, in reply to a resolution of the Commons, announced his determination "to take such steps as may seem to me advisable for the effectual discouragement of Orange lodges, and, generally, of all political societies excluding persons of a different religious faith." On this declaration Cumberland resigned his Grand Mastership, and the Orange Society of Great Britain dissolved, though it was re-established with new "laws and ordinances" some ten years later.

It would be unjust to take party speeches in the Commons as evidence of Fairman's intentions, but the correspondence between himself and the Orange leaders on the question of the re-organisation of the Order in Great Britain, which Hume managed to secure and publish in the *London Post*, reveals a good deal about the man and his mission. Fairman's appointment in 1831 as Grand Secretary and Grand Treasurer for Great Britain took place at an exceedingly critical juncture in Orange history. Catholic Emancipation was a staggering blow to the Society, whose members were wholly of Lord Eldon's opinion that "if ever a Roman Catholic was permitted to form part of the legislature of this country, from that moment the sun of Great Britain would set." They were confirmed in their belief when hard on the heels of the Relief Act came the threat of Parliamentary Reform, which Orangemen regarded in much the same light as a modern Tory would an attempt to substitute government by Soviets for government by Parliament. Nor was this the view of Orange-

men alone. It was shared by a great body of Conservatives who had taken no active part in the last phases of the struggle to prevent Catholic Emancipation, which they recognised must inevitably come, but who saw a deadly menace to their own privileges not only in Reform, but in the reign of "Jacobinical license" which, they had persuaded themselves, would follow Reform.

Fairman's main objects are plainly enough defined in his correspondence. He desired to strengthen the Order by recruiting "men of influence and consideration" to act as County Grand Masters, and give a lead to "the classes in humble life" who, with a little judicious encouragement, would flock into the lodges. As Fairman acutely pointed out, the "higher orders" stood to benefit economically as well as politically by backing Orangeism. In the Luddite disturbances the Orangemen of Manchester and neighbourhood had shown themselves eager to act against the strikers; and it was popularly believed, though the charge has been denied, that the Yeomanry who perpetrated the Peterloo massacre were members of the Society. In urging the Marquis of Londonderry to join the movement, Fairman tells him that the Durham miners might be induced by his example to establish lodges amongst themselves, which "would likewise prove," he adds, "a partial check against their entering into cabals hereafter, no less to the preservation of private property than to that of the public peace."

To the same correspondent Fairman outlined his campaign in words that sum up the policy which, eighty years later, another Marquis of Londonderry expounded on Carsonite platforms:—"By a rapid augmentation of our physical force we might be able to assume a boldness of attitude which should command the respect of our Jacobinical rulers. What

the Catholics and the (trade) unionists have achieved by agitation and clamour in a factious cause, we might be enabled to effect in a righteous one. If we prove not too strong for such a Government as the present is, such a Government will soon prove too strong for us ; some arbitrary step would be taken in this case for the suspension of our meetings. Hence the necessity of our laying aside that non-resistance, that passive obedience, which has hitherto been religiously enforced to our own discomfiture."

With the approval, and by the warrant, of his "valued brother, Cumberland," Fairman was dispatched, at the expense of the Grand Lodge, to preach these doctrines in Scotland and the North Country where Orangeism was strongest. On military matters connected with the Institution he reported directly to the Duke of Cumberland. The nature of these reports remains unknown, but Lord Kenyon's replies to the chronicles of the missionary make curious reading. Thus almost the best that can be said of Scotland is that "Swaney takes some time to be well roused, but when he imbibes the heat of Orangeism he will not lose it again." In Lord Kenyon's opinion it was splendid that the Duke of Gordon should have joined the standard, but "a great pity that the amiable Duke of Buccleugh does not see the immense importance of sanctioning such a cause as the Orange cause, identified as it is with high Conservative principles."

Fairman, whose duties ranged from presiding at lodge dinners to distributing "anti-Roman Catholic books" to peers and bishops, complains that he is kept out of bed "till two in the morning, labouring to get my business under, which in spite of all my industry still gains upon me." At Barnsley, where he established a lodge, he declares that all the ladies, "the blue belles of Yorkshire," are with us ; and

relating how these "noble dames" shed tears when His Royal Highness's health was proposed at a dinner party, he adds, "by excess of toil my own nerves are so unstrung too, that in making to your Lordship this report, I am playing the woman." But Fairman boasts the strong hand as well as the tender heart; and has no hesitation in urging the suspension or, if necessary, the expulsion from the Order of "some disorderly men in or near Bolton who have shown something like a radical spirit." Fairman's "excess of toil," however, achieved little or nothing. As he found the lodges, in his own phrase, "trunks without heads," so he left them. At the conclusion of his tour Lord Keynon is discovered mournfully admitting that "certainly if the whole body were rotten it had better be dissolved and renewed; but that could only, perhaps, be after communication with the sound heads or sound members of the different lodges." The Deputy Grand Master requests the Grand Secretary "to send me the *ipsissima verba* which you wish to introduce to prevent disloyalty among our brethren"; and characteristically concludes, "be so good as to send it under weight, as to-day's letter has cost me three shillings and eight pence."

It is a tame and distressing end to a crusade begun with so loud a flourish of trumpets. I do not know what arguments Fairman used in the hope of firing enthusiasm, but, judging by the hectic tone of his letters, his advocacy was not likely to err on the side of moderation. It is quite possible that he exceeded the instructions of his employers, more especially as he prided himself on the possession of "an apocalyptical gift, an intuitive light" denied to lesser mortals. Haywood's charge does not appear as fantastic as Orange apologists would have us believe, when it is discovered that Fairman first introduced himself to the Duke of Cumberland as one who had

unearthed, not invented, a plot to change the succession to the Crown. His letter to Cumberland is incomplete, but the "rash design in embryo," of which ominous hints are given, refers undoubtedly to the scheme, detailed in a private communication to John Sidney Taylor of the *Morning Herald*, which aimed, so Fairman asserts, at establishing on the death of George IV. a regency with the Duke of Wellington as dictator. "Some whisperings," Fairman writes, "have also gone abroad that in the event of the demise of the Crown a regency would probably be established, for reasons which occasioned the removal of the next in succession from the office of high admiral. That a Maritime Government might not prove consonant to the views of a military chieftain of the most abounded ambition may admit of easy belief; and as the second heir-presumptive is not alone a female but a minor, in addition to the argument, which might be applied to the present, that in the ordinary course of nature it was not to be expected that his reign could be of long duration, in these disjointed times it is by no means unlikely a vicarious form of government may be attempted. It would only be necessary to make out a plausible case, which from the facts on record there could be no difficulty in doing, to the satisfaction of a pliable and obsequious set of ministers as also to the success of the experiment."

Fairman "obtests the Deity" that his object in informing Cumberland of the scheme is that "should the experiment be made, and its expediency be established, your Royal Highness would be in a situation to contend for the exercise in your own person of that office at which the wild ambition of another may prompt him to aspire." This points, not to usurpation, but to the establishment of a Protectorate; and there can be little doubt that the

desirability of placing power in Cumberland's hands, should the Princess Victoria be called to the throne before she had reached her majority, was, to Fairman's mind, increased rather than diminished by the passing of the Reform Act. It is clear also that, unlike his superiors, he saw Parliamentary agitation offered no prospects of success. They were always hoping against hope that the electors would rise in their wrath against "Radicalism"; Fairman frankly held the view that the right policy was not to influence Parliament, but to dominate it. "With a Government," he declared, "that yields to clamour what it would deny to justice we ought to be vociferous in proportion." Again, writing to the Duke of Gordon, the Orange leader in Scotland, Fairman argues: "If we are to be considered as the auxiliary force of a constitutional Government we ought to be in a state of efficiency for such a purpose; if we are to be arrayed in hostility to a Republican Ministry, we ought to be in a condition to check their subversive courses."

It is probable enough that if Fairman pressed these counsels on his leaders his exhortations to the rank and file were even more vehement and unrestrained. In the privacy of lodge meetings he may easily have uttered sentiments that smacked of "contingent treason," more especially as such sentiments have always been the merest commonplaces of Orange oratory. After all, Fairman, so far as I know, never said anything as strong as the warlike parson, Mr. Flanagan, who declared in 1868, that if the Irish Church was disestablished, Queen Victoria, having broken her coronation oath, would have forfeited her claim to the Crown; nor did he rise to the sublime heights of Sir Edward Carson and his lieutenants.

How far Fairman's instructions permitted him to preach sedition, and whether he exceeded these instructions, are questions that are unlikely ever to be

answered. But a curious letter, which concludes the correspondence published by Hume, suggests that the Grand Secretary believed his employers had gone so far as to place themselves in his power. Writing to a friend, whose name is indicated only by the initials "D.... C....," Fairman says: "By returning the Palladiums with a small packet of letters from kings and princes I left for your perusal, you will oblige me very much. As circumstances will at length compel me to seek a compensation from royalty for my services and surrenders in their service, should not an appeal to their justice, made confidentially and respectfully in the first instance, be productive of the desired end, I shall enforce my claims through the medium of the Press, both in pamphlets and papers, when a dread of exposure may prompt them to do that which ought to have emanated from a sense of gratitude." Whether Fairman actually blackmailed the Cumberlands and Kenyons remains a mystery, but his refusal to produce documents demanded by the Select Committee, even when summoned for contumacy to the bar of the House, strengthens the suspicion that he had extorted good terms for himself from the heads of the Order.

CHAPTER X.

THE PROTESTANT BOYS.

I HAVE dwelt on the Fairman Plot at what may seem undue length, because the exaggerations and denials of controversialists on both sides have obscured the essential facts, and also because of the curious parallel it offers to events in Sir Edward Carson's campaign. If Fairman whispered secretly in lodge meetings that William IV. ought to be deposed for having signed the Reform Bill, Orange orators openly declared that the passing of the Home Rule Bill would absolve them from their allegiance. "Platform treason," as T. M. Kettle said, "is not so much an eccentricity as a habit of Orangeism." But it is worthy of notice that while this "platform treason" may flatter the prejudices of the rank and file, it is always designed to serve the economic interests of their leaders. This is as true to-day as it was seventy years ago, when John Mitchel warned the Ulster Orangemen that freedom to denounce the Pope and all his works was a poor substitute for the loss of tenant right.

"The Irish nobleman and the British statesman,' Mitchel urged, "want the very same thing: they are both a tail. The grand master knows that if you stick by your loyalty and uphold the British connection you secure to him his coronet, his influence, and his rental—discharged of tenant right and all plebian claims. . . . Irish landlordism has made a covenant with British government in these terms—Keep down for me my tenantry, my peasantry, my 'masses' in due submission with your troops and laws, and I will garrison the island for you and hold it as your liege-man and

vassal for ever ! " The industrial capitalist who has stepped into the landlord's shoes makes practically the same claim to-day. To the *Times*, and to the party whose ideals Lord Northcliffe expresses, the value of Sir Edward Carson's crusade was that it strengthened " the conservatism of Ulster." " By disciplining the Ulster democracy and by leading it to look up to them as its natural leaders, the clergy and gentry," so the *Times* asserted on 9th May, 1913, " are providing against the spread of revolutionary doctrine and free thought."

The lesson, it would seem, has been well learned. In a pamphlet consisting of articles reprinted in 1917 from the *Morning Post*, we are informed, " there is at least one place in the Kingdom where, although there is much noise, there is no talking and, in consequence, no strikes—that place is Ulster. ' Have you had any visits from the Red Flaggers here ? ' I inquired of a stolid-faced riveter in the Belfast shipyards. An emphatic nod was the answer. ' What did you do to them ? ' I asked. The reply was a flash of steely, work-tired eyes and a downward jerk of a thumb in the direction of an exceedingly uninviting pool of oily water. . . . The Ulster folk have learnt by bitter experience to discriminate between loyalty and treachery, and if they had the reins of government in their hands half the cranks and pacifists would long ago have been hanged as high as Haman."

The writer states rather what he imagines ought to be the case than actual facts. During the war not one strike but many took place in the Belfast shipyards, though I readily admit in practically every case these were due more to Government bungling, especially in regard to the payment of the Hills bonus, than to the tyranny of the masters or the greed of the men. In the linen trade friction was still more acute. The refusal of a demand by the tenters for an advance

resulted in throwing thousands of weavers out of work for weeks. So far from showing any desire to end the trouble the employers declined to recognise the Government arbitrator or plead their case before him. The *Morning Post* correspondent hails Ulster as a Tory Utopia, where "a common religion, a common cause—Imperialism—common interests and aspirations, all of these when imperilled brought about a close psychological communion between rich and poor, between employers and employees." It is an attractive picture, but the colours, I fear, would have lost some of their brightness had the author sought his facts in artisans' kitchens as well as in manufacturers' offices.*

Orangemen can still crow loudly enough on their own dunghill, but that nowadays is almost the only consolation left to them. Their opponents, indeed, represent them as a pampered and privileged class, which, as the price of acting as "England's faithful garrison," has been, and still is, loaded with rewards and favours. As far as the rank and file of the Order are concerned this, in modern times at least, is ridiculously untrue, and I have always held that Nationalists by continuing to make it their staple argument wilfully deprive themselves of their strongest controversial

* The great engineers' strike of January and February last threw a curious light on "the close psychological communion between employers and employees" which, according to the *Morning Post*, distinguishes happy Belfast from all other industrial areas in the Three Kingdoms. Alas! for the binding force of a common Imperialism and a common religion. Imperialistic employers, who made the heavens ring with their protests against a "pogrom plot" when the military were ordered to Belfast at the climax of the Carson conspiracy, clamoured now for machine guns to cow their Orange and Protestant workers, whose demand for a forty-four hours week had transformed them, in their masters' eyes, from pillars of the constitution into ravening Bolsheviks.

weapon. The Orangeman may be a traitor to the national cause—though this is highly disputable, inasmuch as he vehemently repudiates the theory of an obligation—but, even assuming he is, he has failed wholly to obtain his thirty pieces of silver. And since he professes to judge the merits of a political creed purely by its practical results, it is relevant to insist that it is truer of him than of the despised Celt that "he went forth to battle but he always fell."

His services in '98 were rewarded not with the maintenance of Protestant Ascendancy for which he fought, but with the Union, which, he was quick to see, meant sooner or later the destruction of his ascendancy. Castlereagh's proposals were bitterly opposed by thousands of Orangemen, and the controversies to which they gave rise nearly wrecked the Institution. The Grand Lodge sought to lay an embargo on free discussion inside the Order; but its members were roundly informed that they were "placed, pensioned, and bought," and Orangemen were urged to submit no longer "to the directors of a lodge which is principally composed of persons who are under a certain influence, which is exerted against the rights of Ireland." Having bought Parliament by open bribes, and squared the Presbyterian Church by increasing the *Regium Donum*, Castlereagh found it a comparatively simple affair to close the mouths of the Orange leaders. With a few honourable exceptions they obtained their price; and the rank and file were left to find what comfort they could in the reflection that, as the brethren of Coagh district put it, "We are not now the divided, rebellious people which recently disgraced this island, as we perceive and acknowledge the necessity of a compacted Union, in order to promote our mutual prosperity."

The Union was for Orangeism merely the first of a long series of "betrayals." Catholic Emancipation,

Disestablishment, Land Reform, and Home Rule—all the great movements of the century, which have been to the Nationalist stepping-stones towards his goal, are to the Orangeman shattering and irretrievable defeats. He resisted one and all in the name of England, and with the promise of English support, only to find himself left hopelessly in the lurch. Yet the lodges, with a devotion that would be pathetic had it the merit of being intelligent, are still ready to volunteer for every Tory forlorn hope, buoying themselves with the idea that some day England will see the error of her ways, and, flinging off the rags and tatters of an effete Liberalism, will revert to the full-blooded methods of Castlereagh and Eldon. If one could imagine an American Party which cherished the dream of upsetting the Declaration of Independence, and all that hinges upon it, one would get something like an approximation to the Orange view. It is these incorrigible Don Quixotes of politics who taunt Irish Nationalists with being mere dreamers of dreams. Tilting at windmills, and charging innocent sheep in mistake for Paynim hordes, the campaigns in which they spend themselves so zestfully are memorable only for their grotesque futility.

Nothing would be easier than to present a picture which should show the Orangemen as relentless persecutors before whom Nationalists cower in abject fear. Apart from the fact that such a picture, far from bringing a blush to the cheek of the "Brethren," flatters their sense of power, it represents a state of affairs which, in modern times, has no foundation in fact. Elections are still stirring events in Ulster; but they are no longer conducted as they were in Trim in 1834, when two hundred Orangemen armed with pistols and daggers, and led by a clergyman named Preston, marched into the town, and were informed by the Tory candidate, "our reliance is on

you." The sheriff himself had to wrest a pistol from one of the Brethren in the polling booth; and on their homeward march they killed a Catholic named Henry apparently for the fun of the thing. Again at Annahagh, in the following year, a party of Orangemen armed to the teeth burned in broad daylight seven Catholic houses in the village, and "wrecked and devastated" nine others. On the approach of a force of police and artillery they took up a position on a neighbouring hill with fixed bayonets, declined to surrender their weapons or disperse, and finally marched off with all the honours of war "in regular order with sloped arms." Not a single offender was punished for this outrage, and had any been arrested they would have had little reason to fear the result. Two Orangemen who had stabbed a Catholic youth at Tanderagee in 1835 were acquitted on the charge of murder, and sentenced to twelve months inprisonment for riot and assault. On their release they were escorted to their homes by a procession of Orangemen with bands and colours. One hero was promptly received into the police on the recommendation of a Protestant clergyman, and the other enrolled as a member of a yeomanry corps.

There was little exaggeration in Sheil's description of the administration of the law at this period. "Picture to yourself," he said, "an Irish court of Justice. An Orangeman is indicted; in the jury-box twelve Orangemen are placed; the magistrates, if the case be tried at Quarter Sessions, are members of this fatal fraternity. Under these circumstances, what a mockery is the administration of justice!"

Judge Fletcher, in a famous charge to the Wexford Grand Jury in 1814, speaking as one "attached to no party," stated the case quite as strongly as Sheil. "These societies, called Orange Societies," he said, "have produced most mischievous effects, and par-

ticularly in the North of Ireland. They poison the very fountains of justice, and even some magistrates under their influence have, in too many cases, violated their duty and their oaths. . . . Of this I am certain, that, so long as those associations are permitted to act in the lawless manner they do, there will be no tranquillity in this country, and particularly in the North of Ireland. There those disturbers of the public peace, who assume the name of Orange Yeomen, frequent the fairs and markets with arms in their hands, under the pretence of self-defence, or of protecting the public peace, but with the lurking view of inviting attacks from the Ribbonmen, confident that, armed as they are, they must overcome defenceless opponents, and put them down. . . . The oaths of the Orange Association or of the Ribbonmen have, indeed, continued to be obligatory. As for oaths administered in a court of justice, they have been set at naught. . . . 'I am a loyal man,' says a witness; that is, 'Gentlemen of the Jury, believe me, let me swear what I will.' When he swears he is a loyal man he means, 'Gentlemen of the Jury, forget your oaths and acquit the Orangemen.' . . . Such are the pretenders to loyalty, many of whom I have seen; and incalculable mischiefs they perpetrate. It is not their interest that their country should be peaceful; their loyalty is a 'sea of troubled waters.' "

The official Orange answer to this indictment is that it was "a vile calumny, a disgrace to the ermine," uttered by a Judge who had the temerity to differ from Lord Norbury on the question of Catholic Emancipation. The "Orange Yeomen," the historian of the Order declares, "had practically disappeared when Judge Fletcher referred to them." With delightful *naïveté* the author fails to see that his own explanation of their disappearance goes a long way to support the charges he is endeavouring to refute.

Ireland, he laments, was deprived of the services of manly Protestants because they were courageous enough to stick to their principles. The yeomen of Armagh and Bandon laid down their arms rather than obey the order to parade without Orange favours on their uniforms; and when a yeomanry corps in County Down refused to admit Catholics to the ranks, and was disbanded by the authorities, Mr. Sibbett's comment is "experience had taught the men that a mixture was impracticable."

This view admirably illustrates the central doctrine of Orangeism. It is the duty of Nationalists to obey the law simply because it is the law; Unionists, on the other hand, must be satisfied that the law squares with their prejudices, and if it fails to do this, its decrees have no binding force upon them. Of late years the burden of their cry has been that legislation is directed wholly against their interests. This they attribute to the Machiavellian wiles of the Nationalists, completely ignoring the fact that those who imagine that Parliaments should move along eighteenth century lines in a twentieth century world are dooming themselves to bitter disappointment. A century ago the Orangeman threatened in the tone of one who was accustomed to extort submission; nowadays he still threatens, but moans mingle strangely with his menaces. No Nationalist can surpass him in denunciations of British bad faith. "Nothing," Sir Edward Carson declared, "has done more harm in Ireland than the broken pledges of British Governments;" and one of the Belfast Orange papers, in endorsing its leader's words, announced that Ulster Unionists had long grown weary of "being bought, sold, and haggled over by English Ministers like cattle at a fair."

The obvious thing under the circumstances would seem to be for Orangemen to work out their own salvation, independently of such treacherous allies.

This solution, though it might not be distasteful to the rank and file, finds scant favour with the leaders, for the simple reason that nine times out of ten they are English Tories first and Ulster Orangemen a long way after. In his own view the incarnation of Tennyson's "still strong man in a blatant land," the Orangeman, to the rest of the world, presents a spectacle which is pathetic rather than impressive. He may, as his opponents declare, stand for Junkerdom, but it is Junkerdom no longer a ravening beast, but mangy and toothless, with claws pared to the quick, and little of the lion left save the power to roar. Penned behind the waters of the Boyne and the Foyle, he surveys with melancholy eyes a world in which even those whom he was accustomed to regard as allies have adopted as their creed the worst heresies of his secular foes. "Government by the consent of the governed" is a phrase more favoured than the "rights of the ruling race." Except in the columns of the Belfast Press and the *Morning Post*, the Imperialistic big-drum, however vigorously it may be banged, has no chance against the war-cry of "self-determination" raised by "the lesser breeds without the law," who, a few short years ago, were supposed to deserve, and indeed to desire, no better fate than that of meekly submitting to the control of peoples strong enough to hold their own in a world where there was no appeal from the rule of force.

Orangeism, though it made a stout fight, as its worst enemies must admit, was from the first a forlorn hope. It was born at least a century too late. By 1795, when the Order as we know it to-day took shape, doctrines that had been the axioms of the Whig Revolution of 1690 already wore the air of grotesque anachronisms. In that year the French Revolution, to quote Dr. Holland Rose, "passing out of the molten state, began to solidify"; and Orangeism,

which was at once a protest against and a challenge to "the levelling principles of Jacobinism," was doomed before long to find itself in the position of the earthen pan in collision with the brazen vessels.

In the twentieth century an attempt to claim privilege on the ground of religion is less a danger to the State than an outrage on common sense, as the most thorough-going champions of the Brethren are slowly coming to realize. Democracy, so long their pet abomination, has come to its own in name, if not altogether in reality ; and Orangemen, to whom the creed of equality and fraternity as between Protestant and Catholic was rank blasphemy, now, amusingly enough, claim to be guardians and defenders of the democratic tradition. It is true they interpret this as meaning that a Protestant minority, however small, must rank as equal to a Catholic majority, however large, though, when the case is reversed, their opponents are bound to accept in all its rigour the principle of deciding policy by counting heads. If the advance is not very great it serves to show that, despite the denials of most of its supporters and practically all its critics, Orangeism is not absolutely impervious to the pressure of modern ideas.

I know it will be argued that where Orangeism is concerned one is dealing not with political prejudices which may be softened by reason, but with religious antagonisms against which logic is of no avail. There is an element of truth in this contention, but, personally, I must confess I am wholly sceptical as to the reality of the religious convictions which are popularly supposed to inspire the most characteristic manifestations of Orangeism. While it would be criminal to minimise the deplorable results of sectarian bigotry in Ulster, it is quite possible to exaggerate their significance. Awed by his official reputation for "dourness" and stark sincerity, strangers are accus-

tomed to take the threats of Orangemen much more seriously than those against whom they are directed. Well-meaning sentimentalists from the other side of the Channel, who, greatly daring, have spent a few hours in the back lanes of the Shankill Road, describe with shuddering horror a community inflamed by a blood-feud and sighing for pogroms in the name of religion. But the Orangeman, like the Fat Boy in *Pickwick*, delights in making people's flesh creep; and his grievance is that while he can still impress outsiders his real opponents are nowadays inclined rather to smile than to shiver.

As a matter of fact the worst form of Ulster bigotry is not that of the mobs of stone-throwers and looters who on anniversaries sacred to the victor of the Boyne make history of a sort in the North of Ireland. Their fury, if fierce, soons burns itself out; and a week after an upheaval that filled the Belfast hospitals with broken heads, I have seen men who were foremost in the fray on different sides drinking together in all good comradeship. The really hateful thing is the attitude of the middle classes and the so-called leaders of opinion, clerical as well as lay. Too respectable or too cowardly—it comes to much the same thing—to work off their bad blood in a fair fight with fists or stones, they are not ashamed to use the platform, the Press, and even the pulpit, to deepen rancours, which, had they cared to employ their powers to better ends, would long since have been no more than an unhappy memory. On its record there is no difficulty in obtaining a conviction against Orangeism, but there is small satisfaction in placing it in the dock if those who made it their instrument are permitted, as always in the past, to go scot free.

As a matter of fact the average Orangeman is simple rather than satanic. Even in his lodge-rooms he is not

always meditating the iniquities of the Vatican; and he values his creed for other reasons than the lusty vigour of its hymns of hate. With other primitive minds he delights in mysteries for mysteries' sake, and Orange ritual makes exactly the sort of appeal that he finds irresistible. Its passwords and handgrips, its symbolism of Jacob's Ladders and skulls and crossbones, its weird nomenclature of "Purple Men" and "Black Men," "Grand Masters" and "Worshipful Masters" thrill him by their suggestion of romance, while at the same time they increase enormously his sense of his own importance. I have no knowledge of the inner mysteries of modern Orangeism, though I understand they are a debased variant of Freemasonry; but in the evidence of the Rev. Holt Waring before the House of Lords Committee in 1825 there is an interesting description of the original signs and passwords.

This clergyman, who had joined the Orange Society in 1798, stated that the scheme and system first instituted was based on the flight of the Children of Israel from Egypt. "In order that they should know each other for their future protection," he told the Committee, "they instituted a sort of catechism, question and answer, signs for use when they met. The first was a question—'Whence came you?' 'From the House of Bondage.' 'Whither do you go?' 'To the Promised Land.' 'How do you expect to get there?' 'By the benefit of a password.' 'Have you that password?' 'I have.' 'Will you give it to me?' 'I will divide it with a brother.' The password was M-i-g-i-d-o-l, being the name of a town at which the Israelites first encamped. . . . There was always a secret sign or password, a sort of countersign. In that the words were 'The great I AM had sent me unto you.'"

It is curious to contrast this with a supposed

Whiteboy catechism of the same date, which the *History of Orangeism* sternly denounces as gibberish covering deep revolutionary designs—"What are you?" "I am a man." "How can you prove yourself to be a man?" "By being born a true member of the Church of Christ, which is the greatest River you ever met with." "Were you baptised?" "Yes." "What name did you get?" "Truth and Liberty." "How long are you from the centre of Ireland?" "It lies in the centre of my heart." "Have you any proof of that?" "Yes, God prosper the true United Boys." "What are you up to?" "To the rights of my country." "Who keeps your rights from you?" "My former brothers." "What arms of protection do you carry?" "I carry the Cross as a gift from God under my heart." "What is your age?" "My age is my name, and my name is my number." "What is your number?" "B." "What is your countersign?" "*Eliphantis notes elisen Montigua.*" "What is that in English?" "Death to a Traitor or a Traitor to Death." "Where do you keep your secrets?" "In a bone box in my left side." "How high are you?" "Three steps from Paradise." "You are going on one side of your shoes?" "It is no matter to you whether I stand upright." "Do you stand so?" "No." "Why so?" "There is a heavy yoke over us since the battle of the Boyne."

Most people, I imagine, will say without the slightest hesitation that instead of being characteristic of races alien in blood, religion, and tradition, the documents reflect exactly the same type of mind, though of the two the Whiteboy catechism alone shows a touch of poetic imagination.

Orangeism, powerfully as it has affected the Ulster mind, so far makes but a poor show in literature. It can claim a few vigorous ballads, such as "The

Maiden City" and "Oliver's Advice," which Gavan Duffy thought sufficiently good to be included in his anthology, *The Spirit of the Nation*. In the main, however, Orange verses, as printed in orthodox song-books, make little appeal to the imagination. They are written either in diluted Macaulayese or in the stilted style of the eighteenth century, of which this quatrain is a good example :—

> "To Nassau's lov'd shade in Elysium of late
> Some sons of Ierne were heard to complain;
> Now virtue is driven from her favourite seat,
> And loyalty groans on the blood-sprinkled plain."

But side by side with these a folk-tradition has grown up which gives more interesting results. Just as General Booth did not see why the devil should have all the good tunes, so the Unionists didn't believe in the Nationalists having all the good songs, and Orange rhymers adopted the methods of their political opponents to their own ends. Many of these efforts have been handed down orally, others circulate in penny broadsheets, which are still in great demand in Ulster. Some years ago no Orange demonstration was complete without a ballad-singer, whose melodies were usually more to the liking of the crowd than the speeches of the orators. Nowadays the ballad-singer is not seen as often as he used to be; but a Belfast printer continues to issue these sheets wholesale, and apparently finds them a good investment. Their "grey paper and blunt type" recall the French novel of Browning's Spanish monk; and in the true broad-side fashion each song has its headpiece, the most popular being a cut representing King William on his white horse.

It might have been expected that Ulster Scots, as their leaders love to call them, would have gone to the

Border Ballads for literary inspiration. There are, it is true, a few pieces obviously modelled on Burns, such as " Rise ! ye sons of William," an adaptation of " Scots wha hae," and this jolly variant of " Green grow the rushes, O ! "—

" And did you go to see the show, each rose and
    pink-a-dilly, O !
To feast your eyes and view the prize won by the
    Orange Lily, O !

> Heigh ho, the Lily, O !
> The royal, loyal Lily, O !
>   Beneath the sky
>   What power can vie
> With Erin's Orange Lily, O !"

But the curious thing is that the majority of the writers follow—unconsciously, one imagines—a debased Gaelic tradition. Take, for instance, " David Brown's Farewell to Kilmood Lodge, 541," supposed to be written by an Orange emigrant, my copy of which has as headpiece a three-masted paddle-wheel steamer. I am pretty certain the author knew no Irish, yet his rhymes are a clumsy reflection of the assonances characteristic of Gaelic verse. One stanza will serve as an illustration, and it is interesting also for its list of popular Orange airs :—

" Our master there he fills the Chair, his rules and
    laws we will obey,
As our flags we hoist, the ' Protestant Boys ' is the
    favoured tune we still do play ;
' The Highland Lad,' ' Tartan Plaid,' ' Kick the Pope,'
    and ' Who's Afraid ? '
' The Orange and Blue,' ' Boyne Water ' too, and that
    favourite tune called ' Lisnagade.' "

What is described as "the old and popular ballad entitled 'Annie Moore'" is in a more florid style. It is a lament for "a proper, tall young girl," killed in a Belfast riot on "the 12th day of July in the year of '45." As the song puts it :—

"A ball it entered in her breast and pierced her body through ;
She gently fell and waved her hand, she could not bid adieu,
As I held her milk-white hand in mine, my breast being filled with woe,
To see those lips I oftimes kissed now whiter than the snow.

Annie Moore was my love's name, of credit and renown,
She was the flower of this country and the rose of Belfast town.
The Protestant cause she dearly loved—William's sons she did adore,
And round her neck, even to the last, she an Orange ribbon wore."

Of all the laments the quaintest is "The Murder of M'Briars." I have met sceptics—not Ulster folk—who argued the piece must be a parody, but it is really a genuine expression of Orange emotion. After a characteristic invocation—"Come all ye sons of William, whose principles are pure" ("Come all ye"—the singer's opening to gather an audience—is now a descriptive label for Irish street ballads)—we are given in the right heroic style a picture of the tragic hero :—

"He was a master of our band, of honour and great fame,
He was master of an Orange Lodge, M'Briars was his name ;

By Popish schemes he has been brought to an untimely grave,
When no kind Protestant was near his precious life to save.

The whiskey it was in his head, no harm was in his mind.
He happened for to tell too loud what way his heart inclined ;
And for the same three villains swore, and kept their promise good,
To wash their hands before they'd sleep that night in Orange blood."

But " Orange blood," as another verse shows, has peculiarities all its own :—

" The rain that night in torrents fell, but oh ! it fell in vain,
For the blood of that poor innocent next morning did remain.
It was not black like rebel blood, it was both clear and bright,
Which showed M'Briars did belong unto the Cause that's right."

There is no half-heartedness in driving home the moral :—

" Now to conclude and finish, I'll end as I begun—
Be on your guard both day and night, and murdering Papists shun ;
They never would consent for to meet us man to man,
But as they served M'Briars they would serve each Orangeman."

That is quite an ordinary conclusion, though sometimes, as in " Dolly's Brae," the benighted Catholic is given a chance :—

" Come all ye blind-led Papists, wherever that ye be !
Never bow down to priest or pope, for them God will
disown ;
Never bow down to images, or God you'll not adore,
Come join our Orange heroes and cry ' Dolly's Brae
no more.' "

The necessities of rhyme have rather muddled the sense, but it is clear enough what the author is aiming at, and one has little doubt he stood astonished at his own magnanimity.

The best that can be said of these ballads is that the newest of them is at least seventy years old, and though the younger generation of Orangemen sings them, it does not take them as seriously as its predecessors. It is curious that while Sir Edward Carson's Ulster Campaign failed to produce a single verse that struck the popular imagination, every Dublin urchin to-day is singing " Easter Week " and " The Soldier's Song."

END OF PART III.

IV.—The Carson Movement.

CHAPTER XI.

A COVENANT AGAINST DEMOCRACY.

I HAVE no intention of describing in detail the rise and progress of the Carson movement in Ulster. Such an enterprise would demand not a chapter but a volume, and a volume in which it would be necessary to trace at length the ramifications of English policy in Ireland, not merely from the introduction of the third Home Rule Bill, but from the passing of the Act of Union. The main outlines of the campaign are sufficiently well known to render superfluous an elaborate analysis of the successive steps by which a peaceful province, long before the war-cloud blackened the European sky, transformed itself into a gigantic armed camp.

Unlike other rebels against authority, the Ulster leaders did not hide their light under a bushel ; the fountain pens of the special correspondents were in their eyes an asset as valuable as the bayonets of the Ulster Volunteers. In the spring of 1914 a more formidable corps of picked journalists had concentrated in Belfast than took the field with the belligerent armies a few months later. Lord Northcliffe led in person a cohort of ready-writers, and with a Napoleonic instinct for providing against all contingencies sent his yacht into Ulster waters so that she might be available for carrying despatches in case the cables were cut. One met at the Unionist

Headquarters Germans insatiable for information about the military training of Ulster's army, Frenchmen floundering hopelessly in the morasses of Ulster theological controversies, Americans revelling in a real old-world " stunt " which appeared to them to be as remote from twentieth century concerns as the Wars of the Roses. To me the most appealing figure was a Ukrainian enthusiast who had been induced to leave the British Museum, where he was gathering details for a treatise on the oppressed races of Europe, to investigate Ulster for himself. His introductions were all to Nationalists and Radicals, and for days he went about pathetically complaining that he could find no Unionists in Belfast.

From the newspaper point of view, however, there was no stint of good copy, and the journalists made the most of their chances. War and the preparations for war were at the time still happily a novelty ; and tens of thousands of men, destined to die in battles as compared with which the worst that could have happened in Ulster would have been, in the military phrase, no more than " a certain liveliness," thrilled each morning over descriptions of these dour and determined Northerns who had so boldly dropped their ledgers for drill-books and beaten their ploughshares into swords. Newspapers devoted endless columns to reports of speeches and demonstrations ; war correspondents described the parades of the Ulster Volunteers with a wealth of detail hitherto reserved for the manoeuvres of European armies ; political experts scanned the pronouncements of the Provisional Government more anxiously than they would have done a rescript by the Tsar or the German Emperor. The world learned at interminable length what Ulster was doing, but it was by no means so easy to discover why Ulster did it, or what in the long run it all implied.

In those days the popular explanation to friend and foe alike was Sir Edward Carson. To the eyes of both sides he bestrode the province like a Colossus, hailed by his admirers as a superman, who by stamping his foot could call armies into being, denounced by his opponents as if he were Machiavelli and Bismarck rolled into one. It was taken for granted that not only had Sir Edward Carson fashioned out of the population of a few Irish counties a political instrument of the most amazing kind, but that he created the driving force which rendered it formidable. This view seems to me to do less than justice to Sir Edward Carson's skill and insight as a party leader. His real achievement was not the discovery that Ulster would fight. From the Union onwards Ulster has been protesting her readiness to fight, and English Tories have no less loudly proclaimed in chorus that Ulster would be right. The Orange lodges, from which Sir Edward Carson recruited his Volunteers, have always acted as the cannon-fodder of the anti-democratic forces when any new extension of popular rights had to be challenged. As I have shown, they were mobilised against the Reform movement of the 'thirties; against the democratic impulses that began to stir a generation later, and in Ireland took shape in the Church Disestablishment Act and the first tentative efforts to deal with the land system; and in the 'eighties they were hallooed on more furiously than ever to destroy the Land League and the Home Rule movement in the hope of defeating in England the doctrine of "ransom" which, in spite of Mr. Chamberlain's recantation, survived to haunt Toryism like a nightmare.

It was the experience of every Ulster leader that while he was permitted to bear the burden and heat of the struggle, his English allies, having reaped the

maximum of profit from his exertions, invariably left him in the lurch. Sir Edward Carson's superiority lay in the fact that, unlike his predecessors, he entertained no illusions as to the willingness of English politicians to make sacrifices for the *beaux yeux* of Ulster. Their object, with which he thoroughly agreed, was to cripple democracy, and they valued Ulster only as an effective instrument. While Sir Edward Carson was quite prepared to employ his forces as "shock troops," he was resolved that at the critical moment of the assault the heavy artillery of Toryism should not break off the action and leave him unsupported. It was his cue in his public utterances to represent himself as Gideon mustering his little band against the overwhelming hosts of Midian ; and I have seen on the platform tears trickle down his cheeks as he described the perils of the forlorn hope which he had pledged himself to lead. The emotion may have been perfectly sincere, yet Napoleon himself had not a higher appreciation of the value of big battalions, or took more pains to ensure that he should have formidable reserves behind him when the battle was joined in earnest.

Though Sir Edward Carson talked daggers he used none till he had obtained, as he told the House of Commons, "the open declaration of our leaders, of the leader of the Opposition and of the ex-leader of the Opposition, that we have behind us in that armed resistance, under present and existing circumstances, the whole force of the whole Conservative and Unionist Party." Secondly, and even more important, he was determined to hold his hand until he was assured that the enforcement of Home Rule would mean a mutiny in the higher ranks of the army. These were the guarantees flourished incessantly by Sir Edward Carson before his followers to convince them that rebellion, so far from being a hazardous enter-

prise, was really no more than a game which for Ulster was all prizes and no blanks. In this the Ulster leader from a tactical, if not from an ethical, point of view was thoroughly justified, and, personally, I do not quarrel with him for striking death-defying attitudes, while all the time he was aware that the batteries against which he was preparing to hurl himself had been spiked by their gunners. Even the makers of a sham rebellion should not be denied an impressive gesture.

It is obvious now to everyone that if Sir Edward Carson had been relying only on Ulster the Ulster problem would never have absorbed the attention of the chancelleries of Europe. Just as Parnell harnessed Home Rule to the Land Question, so Sir Edward Carson linked opposition to Irish self-government with the general campaign against democracy. We are all democrats to-day, but five short years ago democracy instead of being a valuable weapon against the Hun was a fearsome apparition which prevented good Tories from sleeping peacefully in their beds. Not least of Sir Edward Carson's virtues in the eyes of such Tories was the fact that, unlike certain of their leaders, he refused to have either truck or traffic with the accursed thing. Others might deem it prudent to compromise on the question of Workmen's Compensation, or hedge about Old Age Pensions ; the Ulster champion would no more temporise with these infamies than an early Christian would deny his faith by burning a pinch of incense before the statue of the Emperor.

When, in the fullness of time, Sir Edward Carson set up his Provisional Government he took advantage of the opportunity to demonstrate to the world his opinion of the principle of popular representation. In the Protestant counties of Ulster his adherents controlled the machinery of local government, and

nothing would have been simpler than to order county and district councils, boards of guardians and harbour authorities to nominate delegates to a Constituent Assembly. Sir Edward Carson characteristically resolved to begin as he hoped to end. By a stroke of the pen he transformed the Ulster Unionist Council, the central organisation of the Unionist Associations, into a state-making body, which promptly resigned all power to a Commission of five of its members who were authorised, in consultation with Sir Edward Carson, to frame and submit a constitution for the Provisional Government. Little more was heard of the labours of the Commission till September, 1913, when the Ulster Unionist Council proclaimed itself to be the Central Authority of the new Government, appointed its standing Committee of seventy-six as the Executive, and proceeded to set up a baker's dozen of departments, from a Military Board to a Publication and Literary Committee, which were manned by members of the Executive. The functions of these departments were not disclosed, and the only connection between them appeared to be that in every case Sir Edward Carson held office as Chairman. The model was precisely that of Dublin Castle, where a Chief Secretary exercises despotic powers over multitudinous boards, all working in separate compartments without regard either to the economy of force or the prevention of wasteful friction. For generations Dublin Castle has been the classical example of autocracy masking itself behind a threadbare pretence of constitutional forms. Sir Edward Carson's scheme differed only in that the pretence of constitutionalism was dropped, and the autocracy openly proclaimed. He could say with Louis XIV., *L'État, c'est moi* ; and had the Provisional Government taken practical shape his veto would have been final on every action of his subjects, from the

purchase of a postage stamp to the payment of customs duties.

It may be argued that in organising a rebellion dictatorial powers are essential, and that once the Ulster Government ceased to be " Provisional " its basis would have been radically changed. Conceivably this might have happened, yet I find it difficult to believe that the exclusion from its ranks of all save persons of the propertied classes was merely a coincidence. Sir Edward Carson selected his agents as if Labour were of no more account than in the days before the first Reform Bill ; to judge by the composition of his revolutionary committees, Ulster, to his mind, was destined to be saved by her peers, parsons, and plutocrats. The challenge to theories of popular government was no less ostentatious than deliberate. It was the final justification of the movement in the eyes of its British allies, who held with the *Times* that, " by disciplining the Ulster democracy, and by teaching it to look up to them as its natural leaders, the clergy and gentry are providing against the spread of revolutionary doctrine and free thought."

Whatever the rank and file of the Covenanters may have thought, their leaders did not believe that the threat of an armed rising would extinguish Irish Nationalism. Their blow was aimed at British Liberalism in the hope that by terrorising it they would ruin its prestige in England and at the same time destroy the Irish Parliamentary Party, whose policy was based on the assumption, endorsed up till then by all responsible English politicians, that to obtain the support of a majority of the electors of Great Britain was to ensure the triumph of Home Rule. It was calculated that while Ireland would not abandon her demand for self-government the whole basis of the agitation would be changed, and the solidarity of Nationalism shattered beyond hope of

redemption. With Ireland divided into warring factions, and British Liberalism hopelessly discredited, the anti-democratic party would have the cards in their own hands. The event surpassed their expectations. Liberalism, so far from offering opposition, seemed anxious to knot the rope about its own neck. It met open defiance with the mildest of mild remonstrances; and by its deliberate failure to assert its authority appeared to be bent on proving the contention of its enemies that democracy was synonymous not with the reign of law, but with the abrogation of all law in favour of universal anarchy.

The first and most disastrous surrender, which established a fatal precedent, was the fiasco of the Churchill meeting. The Ulster Liberal Association, a body composed almost exclusively of Protestant Home Rulers, invited in February, 1912, Mr. Winston Churchill, at that time First Lord of the Admiralty, to address a public meeting in the Ulster Hall, Belfast. A ukase was promptly issued by the Unionist Council proclaiming the meeting, and Sir Edward Carson, in endorsing the prohibition, declared that Mr. Churchill, in proposing to make a political speech to Ulster Liberals, was guilty of "a more criminal act than has ever been prosecuted in any criminal court." Five years previously a similar situation had arisen in connection with a meeting organised by the same body in the same hall, which was addressed by Mr. Lloyd George. On that occasion Mr. William Moore (then Unionist member for North Armagh, now one of his Majesty's Judges) had called on the Orangemen to prevent such an insult to their sacred soil. The authorities met the threat by turning out the police. Mr. Moore, instead of leading his hosts to the assault, incontinently left the city, and Mr. Lloyd George delivered his speech without a single interruption. In the case of Mr. Churchill the police looked stolidly on

while the Hall was seized a couple of days before the meeting by bands of Orangemen who announced their intention of holding it against all comers. Dublin Castle bowed meekly to the threat. Mr. Churchill was compelled to make his speech in a football field in the Nationalist quarter; and by way of locking the stable-door after the steed had been stolen, the Government marched in a brigade of infantry to see fair play.

Had the authorities deliberately set themselves to play the Unionist game they could not have bettered this programme. Three weeks earlier the decision to move in troops would have caused the Unionist Council to beat a retreat from a position which, its members admitted in private, they could not possibly maintain if the Government were determined to uphold the right of free speech. Sir Edward Carson no more desired a collision than did Lord Aberdeen and Mr. Birrell. The essence of his plan was to win support for his movement in the ranks of the army; and he knew that to begin by shooting or even stoning soldiers on the streets of Belfast would be fatal to his hopes. When the gathering in the Ulster Hall was abandoned, the military concentration to protect a meeting which Sir Edward Carson had graciously decided should not be attacked, was to his followers simply a final proof of his power. Recruiting for the Ulster Volunteers, which had hitherto gone forward slowly, received a tremendous impetus, and within a few weeks the Unionist Council was able to announce that over 100,000 men had been enrolled.

Unlike Garibaldi, who offered his adherents "neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions; but hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death," the Ulster leader preached rebellion without risk and armed conspiracy as no more dangerous than a parlour game. In an entertaining pamphlet entitled *A Handbook for Rebels*, composed of extracts from

the speeches of the Ulster leaders, the editor, Mr. Thomas Johnson, contents himself with a single sentence of comment—"There is not," he says, "throughout the long story of this armed challenge to constituted authority in Ulster a single execution, imprisonment, deportation, prosecution, or even a police baton charge!"* I do not deny that there were thousands of Covenanters who would willingly have run the risk of all these things, but undoubtedly the conviction sedulously fostered amongst the rank and file was that they had only to flourish their arms and beat their drums to ensure the collapse of the walls of the Liberal Jericho. A personal incident will illustrate the spirit that animated not a few. A certain Belfast business man, who was regarded as something of a Gallio in politics, appeared one day, to the amazement of his friends, in the khaki of the Ulster Volunteers. His wife thus explained the transformation to her neighbours—"Of course he's not very keen on politics, but I thought it would be nice to have the rifle and bandolier as mementoes for the children when they grow up." To levy war against the King in order to provide ornaments for a suburban villa would certainly have been regarded as "very Irish" had it happened in any other part of the country except "dour Ulster."

Like a prudent general, Sir Edward Carson set himself not only to beat up enthusiasm amongst his

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* *A Handbook for Rebels* and a companion volume *The Grammar of Anarchy*, though passed by Censor, are now banned by Dublin Castle from circulating in Ireland. The men who made the speeches are, for the most part, either in high judicial offices or members of the Treasury Bench, but their deliverances are officially denounced as incitements to treason. Surely the climax of absurdity is reached when the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, as a member of the Irish Executive, solemnly labels his own speeches seditious literature.

followers, but to sow confusion in the ranks of his opponents. With the armed forces of the Crown on his side victory was certain. Should he succeed in dividing or even neutralising them, he reckoned that a Government which permitted such a situation to arise might be trusted to lack the courage to grapple with it effectively. It was soon evident there was no reason to fear that the Government would take action. Tory peers and Tory journalists were permitted openly to advocate the resignation of all Unionists from the Territorial Army. The editor of the *Observer* declared in November, 1913, " the whole of the Unionist influence throughout the country ought to be used to prevent recruits from joining as long as there is the slightest threat of coercing Ulster." A couple of months later the Duke of Bedford calculated that, at the outside, a force of only 15,000 regular troops could be mobilised against Ulster, and he viewed with almost cheerful complacency the prospect of their smashing defeat. The British Covenant, signed by men like Lord Roberts, Lord Milner, and Admiral Seymour, set forth as its main object " to prevent the armed forces of the Crown being used to deprive the people of Ulster of their rights as citizens of the United Kingdom."

The campaign was not confined to the platform and the Press. Officers and men were deluged with personal letters appealing to them to resign if the Home Rule Bill became law, or at any rate to make it clear that they would refuse to act against the Ulster Unionists. Apostles of the new creed were eloquent in every messroom preaching mutiny as no longer a crime but the noblest of virtues. Society dames became expert casuists in cases of conscience, and bevies of pretty Ulster women, known as " Carson girls," haunted training camps and depots, winning by their blandishments not a few who had remained

deaf to the arguments of male crusaders. No attempt was made to conceal the plot. On the contrary, its authors craved the widest publicity, believing that this would intensify the social pressure, which they rightly regarded as their greatest asset, and at the same time demonstrate to those who had hitherto held aloof that they were missing their chance of ranging themselves on the winning side. Retired Generals and Admirals rallied to the Ulster standard; it was bruited about that Lord Roberts himself had selected the commander of the Ulster Volunteers. It was not mere back-benchers, but Opposition leaders who argued in the Commons that officers on active service should forswear their allegiance, and invented theories to prove that treason was the truest loyalty. According to Mr. Bonar Law, the situation was the same as that which arose when the standing army of James II. refused to fight, and went over *en masse* to William of Orange. Mr. Balfour protested it was "not undermining the discipline of the Army" to tell soldiers that Home Rule was an issue upon which they were not bound to obey orders to enforce the law of the land. Well might Mr. Asquith say in his speech at Ladybank in 1912, "this new dogma, countersigned as it now is by all the leading men of the Tory party, will be invoked, and rightly invoked, cited, and rightly cited, called in aid, and rightly called in aid, whenever the spirit of lawlessness, fed and fostered by a sense whether of real or imaginary injustice, takes body and shape, and claims to stop the ordered machinery of self-governing society."

Unfortunately for his reputation as a statesman, the Prime Minister was content with analysis instead of action. Dialectically his indictment was unanswerable, but it never seems to have occurred to him that something more was required than abstract expositions of political philosophy. Mr. J. A. Hobson

points out in his pamphlet *Traffic in Treason* that the Cabinet which ran away from the threats of Sir Edward Carson and the Ulster Volunteers was prompt enough to arrest labour leaders who preached the same doctrine of " optional obedience " to soldiers in the case of strike disputes. " In order that treason be successful," Mr. Hobson pertinently asks, " may it be necessary that there should be enrolled in its cause peers of the realm, men holding the King's Commission, Privy Councillors, King's Counsel, and other persons of consequence ? "

Even before the outrageous defiance of the Curragh Mutiny Mr. Winston Churchill declared his eagerness " to put these grave matters to the proof " ; and when hard on the heels of that outbreak came the Larne gun-running, Mr. Asquith boldly announced, " the Government will take without delay appropriate steps to vindicate the authority of the law." Yet in the end it was Mr. Asquith's War Minister who had to be flung overboard while General Gough retained his post. The Ulster leader and his British backers, so far from finding themselves in the dock, were selected as his colleagues in the struggle " to make the world safe for democracy " by a statesman who, speaking, as he said, " with the utmost deliberation and with the fullest conviction," declared of their Ulster crusade that " a more deadly blow has never been dealt in our time by any body of responsible politicians at the very foundations on which democratic government rests." Even Sir Edward Carson can have had no idea when he girded up his loins to destroy Liberalism that the high priests of the creed would so obligingly aid him in pulling down the pillars of their temple.

CHAPTER XII.

SINN FEIN IN EXCELSIS.

Equally amazing was the discovery by the Party which for generations had made law and order a fetish in Ireland that Irish political leaders must stand or fall by their readiness to lead their followers in armed insurrection. Nationalists, who pointed to a majority in the Commons and the constituencies, were taunted with obscuring the issue by shallow sophistries; the only arguments that counted were the bullets and bayonets of the Ulster Volunteers. On this point I quote the declarations not of frantic fire-eaters like Lord Willoughby de Broke and Major Pretyman Newman, but what are presumably the well-considered words of an able writer who, though a Tory, repudiates the label of "a good party man." In his sketch of Sir Edward Carson in that brilliant volume, *Persons and Politics of the Transition*, Mr. A. A. Baumann writes—"There are only two conditions which a minority must fulfil to secure the right of rebellion: they must be ready to risk their lives, and they must be able to put a disciplined force in the field of sufficient numbers to justify the deed. The difference between a riot and a rebellion is one of numbers and discipline—a historical truism, but apparently to-day a recondite truth. . . . Can Mr. Redmond put a disciplined army in the field in sufficient numbers to make a fight for Irish independence? . . . Everybody knows that he cannot. Parnell could not do it thirty years ago before the Land Acts were passed. With a genius for command and a courage far surpassing the measure of Mr. Redmond, Parnell never rose above the level of a

Camorra chief. Where Parnell failed Mr. Redmond is not likely to succeed. Mr. Redmond could not put the semblance of a rebel army in the field, for the excellent reason that since the passing of the Land Act the Irish farmers and peasantry are, most of them, contented with their material, if not their political, condition. They vote, of course, for Nationalist members of Parliament because they are told to do so by their priests and politicians, and perhaps because they have a hazy idea that there are still some slices to be cut from the British joint. But Home Rule is purely the policy of the Machine, which in Ireland is run by the priests and politicians. The Irish nation, a pastoral people, would no more take up arms for Home Rule than volunteer for service under Huerta. . . . If the Home Rule Bill should be withdrawn, or rejected, or postponed to a new Parliament, except a few bonfires and perhaps a street scuffle or two in Belfast, I do not believe a ripple would disturb the surface of Irish life. The majority of the Irish agricultural classes are too comfortable, and they have paid too many instalments under the Land Acts." It is sufficient, I imagine, to point out that the book in which these remarks appear was first published in 1916, the year of the Easter Rebellion!

I admit it is possible, though scarcely probable, that even a publicist like Mr. Baumann might be ignorant of the notorious fact that for the best part of a century Irish leaders have fought their stiffest battles against the advocates of the appeal to physical force. Mr. Redmond was the first political chief who could safely afford to disregard the extremists on his own side who pinned their faith to the doctrine of an armed rising, and it was surely a masterpiece of tragic irony that belief in this weapon should have been restored not by Irish "rebels," but

by English "loyalists." Whatever Tories like Mr. Baumann may have thought, Sir Edward Carson at least knew the truth. Yet, knowing it, he not merely proceeded on his path, but held out an encouraging hand to Nationalist imitators. At a meeting of Primrose Dames, barely two months before the outbreak of war, the Ulster leader said: "I am not sorry for the armed drilling of those who are opposed to me in Ireland. I certainly have no right to complain of it; I started that with my own friends. I was told at the time that I was looking for revolution two and a half or three years ahead. I was very glad, I did not mind that." Sir Edward Carson did not explain to his hearers the cause of his gladness. One wonders why! Can it be that having obtained pledges that the army would not act against his Volunteers, he foresaw that Nationalists, who had not taken this precaution, must sooner or later come into conflict with the armed forces of the Crown, with results disastrous not only to individuals but to the whole movement for Irish legislative freedom? I hesitate to think that a responsible politician would be knowingly guilty of such an infamy; yet this is what actually happened, and Sir Edward Carson, with his experience of Ireland, North and South, must have been aware that the probability was that it would happen.

A week before Great Britain declared war against the Central Powers, the East Belfast Regiment of the Ulster Volunteers marched through the streets of Belfast carrying in triumph the Mauser rifles imported from Germany, and dragging behind them three machine-guns. Constabulary kept the way clear; the soldiers of the garrison watched the procession as interested spectators. On the following day Nationalist Volunteers, who had landed a cargo of arms at Howth, were stopped near Dublin by a body of troops and ordered

to surrender their rifles. As the soldiers were returning to barracks they came into collision with a crowd, on whom they fired, killing and wounding many persons. This episode was to the vast majority of Nationalists the real explanation of why Sir Edward Carson rejoiced at the drilling of his political opponents. They did not blame him, however, half as much as they did the British Government for playing into his hand. It was essential to Ulster Unionists to destroy at all hazards the party in Ireland which preached that self-government could be won by a policy of reason and argument, for the whole Carsonite position rests on the assumption that the Irish demand, so far from embodying a legitimate aspiration, is the expression of a blind unreasoning hatred. Historical antagonisms serve in a large measure to explain, if not to excuse, the survival of this view in Ulster, but British statesmen ought to have known better. Their repudiation of Constitutional Nationalism was not only an act of treachery to Ireland, it was a betrayal of the whole democratic ideal, for which England has since been compelled to pay a heavy price.

During the war the Carson precedent became the charter of every minority which refused to be bound by the will of the majority; shipyard workers, miners, and railway men in turn demonstrated conclusively to politicians like Mr. Bonar Law and Lord Milner that, as Mr. Asquith warned them six years ago, " the possession of a conscience and a repugnance to obey inconvenient or objectionable laws are not the monopoly of the Protestants of the north-east of Ireland." In Ireland still more disastrous results have ensued. There, the effect has been to discredit not only the professions of individual Ministers, but to destroy belief in the pledged faith of the English people. Their word was final, yet, having registered

their verdict, they acquiesced in its withdrawal in face of a threat. Up till then Irishmen had made a distinction between the general body of Englishmen and their rulers, and were willing to believe that the good wishes of the masses were rendered of no avail by the operation of sinister forces in Whitehall and Dublin Castle, the nature of which had only to be made clear to the ordinary voter to ensure their speedy extinction. Carsonism, far from working under the cover of darkness, blazoned its methods to the world, but the Government instead of meeting the challenge surrendered at discretion, and Mr. Asquith's supporters in Great Britain took no steps to repudiate the surrender.

Is it amazing, under the circumstances, that opinion in Ireland, having discovered that English democracy was either unable or unwilling to force its rulers to act in accordance with their pledges, should regard it no longer as a potential ally but as an open opponent? In his recently published life of Bismarck Mr. C. Grant Robinson says, "A nation with responsible parliamentary government is not the victim but the author of its government's blunders; and if it seeks to transfer the responsibility to politicians and a party system, or some other scapegoat, it is guilty of the lie in the soul." There have been many specious explanations of the record growth of Sinn Fein, and all kinds of political physicians have been prescribing antidotes. The vast majority of these would-be healers make the mistake of assuming that a remedy must be sought only on Irish soil, whereas the truth is the conviction that the British people in their attitude to the Irish demand for self-government have been "guilty of the lie in the soul," is to be found at the root of the worst of existing discontents.

Endowed with an unfortunate bias in favour of realism and logic, the Irish are less scornful of open

enemies than of half-hearted friends who, as somebody has said, "control a gigantic world-shaping machine with a mental equipment that might govern a spade or a spindle." They resent being told that they are incomprehensible, and their problems insoluble, by people who fail to see that the incomprehensible thing about Irish affairs since the Union is that the issues instead of being dealt with on their merits have in every case been subordinated to the party interests of English politicians. The Carson crusade is simply the final example of the attempt to win a triumph for the forces of reaction by exploiting anti-Irish prejudices; and the refusal of the average Liberal to discern the truth, or discerning it to take effective action, has been, and while it lasts will continue to be, the strongest weapon in the armoury of the propagandists of Sinn Fein.

Commentators on the Ulster question have for the most part failed to emphasise—what seems to me to be a fact of vital importance—that during the progress of the Home Rule controversy the Unionist case has been twisted right round. In its early stages Sir Edward Carson was making the sort of speeches that Fitzgibbon and Castlereagh would have applauded to the echo; before the end his denial of the right of British statesmen to intervene in Ulster was uncompromising and passionate enough to have satisfied Wolfe Tone himself. The change of attitude was, I admit, largely unconscious, but this so far from minimising its significance accentuates it by its revelation of a woeful lack of coherent logic and clear thinking about fundamental issues. The Ulsterman sees himself, and insists vehemently on others seeing him, as a plain blunt man who likes fair-dealing and hates manoeuvres, and who may be trusted, whether he is right or wrong, to drive straight forward through all obstacles to his goal. In politics, however,

his weakness is to assume that because he is convinced his ends are right, he is at liberty to justify them by arguments that are mutually destructive, and secure them by every means legal or illegal. His original contention against Home Rule was based on a repudiation of the principle of nationality as cutting at the root of imperial progress. In a phrase often in the mouth of his spokesmen, " a great Empire and little minds go ill together " ; and he not only denounced his opponents for their treasonable aims, but despised them for the folly that made them willing, as he put it, to swap the overlordship of the Seven Seas for the control of a potato patch. Nationalism, it was proclaimed, was hopelessly out of tune with the spirit of the times, this spirit finding its true expression in the brassy rhetoric of Mr. Chamberlain's Imperialism, and in the equally strident glorifications by the Henley-Kipling school of versifiers of " The Race " and " The Blood " and " The White Man's Burden." According to this vision of Empire, the Ulstermen were the true prophets of the faith, a ruling race divinely appointed to mete out justice to " the lesser breeds without the law," and act for Britain as " the keepers of the door."

They know better than England herself what England ought to want ; and, to quote the words of one of their champions in an article glorifying the Carson campaign, " the Ulster garrison is still, and will ever be, sturdy enough to slam Great Britain's back-door against all comers, be they English or Irish, traitors or aliens." By the way, this apologia, which appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for May, 1918, is a staggering example of what passes North of the Boyne for well-balanced political argument. The author opens with the following quotation from John Stuart Mill :— " Even supposing that a Government is entirely at one with the people and does not attempt to exercise

any power of coercion unless in agreement with what it conceives to be their voice, still I deny the right of the people to exercise coercion. Their power is illegitimate. . . . The best Government has no more title to it than the worst." The closing words are :— " 'What ye would that men should do to you, do ye also unto them.' Pay careful heed, for in these words lies the secret of all liberty, and justice, and good statesmanship." Yet the case the writer sets out to establish is that Ulster's mission is to discipline Ireland in the interests of England ; and that even if England bids her stay her hand, so deep is her devotion to duty, she will defy the Empire for the Empire's good. It is illegitimate for Great Britain to coerce Ulster, but it is her duty to coerce Ireland ; and " the secret of all liberty, and justice, and good statesmanship " lies in denying to Nationalists as a favour what Unionists are entitled to claim as a right. This is less Machiavellianism, as some people will insist, than muddle-headedness, the inevitable consequence of a creed of racial superiority, whether that creed be preached by Unionists in Ireland or Prussians in Poland and Alsace.

Ulster calls herself the "Imperial Province" because, she assumes, Empire implies the sort of ascendancy she wishes to maintain, under which a minority, claiming to act as a "garrison," can summon all the resources of the confederacy to aid it in imposing its will on the majority. The bitterest discovery of recent years has been that the British Empire, as distinct from the British Government, upholds the principle of majority rule in Ireland, and instead of viewing Nationalism as a corroding poison sees in it the cement that binds the Commonwealth. Professor George M. Wrong, the well-known Canadian historian, has during the war analysed the growth of nationalism in the British Empire, and arrived at the conclusion

that it " both makes the self-governing States of the Empire different from each other and also holds them together." In words that to the Carsonite will seem flat blasphemy, Professor Wrong rules the Unionist fetish of " loyalty " out of court. " The thoughtful Australian or Canadian," he states, " will deny that he owes any loyalty to the British Isles. He feels this no more than the Englishman feels loyalty to Canada. Each of them is satisfied to be loyal to himself." Bad as this is, there is worse to come. Professor Wrong esteems the virtue of race as little as the abstract sentiment of loyalty to England. " A racial nationalism," he says, in words that might have been penned as a counterblast to Sir Edward Carson's most cherished theories, " involves either isolation or the supremacy of a dominant race in a mixed State. It tends to run to pride and arrogance, to thoughts like those of the Hebrew that his race is the chosen of God. When the British Empire was younger we used to hear a good deal about the triumphant destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race. But of late years this note has rarely been heard, and instead we hear something at once more tangible and more vital. At one time we seemed to seek uniformity, partly, perhaps, because we assumed unity of race. It was held that political wisdom required in Canada and Australia an exact copy of Britain. . . . We know now, and we are proud, that no one part of the British Empire can be quite like any other part. When we ask why, the answer is that this is the fruit of Liberty. Nature herself is infinitely varied, and when men are free, when they adjust themselves to the varieties of Nature, they involve differences. To-day no wise statesman has any thought of trying to anglicise the British Empire." But the Unionist indictment of Ireland is that she declines to be anglicised ; and the differences, which

Professor Wrong regards as a proof of vitality, figure in speeches from Ulster platforms as the final justification of the denial of self-government.

The *Times*, on the publication of Professor Wrong's paper, hastened to endorse his conclusion that—"It is partnership in common liberties which unites people . . . We dismiss the phantom of race, and put in its place, as the basis of political organisation, the solid reality of education as that on which the best life of the nations must be established—education in judgment, responsibility and self-control. The growth of the new nationalism in the British Empire is just the growth of Liberty." The English people, the *Times* insisted, must realise "first of all that nationalism involves difference, and that difference is not necessarily, or even presumably, a mischief." But the *Times* was from first to last the strenuous backer of Sir Edward Carson in his contention that the differences between England and Ireland were and are sufficient reason for refusing Ireland the Liberty which, in Professor Wrong's opinion, is the true "wonder-worker," and without which unity of sentiment can never be attained.

Charges of inconsistency weigh as little with the Ulster leader as with the *Times*. Having for years denounced nationalism as the bane of the Commonwealth, no sooner did he realise that Home Rule, in some form or other, was inevitable than he sought to turn the guns of his opponents against themselves by setting up in opposition to their claims a demand for the treatment of Ulster as a separate national entity. There was humour in the spectacle of the most vigorous performer on the Imperial drum sounding resonant fanfares on the Sinn Fein trumpet; but there was tragedy also, and for Irishmen the tragedy had a very bitter flavour. Notoriously, the plan was inspired not by a sincere conviction, but by purely tactical con-

siderations, as is made plain by the fact that the Covenanters, while insisting that Ulster has the same rights against Ireland that Ireland claims against Great Britain, continue to urge the English Government to snap its fingers at the appeal to national aspirations, and stifle arguments by the arbitrament of force. Carsonites not only wish to have their cake and eat it too; they are determined, if they can prevent it, that no one else will be permitted to eat cake at all. Though their blow was nominally aimed at the Nationalists, its effect was to undermine the whole Unionist position, which, in theory at least, was based on the assumption that the opposition to Home Rule sprang not from a selfish wish to serve the ends of a creed or a party, but from an honest desire to further the best interests of Ireland. The Covenanters now openly proclaim a narrower parochialism than that which they denounced in Sinn Fein; and to assert it are prepared not only to resist the authority of Parliament, but to fling overboard their "brethren" in the South and West, whose supposed sufferings under Nationalist persecution have been the theme of Sir Edward Carson's fiercest philippics.

Outside the Balkan States, I imagine, it would be difficult to find a more cynical application of the principles of *Realpolitik*; and the amazing thing is that British statesmen, who from their moral pedestals pointed scornful fingers at Ferdinand of Bulgaria, should have both initiated and countenanced manœuvres in Belfast that even in Sofia would not have been openly avowed by their authors. I shall be told, of course, that English politicians did not create the Ulster spirit, and cannot be held responsible for all its manifestations. If they did not create it—Ulster history contains strong evidence to prove that they did—it cannot be denied that in later years they have

fed and fostered it by every means in their power. So far from being a wilful paradox, it is the sober truth that the perpetuation of Irish differences is due less to the racial and religious antagonisms which our rulers affect to deplore than to the exploitation of these antagonisms for the purposes of English party politics. Lecky, in a famous image, described the English Pale as a spear-point that was kept turning in an open wound. What the Pale was in Tudor times the English party system is to-day. Ireland has never entertained any illusion as to the manner in which that system reacts against her interests. A generation ago Parnell told the Government of the day that a dictatorship on Cromwellian lines would give better results from every point of view than reliance on methods under which proposals vitally affecting the welfare of the Irish people are of importance only for their bearing on the strategical manoeuvres of Whigs and Tories. The answer to Parnell, and to the protests equally strong made by his successors, was that they might as well rail against the law of gravity as against the party system. Ireland was as free as England to manipulate it in her own favour, and once this was accomplished her triumph was secure. After decades of uphill effort Ireland at last achieved what friends and foes alike had declared to be an impossibility, only to discover that the rules, which had been sacrosanct while they operated against her, no longer applied. The whole fabric collapsed at a blast on the Tory bugle-horn; and Liberals hastened to acquiesce in a betrayal that meant their own extinction as a political force rather than face the risks of asserting the fundamental principles of popular government in Ireland.

CHAPTER XIII.

ENGLAND BLOCKS THE WAY.

Future historians will see a masterpiece of irony in the fact that German autocrats chose to issue their challenge to democracy at the exact moment when British politicians were tearing their Constitution in tatters to show their contempt for democratic theories. Never in modern times has there been a more extraordinary transformation. Men to whom Nationalist principles had been anathema all their lives, and subject races a pestilent nuisance, clasped Serbia to their hearts, and were willing to die that Jugo-Slavs and Czecho-Slovaks might be free. What had been treason when Irishmen asked for it, and, as events were to show, continued to be treason so far as they were concerned, became a God-given right the denial of which put the rulers and the people of the Central Powers outside the pale. The shock was, naturally, felt most acutely in Ulster, for Germany's challenge to Europe was precisely Ulster's challenge to Ireland. As Mr. Robert Lynd put it, and the remark is as true as it is pungent, had Sir Edward Carson been the Kaiser and the Kaiser been Sir Edward Carson the history of the last ten years would not have differed one iota. No one who mixed with Covenanters during the anti-Home Rule agitation will question the assertion that Germany shone in their eyes as a radiant example of all that Great Britain should be, but unfortunately was not. The appeal to her practice ran like a *leit-motif* through their speeches ; and her belief in " resolute government " as the right medicine for small nationalities was trumpeted as a final proof of the superiority of her Imperialism over the decadent Liberalism that had corrupted English life.

I do not believe that the average Carsonite, eagerly as he clutched at the Mausers which Germany so obligingly placed at his disposal, ever contemplated the possibility of changing his status to that of a subject of the Kaiser. It is, I know, quite easy to rake together declarations by parsons and deputy lieutenants in which the All Highest is seen figuring as the Deliverer of Ulster, a twentieth century Protestant Hero, miraculously raised up to preserve and extend the work of his namesake, William of Orange. But while Ulster " loyalists " should not be permitted to escape the consequences of these utterances, those who magnify them into serious proof of a deep-laid plot in the interests of Pan-Germanism are simply enabling the Covenanters to evade the real charge against them. They have no qualms of conscience about the Hamburg rifles ; while Germany undoubtedly permitted these to be shipped to serve her own ends, the Ulster Volunteers insist that they accepted them to execute a policy with which Germany had nothing to do. With equal fervour they repudiate responsibility for creating a situation which encouraged the Kaiser to declare war. Despite the denials of Sir Edward Carson, it is notorious that Kuehlmann visited Ulster while the issue of civil war hung in the balance ; and if the leaders of the Volunteers had no official knowledge of his presence, unofficially the news was circulated far and wide as a proof that Ulster's determination to resist had become a factor in international politics. I am ready to admit that Kuehlmann may have been fishing in troubled waters purely on his own account ; and that whatever possibilities he discerned of making a rich profit for Germany he was careful to give the Covenanters no inkling of them. At the same time it is difficult to regard it as a mere coincidence that from the Agadir episode onwards every crisis in

foreign affairs was accompanied by a stiffening of the Ulster demand. Sir Edward Carson knew the European situation if the bulk of his followers did not, and his insistence on his pound of flesh, though it may be a tribute to his powers as a master of statecraft, reveals in a curious light his professions of devoted loyalty to the Empire. He exploited England's pre-war complications with Germany as ruthlessly as the Sinn Feiners sought to exploit the complications arising out of the war; and whereas Sinn Fein at least fought in the open, the Ulster campaign was developed by the methods of political blackmail.

Of course Sir Edward Carson did not desire to precipitate war; nobody ever desires that. He, and the ex-Cabinet Ministers with whom he was allied, merely decided that in view of the German menace, of which they tell us they were fully aware, the organisation of an armed conspiracy, combined with the destruction of the spirit of discipline in the army, would compel the Liberal Government to submit to their demands, unless its members were prepared to be ground to powder between the upper millstone of Tory Ascendancy and the nether of Prussian Militarism. It is worthy of note that while enforcing settlements in the railway and coal strikes by the argument that the continuance of the disputes would intensify the difficulties of the international situation, the Cabinet, as Mrs. Green says in her striking pamphlet *Ourselves Alone in Ulster*, "eschewed controversy with Imperialists of the North-East Ulster quality." So far from the movement being challenged as a national danger, its authors, in such time as they had to spare from preaching mutiny to the army and organising rebellion in Ulster, lectured strikers on the infamy of squabbling over wages while Germany was arming, and raged against Ministers for meekly cowering under the threat of the Kaiser's mailed fist.

Casuists indeed are trying to demonstrate that it was really Sir Edward Carson and not General Foch who destroyed the German chances of victory. "Irish Unionist," writing in the *Morning Post* (19th Oct., 1918), meets the charge of Mr. H. G. Wells that Germany relied mainly on "Sir Edward Carson, General Gough, and the guns she had furnished for the Ulster revolt, to keep us out of the struggle," by asserting that Lord Roberts looked favourably on the Ulster Volunteers because he saw in them a "useful auxiliary to the Regular Army" in case of a war with Germany. According to "Irish Unionist," the German menace "was better realised in Ulster than elsewhere," and the Ulster Volunteers were the answer to it. So we have it laid down that the best way to prepare for war abroad is to organise rebellion at home. A still more astounding argument was recently used by a correspondent of a Belfast Carsonite paper, who relates an incident of her own experience in territory occupied by the Germans, which, she says, "may help to dispel the idea that Ulster precipitated the war." The incident happened, according to "Lady Voter," as she signs herself, "in the course of a little catechism by a most courteous Prussian 'Kommandantur,' who asked my nationality. Having previously heard reference to the people of this island as a whole in terms of contempt and derision such as 'Irish pigs,' it suddenly struck me to reply 'Ulster.' To my surprise it was taken quite solemnly, and then came the query—'Carson Party?' which was answered with an unhesitating 'Yes!' To the great diversion of others as well as myself, small favours were directed my way afterwards that were not offered at all to those who had announced themselves 'Irish.' Germany knew all about this country, and respected Sir Edward Carson and his followers, whom the powers that were

regarded as Imperialists—the 'Irish' were the rebels." "Lady Voter's" case is that Sir Edward Carson acted the pro-German part so well that he deceived the Germans themselves, and thus compassed their ruin. One would like to hear Sir Edward Carson's comments were Sinn Feiners to use a similar argument!

Even all that has happened since August, 1914, has not opened the eyes of the champions of Unionist Ulster to the truth about their position. To many of them the declaration of war came as a positive anticlimax; and it was with something like disgust they realised that, having set the stage for Armageddon on the Lagan and the Foyle, the real Armageddon was to be decided on the banks of the Marne and the Somme. Not a few of them indeed still cherish the hope that Sir Edward Carson will once again establish his headquarters at Craigavon ringed about by the bayonets of his faithful Volunteers; and that the remnant of the Ulster Division will joyfully apply at home the lessons they learned in France by constructing a Siegfried Line across the Gap of the North. As one of their poets has sung:—

> "Ulster will strike for England,
> And England will not forget;"

and what England must not forget is that Ulster's price for helping "to make the world safe for democracy" is the perpetuation of a system which, even its defenders are constrained to admit, is the antithesis of democratic rule.

On the moral issue, Ulster from the first has been a millstone hung about the neck not only of Great Britain but of her Allies. No question has been raised about subject races, from the democratisation of Bohemia to the rights of Esthonians to self-determination, for which the rulers of the Central Powers

could not find a precedent to justify their policy in the history of modern Ireland. These thrusts, which English statesmen, to the open dismay of their Allies, were wholly unable to parry, fail to stagger in the slightest the enormous self-complacency of Ulster. She denounces impartially Germans and Irish, Americans, and even British, for drawing parallels to which she objects. And, characteristically, her spokesmen imagine that their objection to these parallels is sufficient proof that they are invalid. They poured scorn on the hypocrisy of the Kaiser when he posed as a believer in the principle of self-determination, and hastened to confront him with the concrete cases of Alsace and West Prussia. When in turn they are confronted with the concrete case of Ireland, it is discovered that, like the Kaiser, they are firm believers in the doctrine that political charity begins anywhere except at home.

Before the war Ulster not only set Germany upon a pedestal as an example to Great Britain of progressive Imperialism, but sought anxiously to prove that the Germanic virtues, as she regarded them, were her own inheritance by right of blood. In the days when Sir Edward Carson, recognising that the claim of Ulster as " the faithful garrison " was out of tune with twentieth century ideas, was setting himself to establish the " two nations " theory which is now his stand-by, a Presbyterian professor of divinity caused a great flutter in Belfast by a lecture in which he demonstrated, with a tremendous parade of that pseudo-science so dear to professors of divinity, that the Home Rule struggle was simply a conflict between the virtues of Teutonic Ulster and the defects, if not the actual vices, of Celtic Ireland. The explanation was hailed on all sides as a heaven-sent revelation. I have heard it quoted by a score of orators as a final argument ; and on the occasion of

the first great parade of the Ulster Volunteers a Belfast paper declared, "One could not help being impressed by the determined Teutonic type of features of the men as compared with the weaker physiognomy of the Latin races." I do not know whether it would be possible to lecture nowadays in Belfast on Ulster's debt to the Teuton, but I am certain one might more safely beard a lion in his den than compliment a soldier of the Ulster Division on possessing features of a Teutonic cast.

Nevertheless a resemblance does exist between the Ulsterman and a certain type of German, though it is possible to explain it as a result of the operation of social and political forces without indulging in grotesque ethnological fantasies. In her pleasantly-written volume, *Our Allies and Enemies in the Near East*, Miss Jean Bates devotes a chapter to the Saxons of Transylvania, which might, with a few minor changes, have been written as a description of the Ulster Settlers. These Saxons came to Transylvania not long before the Normans invaded Ireland; and their contempt for the races amongst whom they dwell has increased instead of diminishing in the interval. They entertain a boundless scorn for the "dirty Wallachs" and the "thriftless Roumanians"; and when reminded by strangers that they are living in the twentieth century not in the Dark Ages, reply, according to Miss Bates, "What do *they* know of the dangers which beset us godly Saxons who dwell in the midst of perils, and have only the right arm of our good Herr Gott to lean upon?" The amiable Slav may salute the Saxon in the name of "Christ the Risen," but the Saxon as a good Lutheran "hunches his shoulders, and praises his 'Herr Gott' that he is not an idolater as is his would-be friendly, if alien, neighbour." For centuries the Transylvanian Saxons "have cultivated a surly and mistrustful demeanour

as a safeguard against the wiles of the wicked ;" and their greatest joy in life is to listen to interminable discourses by their pastors on the text, "Come ye out from among them, and touch not the accursed thing," in which the defects of the Slav, Roumanian, and Magyar serve to reveal in new brightness the shining virtues of Germanic blood.

Miss Bates describes a Saxon festival which, in spirit at least, bears an uncanny resemblance to the Orange celebrations of North-East Ulster. "The noise of doleful singing can be heard in the distance, and a procession heaves in sight led by an old man attired in a long dark woollen garment and carrying a drum on which he beats a tattoo. Following after him come the members of the Egerburg *Bruederschaft* who also wear sombre-hued monkish vestments and bear large staves in their hands. They are chanting the last verse of an ancient Lutheran psalm, and on their arrival at the restaurant the proprietor sallies out to welcome them. 'Good-day, good people. From whence do ye come ? Are you weary ? And for what purpose have you worn out your shoes ?' Whereupon the old man with the drum answers : 'We have journeyed as did our fathers from our Fatherland of Germany into this country of godless barbarians. We are free people, the noblest of people, and we came here of our own accord, with staff in hand, to turn the heathen from wickedness and to work the will of God. We be Germans as were our fathers, and God is with us wherever we go.' "—"So do the Saxons," Miss Bates adds, "keep the racial gulf open which for eight hundred years has yawned between them and the real children of the countries of South-Eastern Europe." The astounding thing is that no one is more outraged by the spectacle of Transylvanian ascendancy than Sir Edward Carson ! In an introduction which he contributes to Miss Bates's

book, he goes out of his way to express the pious hope that the privations of war may have " chastened the arrogant egotism by which the stupid Saxon colony in Transylvania proves the persistence of racial type." This is surely an extraordinary sentence to be penned by a man who has made the " arrogant egotism " of Ulster the basis of his political creed ; and the failure of its author to see that he condemns in the Saxon settlers the qualities he lauds in the Ulster Planters is typical of the movement he leads.

The Irish Unionist has managed to convince himself that the problem with which he is concerned is unique in political history, and therefore conclusions and analogies drawn from other countries can have no possible bearing on it. He grinds his teeth at the thought of Baltic Barons lording it over Letts and Esthonians, and every Orange Lodge was willing to fight to the last cartridge in order to break the domination of Protestant German over Catholic Pole. Yet he is honestly unable to realise that minority rule in Ireland is no less intolerable than minority rule in Poland, even if it could be justified, as it cannot, by the plea that its continuance serves the interests of the British Empire. Of late the Covenanter has made it painfully clear to his former admirers that he is an Imperialist only so long as Imperialism is, from his point of view, a paying speculation. When it demands sacrifices instead of conferring privileges the Ulsterman may still mumble " loyal " catchwords, but in practice his attitude cannot be distinguished from that of the abhorred Sinn Feiner.

Statesman after statesman has declared that a settlement of the Irish question on the basis of self-government is a vital and urgent necessity. Ulster resolutely blocks the way towards such a settlement. Sir Edward Carson, for example, denounces as high treason the Sinn Fein appeal

to the principle of self-determination, yet he invokes it as fervently as Mr. De Valera himself not merely as a counterblast to Nationalism, but as a weapon with which to bring Great Britain to her knees. Throughout the war he was busy translating into deeds the words of his lieutenant, Mr. James Chambers, afterwards Attorney-General in the first Coalition Government, who, speaking in Belfast in May, 1913, declared " they owed to England allegiance, loyalty, gratitude; but if England cast them off then he reserved his right as a betrayed man to say ' I shall act as I have a right to act. I shall sing no longer ' God Save the King.' " . . . It is true Sir Edward Carson picks his phrases more carefully than Mr. Chambers did, but in practice he exploits with a thoroughness and deftness all his own the principle that " England's difficulty is Ulster's opportunity." Nationalists do not blame him for this. On the contrary, they hold it goes far to prove their case that under the existing system of government a real bond of union between the people of the two islands is an impossibility.

Ulster, for all her protestations of loyalty, is no more willing to recognise England's right to enforce a settlement to which she objects than is Leinster or Connacht. The refusal of either of the contending parties to accept the verdict of this tribunal, unless it happens to be in their favour, creates, according to British ideas, a hopeless *impasse*. As the Irish, it is argued, are so unreasonable that a section will always oppose any solution that may be attempted, the only practicable course is to continue a system, the defects of which are a by-word throughout the world. This is not only the theory of the Tories, but the practice of the Liberals. After the Easter Rising, Mr. Asquith, as a result of his investigations in Dublin, announced that Castle Government had hope-

lessly broken down. Everywhere, except in Ireland, it was assumed that this discovery heralded the introduction of drastic reforms. Ministers, however, after a half-hearted attempt at reconstruction, found it simpler to sit precariously enthroned on the bayonets of the army of occupation; and the resentment which such a negation of statesmanship inevitably provokes, so far from being regarded as a just retribution for British bad faith, has been triumphantly exhibited to the world as a damning proof of Nationalist hostility to the cause of freedom.

The truth is that British politicians by their partisanship in the past have forfeited any claim they may have possessed to act as judges in an Irish dispute. Their intervention serves no other purpose than to intensify difficulties and multiply obstacles, a fact which, if it was ever in doubt, has been conclusively established by the record of events since the outbreak of the war. Ireland asked, and asks, no more than freedom to apply on her own soil the principles for which she was summoned to fight on European battlefields. This permission England steadily refuses; and the members of three successive Cabinets have exhausted their ingenuity in attempting to explain away the refusal by excuses, which they denounce on the lips of German statesmen as hypocritical pretences. Mr. Balfour sees no bar to a settlement of Bohemia and Posen on the basis of majority rule, though in one area the German minority amounts to a third of the population, and in the other the races are nearly equally divided. Mr. Lloyd George definitely declares that in East Africa the Askaris will not be permitted to claim special consideration as a dominant militarist minority, but must subordinate themselves to the will of the majority. Yet with an inconsistency that would be farcical if the results were less

tragic, the British Government confer on Ulster a veto which enables her to defy the will of the English as well as the Irish people.

This may be in the eyes of Ministers one of the needs of the situation, but if it is, it ought to be frankly avowed. It is gross political dishonesty to pretend, as is now pretended, that the Convention failed to obtain a settlement because Irishmen were unable to agree amongst themselves. Notoriously the real obstacle was not Irish factionism, but the assurance given to the Ulster delegates that the Cabinet would decline to adopt any scheme which did not meet with their approval. As Sir Edward Carson's demand is for the maintenance of the existing system—in his favourite formula "we want only to be let alone"—his delegates were able by the simple process of objecting to every constructive proposal to prevent a settlement. Nationalists were not blind to the fact that the War Cabinet's insistence on "substantial agreement," coupled with the refusal to define what the phrase implied, deprived the Convention of any real claim to be regarded as a genuine instrument of self-determination. Though they suspected it would be used as a "peace-trap," they did not reject it on this account. Their acceptance was denounced by the Republicans as a surrender, if not a betrayal, of the national claim, but Constitutionalists could give sound reasons for the course they adopted. In proposing a Convention English Ministers admitted for the first time that the settlement of Irish differences was a question for Irishmen themselves; and Nationalists who had already gone to extreme limits to conciliate Ulster were satisfied that the concessions they were prepared to offer would prove to the world, if not to Sir Edward Carson, that there was no reasonable foundation for the fears which his followers professed to entertain.

Whatever else the Convention failed to do, it succeeded in disposing of the argument that any serious grounds exist for believing that Home Rule means Rome Rule. The Southern Unionists, who, if religious intolerance were a danger, would have much more to fear than the compact Protestant majority of the North-eastern counties, were content with the safeguards which the Nationalists were willing to grant. Even the Ulstermen did not deny the efficacy of these safeguards.* As Sir Horace Plunkett put it in the letter to the British Prime Minister which prefaced his report, they claimed that "if Ireland had the right to separate herself from the rest of the United Kingdom, they had the same right to separation from the rest of Ireland." This claim is a denial of the right of Great Britain no less than of Ireland to impose terms on Ulster, though with a heroic contempt for logic the Carsonites produce as proof of their power of veto the pledges of English Ministers. If the Convention failed to achieve "substantial agreement" the fault was due less to the inability of Irish parties to evolve a compromise than to the action of English politicians in laying down conditions and reservations which made a compromise impossible. No man excels Mr. Lloyd George in

* It is now, curiously enough, the Ulster Covenanters who object to safeguards for minorities. Sir Edward Carson and his colleagues are opposed tooth and nail to proportional representation in local government elections, and denounce as "traitors to Ulster" Southern Unionists, who are hailing the scheme as a new charter of liberty. The explanation of the apparent paradox is extremely simple. Proportional representation threatens to shatter the Ulster *bloc* by giving Northern Nationalists their fair share of political power, and breaking the prohibition which denies to Labour its place in the sun. It seems quite logical to the good Carsonite that he should be free to exercise uncontrolled majority powers at the same time as he claims unlimited minority privileges.

the difficult art of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds, and never has he practised it more diligently than in his handling of Irish affairs. Unfortunately for his reputation, the Convention, which was to be the final proof of his agility, has served merely to demonstrate to the world that if Irish parties are agreed in nothing else, they are of one mind in their suspicions of the good faith of British Ministers and of their qualifications to act as an impartial tribunal in Irish disputes.

It may be galling to Englishmen's pride to admit that their intervention in Irish affairs does infinitely more harm than good, but it should not be half so galling as the spectacle which Ireland presents after seven centuries of British rule. T. M. Kettle used to insist that "humility was for Englishmen the beginning of wisdom on the Irish question." If that was true seven years ago when Kettle published his *Open Secret of Home Rule*, it is still truer to-day, when to the record of English Rule have been added an armed conspiracy in Ulster to defy Parliament and the Crown, and an open rebellion in Dublin. To preach humility, as Kettle was careful to point out, is not "to ascribe horns to England and a halo to Ireland." Three quarters of the muddle and tragedy are due less to evil designs than to good intentions. The average Englishman, as distinct from the little band of reactionaries who exploit his weaknesses, really believes that the salvation of Ireland rests on his shoulders, and that it is the duty of his rulers to achieve this salvation even against the wishes of Irishmen themselves. In a sense the delusion is not unnatural. Irish parties have contributed to it by their appeals for support; and the Englishman is scarcely to be blamed if he failed to realise that while all sides were prepared to welcome him as an ally nobody wanted him as a judge.

The Carson crusade dealt the final blow to such rags and tatters of prestige as England could claim in Ireland. Nationalists had accepted her as arbitress not because they acknowledged her right, but because Unionists insisted that she must be regarded as the final court of appeal. Ulster's repudiation of the decision in favour of Home Rule transformed the whole situation. The repudiation was absolute, for Sir Edward Carson and his lieutenants made it clear that no appeal to the British electorate, if unfavourable to Ulster, would be accepted by their followers as binding. This ruled out England as far as Ulster was concerned; and when instead of asserting her authority to impose her decision she told Nationalists that her law must give way to Sir Edward Carson's will, she ruled herself out in the eyes of Ireland. There is still a pathetic delusion amongst the British people that Ireland looks to them for a great act of constructive statesmanship. If once upon a time Ireland entertained that hope she does so no longer. England has failed signally not only as an arbitress but as an honest broker; and the best contribution she can hope to make to a solution of the Irish question is to allow Irishmen to settle it between themselves. If she consents to observe neutrality there is little doubt that Nationalists will accept the English connection as a fundamental condition of Unionist co-operation. If, however, she persists in using a minority to thwart the legitimate aspirations of a majority, she may retain Ulster, but she will do so at the price of dividing Irishmen along lines which threaten to make a reconciliation impossible, and with the knowledge that in the future her relations with Ireland will be not a domestic issue but a grave and menacing international problem.

CHAPTER XIV.

CARSONISM AND SINN FEIN.

Sir Edward Carson's claim for self-determination, if it is to square with President Wilson's declarations, must be based on the ground that Ulster is a separate entity with a distinct nationality of its own. But the Ulsterman does not complain that he is classified as an Irishman against his will; on the contrary, his boast is that he is the true Irishman and those who differ from him base degenerates. One of the minor ironies of the situation is that if Sir Edward Carson were to carry his point and divide Ireland into separate water-tight compartments, his place would be not with the Ulster sheep but with the Irish goats. The most rabid Orangeman cannot deny that, apart from his political opinions, Sir Edward Carson is in his eyes as fearful a wild fowl as Mr. De Valera; whereas Mr. Devlin, though he may be the leader of the Northern Nationalists, is by every other test as typical an Ulsterman as has ever played a part in public life. Mr. Devlin holds different views from the majority of his fellow-citizens, but I should be greatly surprised to learn that he does not agree with them in ranking the mud banks of the Lagan higher than the glories of the Shannon or the Lee. If he claims Ulster for Ireland, he claims also that it is infinitely the best part of Ireland, standing on a pinnacle to which the other provinces can attain only by slow and painful efforts. Sir Edward Carson speaks for Ulster powerfully, and often with genuine passion, but he remains an outside advocate who has mastered a brief; Mr. Devlin, as his bitterest opponents admit, is a member of the family, and a proof in his

own person of the falsity of the conclusion that if Ulster differs from the other provinces the difference is purely one of race and religion.

The " two nations " theory is merely a revival of the old fallacy of the opposition of Celt and Saxon, which, as Lecky proved a generation ago, bears no relation to the facts of the Irish situation. During the fight on the Home Rule Bill I had the curiosity to compile a list of the speakers who used this argument on Ulster platforms. The names themselves are the best refutation of the doctrines their bearers preached, for they included Maguires, Murphys, Quinns, MacNeills, Moriartys, M'Donnells and O'Neills. Deplorable as " the blind hysterics of the Celt " may be, denunciations of the race sound as oddly on the lips of these " Macs " and " O's " as would attacks on Germanism by Hindenburgs and Tirpitzes. The quarrel of the Unionist with his Nationalist neighbour is less a clash of races than an embittered family feud. Only near relatives have the same uncanny knowledge of one another's weak points, and the same skill in getting their thrusts home between the joints of their opponent's armour. There is a story of a Jewish Lord Mayor of Belfast who in a time of civil commotion tried to make peace between the hostile mobs, and was extinguished by a shout from the crowd : " What right has a Jew to interfere in a fight between Christians ? " Unfortunately up to this outsiders can always be counted upon to interfere, and it is this knowledge that keeps the parties from arriving at an agreement—were it only an agreement to differ.

Strenuously as Sir Edward Carson demands self-determination for his followers in a section of the Northern province, he is no more a believer in a separate Ulster nationality than Mr. Devlin or Mr. De Valera. His anti-Home Rule campaign was purely destructive, and during it he was more con-

cerned to prove that everything the Nationalists wanted was wrong than to put forward constructive proposals of his own. When he ceases to shout his battle-cry of " We won't have it," and condescends to tell the world what he would do in Ireland were he master of her destinies, it turns out that his solution is not Unionism but Home Rule. In an article in the *National News* (13th Oct., 1918) Sir Edward Carson explained his idea of a settlement, apparently without the slightest suspicion that he was repudiating the central doctrine of the faith in defence of which he organised an armed rebellion. " Finally I am asked," he writes, " what would I do assuming that I had supreme power to bring about a united, contented, and prosperous Ireland ? This is a very wide question. I think I would try and bring voluntarily together under the United Kingdom Government a Cabinet in Dublin, consisting of the best and most experienced and capable men, to advise the Irish Executive on the matter of the economic development of Ireland, and to frame schemes for presentation to Parliament. If such a beginning was made, men's minds would be turned from internal agitation to a substantial economic effort, and it might become apparent that we really have the one object in view—namely, the progress of Ireland."

This, as Mr. Bernard Shaw pithily remarked, is like " demanding an Irish king whilst insisting on an English beadle." If Irishmen of all political creeds could in consultation devise and draft schemes for the economic development of their country, why should it be beyond their power to give legislative effect to their schemes ? Does Sir Edward Carson seriously imply that though Nationalists and Unionists could agree about ends only the members of the British Parliament have the ability required to realize these in practice ? If we are to judge by his criticisms of the

policy—and not merely the Irish policy—of Ministries, Liberal and Conservative, in which he did not hold office, few Sinn Feiners have a lower estimate of the genius of the Englishman as legislator. Lord Morley acutely says in his *Recollections*, "No Irish loyalist that I ever heard of is willing to admit that England can do anything right. She is a special providence whose help is due in all things, and every failure is laid at her door. Everything wrong is set down by loyalists, quite as heartily as by Nationalists, to 'you English people.'" Sir Edward Carson's new position is that adopted by the Irish aristocrat of the first half of the eighteenth century, who was willing in return for a guarantee of ascendancy at home to submit to an English veto on his legislative measures. The Irish Parliament during the reigns of Anne and the first Georges was, for all practical purposes, a body possessing the same powers as the Cabinet for which the Ulster leader sighs. Only by grim experience did Irishmen learn that political freedom is a vital condition of economic freedom. It was an Ulster revolt that broke the evil tradition of subservience; and were Sir Edward Carson to realize his ideal to-morrow, within ten years at the outside he would either be heading a movement north of the Boyne akin to that of Grattan, or his authority would have passed to another leader.

The nearest parallel to the Ulster problem is that of the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland in the eighteenth century. Skrine, in his *Travels in the North of England and part of Scotland*, describes "the marked distinction between the races of the same country" as "quite unparalleled in any other nation;" and from his own observations made in 1787 adds, "neither does it seem to wear off in the degree that might be expected in the common progress of improvement." In one of his essays in

Memories and Portraits Robert Louis Stevenson puts it more dramatically. " A century and a half ago (he writes) the Highlander wore a different costume, spoke a different language, worshipped in another church, held different morals, and obeyed a different social constitution from his fellow-countrymen either of the north or south. Even the English, it is recorded, did not loathe the Highlander and the Highland costume as they were loathed by the remainder of the Scotch. Yet the Highlander felt himself a Scot. . . . When the Black Watch, after years of foreign service, returned to Scotland, veterans leaped out and kissed the earth at Portpatrick. They had been in Ireland, stationed among men of their own race and language, where they were well liked and treated with affection ; but it was the soil of Galloway that they kissed at the extreme end of the hostile lowlands, among a people who did not understand their speech, and who hated, harried, and hanged them since the dawn of history." Sir Edward Carson would be the last to deny that in this sense Ulster is also Irish. He knows, and the most bigoted Covenanter would not dispute the fact, that were Ulster regiments returning from France to land at Sinn Fein Dublin or Rebel Cork, though they might not kiss the earth, they would feel a thrill of home-coming such as the touch of English or Scottish soil could never give.

As a matter of fact the essential unity of Ulster with Ireland, if it is still a paradox to many at home, became a magnificent commonplace on the fields of Flanders and Picardy. The Ulster Division was recruited from the Carson Volunteers in the hope and belief that it would afford a living proof of Ulster's uncompromising adhesion to the principles of the Covenant. Yet in the war zone the first act of the Northern battalions was to fraternise with the Irish Division recruited from the Redmondite Volunteers.

Men of Antrim and Down, to whom Catholic Nationalists were in theory much more the enemy than Protestant Germans, found to their astonishment that they had stronger ties with the Leinsters and the Munsters than with English, Scots, or Colonials. Victories and defeats in which Orange and Green fought side by side have strengthened and deepened this sense of fellowship; and I have heard not one but scores of Ulster soldiers, Covenanters to a man, declare that with Southern regiments on their flank they could go anywhere and do anything. "They're the lads," the tale always concludes, "who won't leave an Irishman in the lurch, no matter where he hangs his hat on Sunday."

During the sittings of the Irish Convention I travelled one day from Belfast to Dublin with one of the delegates and three sergeants of the Ulster Division who were returning to France. Naturally the conversation turned on politics, and all the soldiers were strong for a settlement. "If we can get on fine in France," said one sergeant, who described himself as an Apprentice Boy of Derry, "why can't we do the same at home?" "There's nothing wrong with the Fenians" (to the Orangeman all Nationalists are Fenians), was the comment of another; "and if you had some of our boys on the Convention they'd soon tell John Redmond and Sir Edward too that the quicker they shook hands the better it would be for everybody." As they left us at Amiens Street their final word to the Convention delegate was: "Settle it before we come back. We've had enough of fighting Fritz to want to fight Irishmen." It has always seemed to me one of the great defects of the Convention that the Irish and Ulster Divisions were not represented by delegates from the ranks. They might not have been trained politicians, but their presence would have refuted many of the argu-

ments used by politicians to show that an impassable gulf divides Ulster from Ireland.

Nationalists who flocked to the colours when Germany invaded Belgium held with Tom Kettle that to be a good Irishman it was necessary to be a good European, but they also felt that their action was symbolic of the spirit that would animate the Ireland of the future. This was the conviction not only of the leaders, but of the rank and file. Quite recently I discovered in the columns of an Ulster Unionist paper an "in memoriam" notice of a Nationalist soldier killed in action in France. As usual the formal announcement was followed by a verse quotation, but instead of the stale sentiments or woeful doggerel that make such columns a happy hunting ground for the cynical humorist, a stanza, by a fine inspiration, had been chosen from Dr. Drennan's elegy on William Orr, the first martyr of the United Irish movement :—

> "Why cut off in palmy youth ?
> Truth he spoke, and acted truth.
> 'Countrymen unite !' he cried,
> And died, for what the Saviour died !"

Orr was an Ulster Presbyterian, hanged in 1797 by the British Government ; this was a Catholic Nationalist, who died in an English uniform, yet both gave their lives willingly in the belief that their sacrifices would prove to be a bond of unity between all Irishmen. The baser kind of Unionist may continue to proclaim that such men were conscious hypocrites, but I think Sir Edward Carson is generous enough to recognise that whether their aims were in his sense of the words "loyal" or "disloyal," they were at least nobly conceived ; and I am confident that Ulster soldiers who fought side by side with the Irish Division will want some better proof than the word

of platform orators that their Nationalist comrades challenged Prussianism in the field in order to obtain power to impose on Unionist Ireland Prussianism in its most detestable form.

Three-fourths of the antagonism between North and South springs from sheer ignorance, and this ignorance is not peculiar to either side. Burke, discussing the effects of the Penal Laws, says, " Sure I am that there have been thousands in Ireland who have never conversed with a Roman Catholic in their whole lives, unless they happened to talk to their gardener's workmen, or to ask their way when they had lost it in their sports ; or, at best, who had known them only as footmen or other domestics of the second or third order. . . . I well remember a great and in many respects a good man who advertised for a blacksmith, but at the same time added ' He must be a Protestant.' " Burke's description still holds good of Unionist Ulster in the second decade of the twentieth century, and the sort of advertisement he derided continues to be a stock feature of Irish papers.

The abnormalities of the economic situation have aided and abetted sectarian prejudices in deepening these lamentable divisions. Ship-building and the linen trade, the twin pillars of industrial Ulster, not only find their markets but draw their supplies of raw material from outside the island. Thus the problem of maintaining the consciousness of interdependence between rural and urban communities, which is vital in a well-ordered State, would be extraordinarily difficult in Ireland under any circumstances ; and when political and religious prejudices so operate as to intensify economic differences the most buoyant optimist may well be tempted to despair. As a result of the war it is true there is a prospect of an extension of flax-growing in the South and West, which would constitute a new bond between the other

provinces and Ulster; and the transformation of Cork into an industrial and manufacturing centre may yet enable it to dispute Belfast's title to speak as the one commercial city in Ireland. These forces, however, can develop only slowly; and meanwhile fanatics on both banks of the Boyne are doing their best to aggravate the situation.

As I have said, the faults are not wholly on the side of the North. It may, and does, make a fetish of its material prosperity, but that is no reason why those who are opposed to its politics should attribute, as some of them are inclined to do, all its defects to its industrialism. Of late years a vast amount of nonsense, and pernicious nonsense too, has been talked about the advantages which the peasant enjoys over the city worker. The working-class quarters of Belfast are mean enough in all conscience, but those who denounce them to exalt the transfiguring influences of nature on the mind of the countryman conveniently forget that the most beautiful districts in Ireland from the poet's point of view are, as a rule, from the human point of view, appalling agricultural slums. In this matter facts are of more account than theories. And the salient fact is that while the back-streets of Belfast are crammed with an ever-increasing population, the young generation in Connacht only awaits the opportunity to follow other generations in a flight into exile. One Belfast may be enough in Ireland, as our academic "simple-lifers" say—most of them, by the way, are confirmed town birds—but it seems a questionable advantage to limit industrialism to the north-eastern counties if the pick of young Ireland is driven abroad to work out its destiny in the blast-furnaces of Pittsburg or the coal-mines of the Black Country. I remember vividly an encounter with a strenuous Gaelic Leaguer, who deplored Belfast's lack of enthusiasm for the

development of native industries. It took me some time to realise that world-famous shipyards, textile factories, and tobacco works were to his mind not Irish at all, that title being reserved for one-horse enterprises which, as often as not, use the catch-cries of patriotism to enable them to underpay their workers and overcharge their customers. This attitude, I may say, is not typical, but undoubtedly it exists, adding another to the many stumbling blocks which prevent a clear understanding between North and South.

I am no believer in the Johnsonian doctrine—

"How small of all that human hearts endure
That part which kings and laws can cause or cure."

Kings and laws have wrought havoc in Ireland, and other and different laws are required to repair the evil. It is easy, however, to exaggerate unduly the importance of political reforms, and expect legislative changes to do what can be done only by a change of heart. In Ireland, unfortunately, the tendency of both sides is to ignore this elementary fact. According to one school all that is necessary is to maintain the Union. The fact that the Union has been maintained for over a century, with no other result than to intensify existing divisions and enmities, and immobilise in Ireland a huge army of occupation in the most critical hours of a world war, so far from being regarded by Unionists as damaging to their cause, is hailed by them as the final proof that the system in being is a masterpiece of statesmanship. On the other hand, one meets Nationalists who have persuaded themselves that the mere enforcement of a measure of legislative freedom, whether it takes the shape of Home Rule, Dominion self-government, or an Independent Republic, would straightway remove all differences and transform Irishmen into a band of brothers.

I am profoundly convinced that no more urgent necessity exists in the political world than that Ireland

should be free to decide her own destiny in accordance with the principles of self-determination laid down by President Wilson. Had Unionism been as efficient as it has proved incompetent I should hold that view quite as strongly, believing as I do that the sole merit of the existing system in the eyes of its champions is that it enables an Irish minority by the aid of British politicians to override the wishes of an Irish majority. I am willing to agree with the most extreme Sinn Feiner as to the disastrous effects of English influences on Irish affairs. It is a taint which hitherto has proved no less dangerous to its friends than to its foes. While Nationalists are by its operation denied the exercise of those rights which are the axioms of popular government; Unionists, who justify its continuance, range themselves against the central principle of democratic rule, and are compelled, unless they wish to sacrifice any claims they may have to political consistency, to take their stand with the forces of reaction instead of with those of progress, not merely on the question of Irish Government, but on every problem, domestic and international. Ulster has sold her mental freedom for a mess of Ascendancy pottage; and the recovery of that freedom is, or would be—did her leaders really aspire to lead—quite as important as the maintenance of that prosperity which is her constant boast. It was to Ulster and not to Ireland that Mr. Yeats should have addressed his famous reproach:—

> "What need you, being come to sense,
> But fumble in a greasy till
> And add the halfpence to the pence
> And prayer to shivering prayer, until
> You have dried the marrow from the bone;
> For men were born to pray and save.
> Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
> It's with O'Leary in the grave."

At the same time Nationalists, who argue that a mere legislative change will suffice to effect the radical conversion of Ulster, are, it seems to me, in the same boat as Carsonites who insist that firm government is all that is needed to reconcile Ireland to the Union. No doubt were developments permitted to take place along normal lines, and were free scope given to the forces making for unity, fusion would not be long delayed. There are, however, as everybody knows, powerful interests which are determined to prevent any movement towards reconciliation, realizing that it would be fatal to their authority and prestige. Sir Edward Carson's new scheme for eliminating Ulster from Ireland by enforcing in the six north-eastern counties English Acts of Parliament which do not apply to the Nationalist provinces, may appear grotesque and impracticable, but it represents the revival in a dangerous and unexpected form of the principle of "Divide and Conquer." Sinn Fein's central doctrine is that to overthrow English influence in Ireland all that is required is to ignore it; but the Covenanters and their allies are quick to see that if Nationalists adopt the policy of abstention from Westminster, this departure can be used to advance the sectional interests of Ulster as against the national interests of all Ireland. This danger is neither remote nor negligible, but so far little or nothing has been done to meet it. The fundamental weakness of Sinn Fein is that not only have its leaders failed to evolve an Ulster policy, but they act as if such a policy were a minor detail as compared with eloquent arguments about the rights of small nationalities. Once they have settled the main point about England's right of intervention, all other difficulties, so they suggest, will solve themselves automatically, a contention which might carry weight if one could forget that it is exactly because Ulster blocks the way that English intervention is possible.

The leaders of Sinn Fein put the cart before the horse in dealing with the Carsonites, and, as if this were were not bad enough, some of them are deliberately goading the horse to kick the cart to pieces. There has rarely been a more lamentable utterance than Mr. De Valera's declaration in his campaign in South Armagh that he was prepared to blast Ulster out of his path; and his threat that the Orangemen would be given six months either to accept an Irish Republic or clear out of the country bag and baggage was not the less exasperating because it was such patently futile bombast.* It is true the language was not half as strong as that which the Covenanters habitually use about Sinn Feiners, but Sir Edward Carson is in a very different position from Mr. De Valera. So far from expecting or desiring to convert Nationalists to his views, his whole plan of campaign is designed to stereotype existing animosities. In public he professed to be outraged at the menace to his followers; in private, I am certain, he chuckled to see Sinn Fein playing the very cards he wanted. Even yet the Republican leaders do not seem to realize that English influence in Ireland is not necessarily eradicated by transferring the appeal from Westminster. While Ulster continues in her present temper she can always rely on a large measure of support from the anti-Irish faction in Great Britain, and it is nonsense or worse to say that her opposition would be a negligible

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* The Republicans, it is satisfactory to find, are beginning to discover that the Ulster difficulty requires more careful handling than they have hitherto been prepared to give it. At the meeting of the Ard-Fheis of Sinn Fein in April a strong demand was made by Ulster members for a better-organised and more effective propaganda effort in the northern counties. No formal scheme was evolved, and no proposals adopted for grappling with the question of making converts amongst Unionists, but that the existence of the problem should be admitted marks a definite step in advance.

factor. There is no evidence to show that the coercion of Belfast from Dublin would be any easier than the coercion of Dublin from London has proved in the past; on the contrary, an Irish Prime Minister, or even a President of an Irish Republic, who attempted to apply it would speedily discover he had signed his own political death warrant.

Sinn Fein prides itself on the logical stringency of its creed, and its adherents have still to learn that logic, if a good servant, is in politics a deplorably bad master. Uncompromising devotion to principle is an excellent thing, provided always that the premises underlying the principle are not arbitrary. It is, unfortunately, no less dangerous to be too simple than to be too subtle; and extremists who believe, as not a few of them do, that the ramifications of the Irish question are summed up in the couplet

> "On our side is virtue and Erin,
> On theirs is the Saxon and guilt,"

may win cheers from the crowd, which likes a clear-cut issue, but they are going the wrong way to solve intricate problems of statesmanship. No doubt it is tempting to assume that as Unionist Ulster professes to side with England Ireland has only to break the English connection, and the Ulster difficulty will straightway disappear. Sinn Feiners would do well to remember that were this country an independent Republic to-morrow the Covenanters would still be there, a minority, indeed, but a minority which, if it did not accept the new state of affairs, would be formidable not only by reason of the strength of its resources, but by reason of the support upon which it could rely from powerful influences in Great Britain.

It seems, therefore, obvious to me that while England might conceivably be coerced, not perhaps

by force of arms, but by the exigencies of the international situation, into conceding the Sinn Fein demand, her surrender would be nullified if Ireland failed to win Ulster by reason and argument. No one has uttered weightier words on this subject than the distinguished essayist, "John Eglinton," who prides himself on standing aloof from all political parties. He is the champion of the "Modern Irishman," whom he defines as "the Irishman who accepts as a good European the connection with Great Britain, and yet feels himself to be far more distinct from the Anglo-Saxon than he is from the "Mere Irishman." In a preface which he contributed to a pamphlet by Mr. A. R. Orage, "John Eglinton" says, "Admitting the existence in Ireland of a national consciousness and initiative, which it has been chiefly the part of the Catholic Church to conserve, much remains to be done before the descendants of the Anglo-Irish and Scotch-Irish populations, firmly established here by the grace of God, can listen with becoming silence, much less with vehement acclamation, to the grandiloquent claim of the old mother-nation to be a Republic or a Sovereign State. They have to be brought into it, and they are, after all, over a million of imperfectly convinced Protestant Irishmen in Ireland's little population of four millions and not, if it may be believed, without a patriotism of their own. The Sinn Feiners, in short, if they really are the other three millions, will have to take a different tone with them from that which they adopt, if they wish to avoid trouble with them, and impregnate them with the national idea."

Imperative as I believe a root-and-branch reformation of the existing system of government to be, I am convinced that the most difficult problem Ireland has to solve is to establish right relations between Irishmen North and South. Consequently, I hold that the test

of the merit of any proposed reform is less whether it gives the same measure of freedom as that acquired by Poles or Czechs or Slavs, than whether it will tend to liberate forces that make for the unification of all Ireland. Carsonism stands condemned because its adherents are prepared to accept disunion in Ireland as the price of maintaining political union with Great Britain; and a system under which all the resources of an Irish Republic would be required to coerce the northern counties into submission seems to me an equally disastrous alternative. Sinn Fein boasts that it has made Ireland an international question, and I do not minimise the importance of this, though, I confess, the evidence in support of the claim is not yet very convincing. A vigorous foreign policy presupposes a sound domestic policy. But on the gravest of Irish issues Sinn Fein has so far little to offer save the empty threats of Mr. De Valera, though its advocates must be aware that the Ulster difficulty is as formidable an obstacle in the international as in the domestic sphere. If Sinn Fein is, as it can now fairly claim to be, the creed of the Irish people, it must propound a solution of the Ulster riddle based, not on abstract theories, but on the realities of the situation.

END OF PART IV.

V.—ULSTER AS IT IS.

CHAPTER XV.

A FIGHTING CITY.

Belfast is to Ulster what Paris is supposed to be to France. It imposes its will on the community, and no movement succeeds to which it denies support. Unlike Dublin, whose lead the other three provinces do not invariably follow, the capital of Ulster rarely makes the mistake of going too far ahead, but has the gift of intensifying and giving coherence and direction to the vaguer emotions and impulses of the countryside. Many visitors have been tempted to dismiss it as no more than a Scottish or English industrial centre dumped by some freakish chance into an Irish setting. This view is common among South of Ireland folk, Unionists as well as Nationalists, who resent its existence not only as an anomaly but as an offence. The cocksure perkiness of its red-brick houses jars on their nerves; its monstrous array of factory chimneys, flaunting plumes of smoke above the diminished spires of churches, symbolises commercialism exulting in the overthrow of all that is simple and comely in life. I know many to whom the most fitting symbol of the town is the appalling chorus of steam-whistles, buzzers, and hooters that startles the stranger from sleep in the small hours of the morning. It is a Futurist fantasia that would delight Marinetti; to more sensitive folk it sounds as if factories and

workshops were roaring, like lions at feeding time, for their daily tribute of human bodies.

If Belfast has the faults of commercialism, as even its admirers do not deny, it has them in a fashion of its own, which helps instead of hindering the development of a fierce and vital personality. It is not merely depressing as cross-channel industrial centres often are. The soft Irish rains keep it free from grime, and for a manufacturing town it is startlingly clean. Its architecture, it is true, lacks the suavity and dignity of Dublin, and its show buildings achieve little more than a tawdry pretentiousness. When Belfast determines to be imposing in an ornamental fashion the effort is woefully like the display of the vulgarian who seeks to dazzle by loading his fat fingers with rings and hanging gold chains across his paunch. There may be other cities which present as weird a jumble of architectural styles, but in none known to me is the proportion of good to bad so reminiscent of the proportion of bread to sack in Falstaff's tavern bill. This craze for variety is always typified to my mind by the fate of a row of houses built by an earlier generation of Belfast merchants on the Georgian model so admirably preserved in Dublin. The houses were never masterpieces in any sense of the word; but when I knew them first the mellowness of the brick and a certain comeliness in their proportions made a gracious appeal to the eye. In their uniformity and sober dignity lay their charm, but these qualities were defects in the eyes of later proprietors. One innovator, speedily followed by others, relieved the monotony, as he felt it, by building out a bow-window; a second was inspired to cover the walls with pebble-dashed stucco; a third, not to be outdone, painted his bricks in a chequer-board of red and white; and residents, who could not rise to these sublime heights, experimented in fancy doors and fanlights filled with atrocious stained glass.

The curious thing is that Belfast achieves its worst outrages when it is, as it fondly believes, making concessions to beauty. A characteristic example used to, or indeed may still, greet the eye of travellers entering the city by rail from Dublin. Outside the terminus is a pond, whose green, scummy waters, fringed with doleful patches of grass, are set in the middle of a web of railway-lines, where strings of trucks charge each other eternally like maddened bulls. One day somebody, presumably in the hope of redeeming the surrounding ugliness, placed a couple of swans on the pond, and what had been merely a nuisance became from that hour a shuddering horror. Where, however, a strictly utilitarian aim has been pursued, as in the city's cliff-like mills and factories, one gets an impression of naked power, that if not pleasant, is markedly impressive. Only those for whom aesthetics ended with Ruskin will deny beauty to Belfast Harbour and to the miles of shipyards that line the banks of the Lagan. The intricate steel tracery of the gantries that straddle over enormous liners makes an appeal to the imagination stronger than that of crumbling mediaeval castles, and the exquisite proportions and harmonious rhythm of the whole fabric would have delighted a Greek, even if it is despised by some who rave over the fretted stonework of Gothic cathedrals.

Fortunately Belfast is not modern to the exclusion of nature; as in Edinburgh, the country dominates the town. From its busiest streets one has only to lift one's eyes to rejoice in hills and heather; a penny tram journey will bring the traveller into a region as wild as Donegal and as lonely as the Irish midlands. If Belfast children are city born, it is their good luck not to be street-bred. They have the key of the fields, and the least adventurous of them roam far and wide, enjoying all country delights from bird-

nesting in the spring to blackberry gathering in the autumn. Like Wordsworth's Lucy, they lean an ear—

> " In many a secret place,
> Where rivulets dance their wayward round ; "

and if " beauty born of murmuring sound " does not always, as the poet prophesied, pass into their faces, the influence of these golden hours is not as negligible as it is generally assumed to be. Hard-headed Belfast people indeed profess to scoff at such things. Because they cannot be measured in hard cash they rule them out of consideration ; and a visitor anxious to see the sights of the town is more likely to be given a chance of inspecting the system of sewage disposal than to be piloted to the summit of the Cave Hill or the Black Mountain.

Belfast's weakness is to rest her claims too strongly on the basis of purely material success. A local versifier some years ago made it her greatest boast that—

> " She has turned the flax to gold,
> And the most tobacco rolled,"

and few people saw anything ridiculous in the assertion. She sets up tables of imports and exports to be worshipped like the Golden Calf, and believes that her low rate of pauperism suffices to rank her with the New Jerusalem. Her people have evolved a conception of themselves which bears a startling resemblance to the " economic man " of Victorian text-books ; and there is probably no city of the same size in the Three Kingdoms which retains so much of the spirit of the early Industrial Revolution, with its childlike faith in the gospel of salvation by machinery and its glorification of the man of business as the real saviour of society. Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* is still a book which Ulster mothers present

to their sons as a companion volume to the Bible and the *Pilgrim's Progress*; and if its author's prosaic ghost should ever revisit the glimpses of the moon he would probably find Belfast more to his liking than any other town. Here the men who rule affairs have for the most part graduated from back offices, and their successors in those offices dream of a future when they too shall glide to business in a Rolls-Royce car, and act as director on the boards of a score of companies.

Progress is for the majority the art of "getting on," as they describe it; the test of a man is less what he did than what he made. I have heard a Belfast clergyman tell of a wealthy member of his flock, who, when the conversation turned on religion, declared his mind was easy as there were only three questions a man needed to answer, and he was able to answer them. "What are the questions?" asked the minister. "How much money did you make? Did you make it honestly? What did you do with it?" "I don't see any objection to the second and third," said the clergyman. "Have sense, man," came the reply. "What would be the good of asking the last two without the first? Another pillar of the Presbyterian Church, who had also made a large fortune in business, was induced late in life to take a holiday in the Holy Land. After a few days sight-seeing he was discovered one evening shaking a melancholy head. "This sort of thing is very enjoyable," he said, "but it isn't work. A business man's place is in his office."

This point of view of work not as a means, but as an end in itself, is not at all peculiar. It is openly preached as the orthodox creed; and the vision of toilers as busy as ants, and to as little purpose, imposes on many strangers and inspires them with a lively dislike of Ulster. Yet it is not true, or is

true only with deductions that make it a fantastic paradox. The Belfast man spares no pains to paint himself as a slavish materialist; he is really an incurable romanticist. Business has for him the fascination of a great adventure; in his devotion to it he feels he is waving the flag of an ideal in the face of an apathetic Ireland. In his attitude there is a hint of the emotionalism with which America gilds the dollar-hunt, yet to the Belfastman neither the dollars nor work come first. Touch him on religion or politics, and everything else goes to the wall. A political war-cry shouted in a back street, the waving of a green or orange rag, are sufficient to resolve the city into a good imitation of a mediaeval Italian town, with its Montagues and Capulets not merely biting thumbs at one another but locked in a deadly grapple. Belfast's sudden relapses into savagery are a feature of its record much more characteristic than its commercial progress; and it is safe to say that during the last half century, when it emerges into the light of general history it has been as the storm-centre of upheavals that stopped just short of revolution.

Lord Morley in his *Recollections* states fairly enough the paradox of Belfast which has baffled other than philosophic Liberals. "This great and flourishing community, where energy, intelligence, and enterprise have achieved results so striking, has proved," he writes, "to harbour a spirit of bigotry and violence for which a parallel can hardly be found in any town in western Europe. The outbreaks of disorder in 1857, in 1864, and 1872 were as formidable as any that have taken place in these Kingdoms, even in the most agitated times of the nineteenth century. There is no such anachronism in our day as the circumstances that make the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne and the Feast of the Assumption days always of anxiety, and often of terror, in one of

the most industrious and thriving societies of the realm."

I remember vividly my first visit as a small boy to Belfast. A faction fight that lasted for weeks was flickering out, and my introduction was sufficiently thrilling. Policemen with rifles and revolvers were massed at every corner; in one of the danger zones which we skirted tired infantry were dozing by companies on the pavements; and we passed a detachment of Lancers escorting a mob of dishevelled prisoners, some of whom were tied to the stirrup-leathers of the troopers. To me it was a blend of the London of the Gordon Riots, of which I had read in *Barnaby Rudge*, and of the Paris of *A Tale of Two Cities*—romance brought up to date. The better I know Belfast the more I am convinced that this idea of romance lurks in a muddled fashion in the minds of not a few of those whose deeds have won it such an unsavoury reputation. Clayhanger tells Hilda Lessways that in the Five Towns " our poetry is blood." In Belfast it is blood that makes poetry, not symbolic but real blood. Its faction fighters do not regard themselves as bad citizens or wilful disturbers of the peace. To themselves they are rather moss-troopers, whose debatable land is the tangle of frowsy streets that divide the Protestant from the Nationalist quarter; and it does not affect the parallel that bows and spears have been replaced by paving-stones and porter bottles and iron nuts.

Belfast is a raw new city, and out of its broils it evolves the legend which is as essential to new cities as old. One generation points out to another a gate still riddled with bullet-holes; a corner, famous for the operations of a sniper who, anticipating German methods, fixed a flagstone on a push-cart, and advancing under cover behind it fired safely into the brown of his enemies; a *cul-de-sac* into which a body of

dragoons were lured and had to fight their way out with stones rattling off their brass helmets as riveters' hammers clang on steel plates in the shipyards. Naturally youngsters, to whom these tales and a thousand others are told, make for themselves holy places like the Mohammedans, and vow, after the fashion of Indian braves, that when their turn comes they will prove not unworthy of the traditions they have inherited. I know it sounds almost incredible, but at the first church I attended in Belfast in the early nineties urchins, hidden from observation in the back seats, used to while away the time by scribbling on the walls, or cutting with their pen-knives on the pews, such sentiments as "Ulster will Fight," "Morley, Murderer and Atheist"—the author of the *Compromise* had been Irish Chief Secretary during the '86 riots and his name at the time was an abomination to Orangemen—"Blast John Dillon and Tim Healy," and remarks even more unfit for polite ears. This was simply a case of "as the old cock crows the young ones cackle," for the parson was a famous Orange stalwart whose sermons were political tirades garnished with Scripture quotations, and who once offered me a book entitled *Mr. Gladstone, or a Life Misspent*, which, to my eternal regret, I did not accept.

In public respectable folk deplore outbreaks of disorder; in private it is rare to find any who do not back one side against the other. An Englishman, who in his first days in Belfast had the ill luck to get mixed up in a party scuffle, used to tell how in his innocence he turned next morning to the local papers for an explanation of this madness, and discovered to his amazement Nationalist and Unionist journals alike engaged in a hot discussion as to which faction had the best of it. On occasion even respectable folk forget their respectability. Thus a merchant

entering his office one morning after a Nationalist procession had hacked its way through a Unionist district, found his foreman, ordinarily the primmest of Puritans, with his coat half torn from his back, and blood running down his face from an ugly wound. "John," he cried in horror, "don't tell me you were in this disgraceful business?" "I was, indeed, sir," said John. "Thank God, I'm no arm-chair politician." In John's sense there are few arm-chair politicians in Belfast, and his spirit flashes out in strange places. Some years ago, after a bad outbreak of rioting, the City Council proposed to take steps which, it was claimed, would go a long way to prevent future troubles. In the fighting quarter, it should be known, the streets are mainly paved with cobble stones or "kidneys," to give them their local name. At the first sign of hostilities these are prized up with pokers and stacked in heaps by the women to serve as ammunition dumps for the fighters. The Corporation scheme was to substitute macadam for the cobble stones, but when the motion came up for discussion it was discovered that the plan was to begin with the Nationalist area, whose representatives, not unnaturally, raised a storm of protest against the unfair advantage this method of disarmament would confer on their opponents. I believe there were some negotiations, but they came to nothing, and to this day the cobble-stones remain.

One can well understand the amazement and even horror of outsiders confronted for the first time with such a state of affairs. Nevertheless it is a vast mistake to assume, as outsiders so often do, that the squalid jehads of Belfast are the inevitable expression in action of sectarian and political passions so vehement that only the clash of physical combat will cool the fervour of rival partisans. I should be the last to deny the grim reality of the antagonisms that

make Ulster history such dismal reading for all who cherish the ideal of Irish unity. But, as in most Irish problems, there is a historical explanation which goes a long way to modify the conclusions drawn by those who are content to judge from surface appearances. The conditions prevailing in Ulster are not the peculiar outcome of divisions between Unionists and Nationalists, but represent, in a very large degree, the survival of an old and evil habit which, not so many generations ago, was the rule rather than the exception all over Ireland. While it would be absurd to say that the feuds are kept alive for the love of faction fighting, undeniably the love of fighting for its own sake is one of the factors which complicate the task of reformers who preach peace and goodwill.

If Ulster does not accept all the tenets of the Nietzschean gospel, it profoundly agrees with its author that "a good war justifies any cause." Naturally this view is incredible to the law-abiding Englishman, who sees in a physical encounter with sticks and stones the collapse of the corner stone of the commonwealth and the coming of universal anarchy. Ireland, having no laws of her own to respect, and—let us be honest, even if the admission ruffles the susceptibilities of super-sensitive patriots—thoroughly enjoying a fight, perceives nothing abnormal in this method of getting rid of bad blood. Philip Skelton is rightly regarded as one of the saints of the Irish Episcopal Church, yet to his dying day he exalted amongst his heroes Baldwin, the Provost of Trinity, who, in one of the frays with the butchers of Patrick's Market, which for eighteenth century Dublin students made compulsory attendance at St. Patrick's Cathedral a joy instead of a penance, led his flock into action, crying, "Follow me, my lads, and I'll head you. I am appointed by your parents and friends to take care of you, and I'll fight for you

till I die." Skelton, according to his biographer, used to add exultantly, " He would have done so too, for he was as brave as a lion."

The tendency is not peculiar to Irish blood ; on the contrary it is a deep-rooted instinct in most races, which is slowly eliminated as a result of education, discipline, and good government. The rulers of Ireland, however, so far from taking steps to wean their subjects from this weakness, set themselves to encourage it as an essential part of the policy of " Divide and Conquer." This is frankly admitted by no less an authority than Sir George Cornewall Lewis. In his *Irish Disturbances,* which is still the classical work on the subject, he says :—" At one time the local authorities encouraged faction fighting ; it seemed to them that the people must necessarily raise their hands against someone ; and they thought that factions would serve the same purpose as the stone thrown by Cadmus among the earth-born warriors of Thebes—that of turning the violence of the combatants from themselves upon one another."

Thomas Drummond, whose statue stands in the Dublin City Hall, beside those of Grattan and O'Connell as a memorial, in Mr. Barry O'Brien's words, " of the solitary English official who won the hearts of her people," found in the thirties of the last century, when he was striving to curb the factions in the interests of public order, that he was upsetting the traditional policy of Dublin Castle. " I ought to mention," Drummond informed a Committee of the House of Lords, " that it was a practice at one time not uncommon, to draw the police from fairs with a view to preventing collisions with the people ; and when the order that they should attend was given, I received a representation from Sir John Harvey, the provincial inspector of Leinster, begging that the subject might be well considered before the order was

sent out, for he felt that very serious consequences might result from it—the policy having been to withdraw the men out of sight and leave the people to fight among themselves unrestrained, rather than risk the loss of life by collision with the constabulary." Mr. Barry O'Brien, from whose admirable biography of Drummond I have taken this extract, adds the comment, " there was no hesitation in allowing the police to shoot down peasants who refused to pay tithes; but drunken brawlers at markets and fairs were not to be interfered with ! "

Some of the factions, such as the Caravats and Shanavests of Kilkenny and Waterford, and the Two Year Olds and Three Year Olds of Limerick and Tipperary, have passed into history. The original cause of dispute between the Two Year Olds and Three Year Olds was supposed to be the age of a horse, and for generations a whole countryside fought ferociously at fairs and patterns on this miserable pretext. The local varieties of factionism were innumerable. Thus in North Tipperary, in 1834, three baronies could show the following list of factions—Ruskavallas and Caffees, Dingens and Dawsons, Cumminses and Darrigs, Bootashees, Bog Boys, and Tubbers. The Bootashees were O'Briens, who derived their name from their custom of wrapping their legs in pieces of leather tied with thongs, and their vendetta against the Tubbers and Bog Boys, who were composed of Kennedys and Hagans, was due to a quarrel between two small boys of rival camps over a game of marbles, " This," Sir George Cornewall Lewis writes, " happened about thirty years ago, and from that period to the present the factions have continued fighting at fairs and markets, and other public meetings."

By their own efforts the Irish people eradicated the virus. Father Mathew's Temperance campaign

gave the first impulse, and O'Connell's Repeal movement exercised a still more powerful influence, by instilling into the minds of even the dullest of the peasantry a sense of the value of unity and discipline. Once the Land War began in earnest it was realised that local feuds were too expensive a luxury for a country like Ireland. The success of the struggle against territorial autocracy depended, in the first instance, on the determination of individual tenants on rack-rented estates to give practical application to the doctrines of the leaders; and if these tenants were more inclined to crack the skulls of their fellows than to concentrate against landlordism the whole crusade would have speedily collapsed. It was by no means an easy task to conquer a habit which had not only the sanction of long tradition, but was thoroughly congenial to the temperament of those who practised it. Uphill work as it was, the thing was done, and the manner of its doing is not least of the achievements of the Irish people in the last century.

Ulster alone, in this as in so much else, remained an exception to the general rule. Orangeism was not moved by the arguments that induced its opponents to subordinate local antagonisms to national ends; on the contrary, it saw in this unity a challenge which necessitated more stringent efforts on its part to assert its claims. Consequently, as faction-fighting died out elsewhere, it acquired a new and more sinister significance in the northern province. I do not minimise the gravity of the conflicts, but I do protest against the reasoning that assumes that every stone flung at an Orange procession, or every head broken on Lady Day when Nationalists hold their parades, is evidence of a hatred too fierce to be extinguished by any measure of statesmanship. As a matter of fact the actual

belligerents take these encounters much more philosophically and in a much better spirit than their respective leaders. The majority hugely enjoy their skirmishes, and their attitude to their opponents is admirably summed up in the expressive Ulster phrase, "friends fighting through other." A proof of this is the fact that the deepest wrath of both sides is reserved for the unfortunate constabulary whose task it is to prevent the combatants from settling their differences in their own way.

Having lived in Ulster for years before Sir Edward Carson blossomed out as a "leader of revolt," I am not impressed by the case put forward by special pleaders in both camps that old hostilities were dying down till the Home Rule agitation gave them a new lease of life. Unionists accept this view because it enables them to contend that no real demand existed for self-government; Nationalists use it as a stick for Tories who exploited Ulster antagonisms in the hope of overthrowing a hated Radical Ministry. It is true, however, that the ferocity of rival partisans had sensibly diminished in modern times; riots on the epical scale of 1864 and 1886 were a memory cherished only by the members of an older generation, to whom the minor outbreaks of disorder which at long intervals disturbed the city seemed a proof that virtue had gone out of the race. The most serious upheaval between 1886 and the Carson crusade was the Transport Workers' strike of 1907, which had nothing whatever to do with sectarian differences. On the contrary, Orangemen, for the first time in living memory, were banded with Nationalists, and not a few of them took part in the conflicts on the Falls Road with the troops and constabulary.

Sir Edward Carson's real offence is not that he created sectarian enmities, but that instead of helping to obliterate them he increased a thousandfold their

venom and virulence. His admirers, indeed, do not hesitate to claim that as there was no actual rioting during the years their leader was mustering his forces in the North, his true garland is that of the peace-bringer, not of the war-maker. Even they, one would think, can hardly expect this argument to be taken seriously. If there was less stone-throwing, this was simply because the stone-throwers were encouraged to hope that by holding themselves in for a little they would be able to finish the job once for all with Mauser rifles and machine-guns. On a minor scale Sir Edward Carson set himself to do exactly what he makes it the chief crime of the German Junkers to have done. His appeal, like theirs, was always to force, never to reason or justice, and he deliberately played on passions which might gain him a political triumph, but entailed a rattling back into barbarism of the community by a surrender to its basest instincts. To flood a city like Belfast with lethal weapons for the avowed purpose of pursuing a political and sectarian vendetta was a crime akin to that of the gun-runner who distributes cheap rifles in Equatorial Africa.

It was easy enough to smile at the sort of enthusiasm that made it fashionable for women to discard tennis racquets for signal flags, and led men of the true faith to honour acquaintances no longer with a casual nod but with a punctilious military salute. In the early days of the movement one's chief regret was that Sir Edward Carson had not insisted on heel-clicking as one of the accomplishments of his Volunteers. Had he done so, Belfast would have suggested still more strongly a rehearsal on a large scale of a Viennese musical comedy. Unfortunately the hysteria speedily assumed other and more questionable shapes. It was decidedly embarrassing for nervous folk who found themselves

jammed in a crowd assembled to greet Sir Edward Carson, as the appearance of the leader was invariably the signal for a fusilade of revolver shots by exultant enthusiasts. I knew a Belfast newspaper office where it was the custom during the crisis to keep a Lee-Enfield rifle lying on the files. A drawer in the editor's desk would be casually opened and then hurriedly snapped to, but not before the eyes of a visitor had caught, as they were meant to catch, a glimpse of a row of automatic pistols. This, of course, was only a harmless device to impress innocent visitors from England—nobody in the office had ever fired even a blank cartridge, or was at all anxious to do so.

There was, however, no real need to stage-manage things for the inquiring stranger. When it became the fashion for half Belfast to go about its business and its pleasure with a revolver in its hip-pocket, life was more exciting than it is in Albania or in a mining town as shown in cinema films of the wild and woolly West. I have seen a drunken Volunteer reeling home on a Saturday night blaze furiously at a street lamp; and at hotly contested football matches a goal would be greeted by a salvo of revolver shots from the spectators, which sent mud and gravel spirting up almost under the feet of the players. As in most other things Belfast must complicate even football with politics. The Linfield team is claimed by the Unionists and the Celtic by the Nationalists, and a contest between the two concludes as often as not with a battle-royal between their supporters. To this day to raise the cry in the streets "Go on the Blues" or "Go on the Stripes"—the pet names of the rival teams—is an offence punishable by a fine of forty shillings or a month's imprisonment on the ground of "using expressions calculated to provoke a breach of the peace." These things may seem ludicrous

rather than tragic, but the tragedy was plain enough to all who were not blinded by the passions of the hour. Presbyterian Moderators and ex-Moderators lauded the discipline of the Carson Volunteers, and archbishops and bishops glorified the armed neutrality of the rival camps as if it signified the dawn of a new Utopia in which the will-to-power should finally supersede the pacifist fallacies of the Sermon on the Mount. But men who possessed no claim to sanctity, and were concerned only for the secular welfare of the community, had little difficulty in discerning behind this affectation of order and unity an attempt, more steady and purposeful than any that had hitherto been made, to persuade Ulstermen that the holiest task to which they could devote themselves was to bellow hymns of hate against their neighbours.

Before Sir Edward Carson swooped down on Ulster this task was left, in the main, to a handful of Orange parsons, for whom the official parliamentary leaders declined to accept responsibility when the fervour of their loyalty brought them into conflict with the authorities. In the Belfast of my youthful days the most prominent of these zealots were a Presbyterian, known to friends and foes alike from the vigour of his oratory as "Roaring" Hugh Hanna, and an Episcopalian, Dr. R. R. Kane. "Roaring Hugh," whose work for Protestantism has been honoured by a statue of almost incredible hideousness, won his spurs as a champion of free speech. He claimed the right to deliver his harangues at the Custom House steps, an experiment which led to fierce riots entailing a heavy loss of life. When questioned before a commission of inquiry as to whether he would consider it his duty to preach when he believed rioting would ensue, he answered, "I would. Our most valuable rights have been obtained by conflict, and if we

cannot maintain them without that, we must submit to the necessity." Later, a group of simple-minded Socialists decided to take advantage of "Roaring Hugh's" victory for free speech by holding an open-air meeting at the Custom House steps. The proceedings had scarcely begun before an orator had an eye knocked out by the mob, and his comrades were with difficulty saved by the police from being drowned in the Lagan.

Dr. Kane was a more complex personality. Standing well over six feet, straight as a lance, he resembled, when arrayed in his trappings as Grand Master he headed his legions on the Twelfth of July, rather a mediaeval bishop going forth to war than a meek Protestant pastor. No man raged more loudly against priestly domination; no man practised it more thoroughly at the expense of his parishioners. It was a common sight to see him driving with his blackthorn into church a mob of loafers whom he had culled from publichouse corners; and while his face would flush past red into purple as he denounced the iniquities of Catholic priests who dragged politics into religion, his own sermons were better fitted for an Orange platform than for a Christian pulpit. To do him justice, he did not fly at small game; and I remember him bearding to his face a Tory Lord Lieutenant who had ventured to remonstrate with Belfast Orangemen. Dr. Kane had his own quarrels with his official leaders, and in his later years his line of development was a sore trial to his associates. He joined the Gaelic League at a time when many Nationalists looked askance at the movement. "My Orangeism," he said, "does not make me less proud to be an O'Cahan." I have heard him boast that his ancestors were with the rebels in '98, and that had he lived then he was not at all certain on which side he would have fought. Unlike the new school of

Orangemen, Dr. Kane had no great opinion of the inherent wisdom and beneficence of the English rulers of Ireland. His part in the campaign against over-taxation in the early nineties brought him into contact with strange allies, and had he been a smaller man he would have been denounced for "trafficking with traitors." Not that this would have troubled him overmuch. He could always be relied on to give as good as he got, and were he alive to-day I am certain he would have fought tooth and nail as an Irishman against Sir Edward Carson's scheme for making the north-eastern counties English shireland.

The later developments of Dr. Kane had a precedent in the career of John Rea, who, like Sir Edward Carson, was a lawyer, but a lawyer with a difference. In the vivid Irish phrase, Rea was a "playboy," whose foible it was to see good in both political parties, and who fought for that good with a persistence that amazed no less than it confounded narrow partisans. His favourite description of himself as "her Orthodox Presbyterian Britannic Majesty's Orange-Fenian Attorney-General for Ulster" was not only a Gargantuan mouthful of words such as his soul loved, but was strictly true to the spirit of his chequered career. From the windows of his house Green and Orange flags flew side by side; and when he was released from jail—imprisonment for contempt of Court was so much the rule with him that he appeared to plead important cases with a bag packed with necessaries for a spell behind prison bars—Nationalist and Unionist bands joined in amity to play him home.

Clifford Lloyd, the notorious resident magistrate whose exploits in Land League days out-Zaberned Zabern, was first stationed at Belfast, where naturally he came into conflict with John Rea, whose Protean political activities would have stag-

gered a much more sympathetic guardian of the peace. One of Lloyd's first duties was to enforce the suppression of an Orange demonstration, which had been summoned to overawe a Nationalist meeting held in Nationalist territory. Despite the proclamation the Orangemen assembled, and, headed by John Rea, strove to force their way through the ranks of the constabulary, in order, as they said, to assert the right of public meeting and free speech. A few weeks later Clifford Lloyd was called on to protect an Orange meeting against which the Nationalists had threatened reprisals. To his amazement, when the attackers appeared, John Rea, mounted on a horse and carrying a green flag, led them into action. The third encounter between the two took place in a Belfast theatre, where Rea, rising between the acts, pointed out Clifford Lloyd to the mob in the gallery, and denounced him with such eloquence that the unlucky magistrate, assailed by Nationalist and Unionist partisans alike, was forced to beat a hasty retreat. Rea's originality was not confined to politics. He tramped about Belfast attended always by a couple of Irish water-spaniels, believed by some of his clients to be his familiars, and, like most men of his generation, he made Byron the god of his idolatry. When he was approaching his grand climacteric he announced his intention of swimming Bangor Bay in imitation of his hero's feat in swimming the Hellespont, and the special trains which an enterprising railway company ran to the scene were wholly insufficient to accommodate the thousands of Belfast people who were determined to witness the exploit.

In his *Fall of Feudalism*, Michael Davitt reprints a characteristic letter, written by Rea from Downpatrick Jail during one of his many terms of imprisonment for contempt of Court, asking to have sent to him "a gallon or two of essence of shamrocks," by which,

he explained, " I mean good Ulster buttermilk, with just a dash of sweet milk through it—say one-fourth, not more—to take off the acidity." In a lyrical rhapsody he continues, " Poets may sing as they like of Falernian, old Coleraine, Guinness's stout, Bass's beer, and French champagne, but from life-long experience (and you have often had practical knowledge during our thirty-five years' friendship of the fact that I never was a teetotaller) I can certify that there is not a drink available for the human race at all equal to the essence of shamrocks. . . . But for my great love of mixed milk and curled dogs I would now, to a dead certainty, be not an Orange prisoner in Downpatrick Jail, fifteen stone weight and in the highest possible spirits, but a very unsubstantial Irish-Orange-Fenian angel flying through Purgatory with a plumage of a most dingy hue, or perhaps, if in favour with St. Peter, of orange, green and crimson, the Irish Tricolour." One of the great events of Rea's life was his defence of the prisoners in the first prosecutions against the Land League held in Sligo in 1879. Rea secured for the trial exactly the advertisement that Parnell and Davitt desired, and his vitriolic wit reduced the proceedings to a roaring farce. While he gibed mercilessly inside the Court at prosecutors and magistrates, demanding indignantly to know, when one of them mispronounced a word, " whether it was permissible for a man in the pay of the Crown to murder the Queen's English," he spent the luncheon interval, to Parnell's horror, in making speeches to a crowd of pious Catholics outside, who listened for the first time to laudations of William of Orange and fiery denunciations of the blighting tyranny exercised by " Romish priests and Italian cardinals."

Rea was not merely an eccentric, as some of his contemporaries professed to believe, he was ad-

mittedly one of the best criminal lawyers of his time, and proved more than a match for Lord Russell of Killowen, who, before he became a member of the English bar, was as a solicitor Rea's rival in Belfast. Rea died by his own hand in the 'eighties, and local tradition has it that he shot himself after a visit from his old competitor, who reproached him with having wilfully wasted abilities that would have raised him to the Woolsack. I do not believe Russell ever uttered such sentiments, or that, if he had been stupid enough to do so, Rea would have received them otherwise than with a shout of laughter. He may not have attained power and place, but he dominated Belfast while he lived, and the supremacy he enjoyed was more to his taste than anything London could have given him. Those who have a liking for the dramatic in politics will always regret that John Rea was not spared to measure swords with Sir Edward Carson. However the struggle might have ended, such a battle of giants would have added a picturesque chapter to Ulster history.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NORTHERN MIND.

THE combativeness of Belfast is equalled only by its self-assertiveness. For many the name conjures up a flushed and vehement person, with a bowler hat crammed down on his ears, who resents a slight on his town as Cyrano resented a reflection on his nose. He makes his very faults a *panache*, and if he does not defend them like the Gascon with a sword, he shoots off facts and figures at opponents for all the world as if he were an animated Lewis gun. Nor is the Belfast man's "guid conceit" of himself merely a piece of arrogance. He is conscious of having created something unique of its kind in Ireland, and any attempt to belittle that achievement brings him into the field, horse, foot, and artillery, ready and panting for battle. Strange as it may seem to outsiders, the Ulsterman is firmly convinced that to have woven better linen and built bigger liners than his rivals is a proof not merely of his economic superiority but of the soundness of his politics and the truth of his religion. And when the manner in which he weaves his linen or builds his ships is questioned he feels his politics and religion are being assailed. This assumption is by no means so baseless as it appears at first sight. His opponents may profess to direct their attacks to purely practical questions like the employment of half-timers or the underpayment of home-workers, but some of them are sure to draw an anti-Unionist moral, and the Ulsterman is convinced that the mildest reflection on Unionism is inspired by a hatred of the fundamental principles of Protestantism.

Of course he has largely himself to blame, for it was he who combined business, politics, and religion into a triple-headed idol, before which he not only bows himself, but demands that the rest of his fellow-countrymen shall prostrate themselves in awe and adoration. Every shipbuilding record achieved on the banks of the Lagan is acclaimed as another nail in the coffin of Home Rule; when Belfast at the end of a good year reckons up its profits it flourishes the total in the face of Dublin and Cork as a final proof that it is right and they are wrong. So ingrained is the habit of returning thanks that they are not as other men, " even as these Nationalists," that Ulstermen, in exalting themselves at the expense of political opponents, can turn a blind eye to the most awkward facts. I shall never forget a speech I once heard a Unionist member make to his constituents, after what was probably the rowdiest election modern Ulster has known. In the square where he spoke practically every window had been shattered by stones, and a couple of hundred yards away police with drawn batons were charging an Orange mob which had raided into Nationalist territory. Yet the burden of the new member's song was that the election would be an example to the South and West of the discipline and order that made Ulster irresistible. At the time I felt sure he was speaking with his tongue in his cheek; now I know that, however illogical he may have been, he was not consciously insincere.

Belfast's boastfulness and self-conceit reached sublime heights during the war. Its recruiting returns were poor as compared with any British industrial area under the voluntary system, yet it persuades itself, and has succeeded in persuading others, that its contribution turned the scale against Germany almost as decisively as the intervention of

the American army. Sir Edward Carson never mounts a platform nowadays without trumpeting to high heaven the glorious deeds of Belfast workers in building and repairing ships for the Navy and weaving aeroplane sails for the Allied armies. No one will dispute that Belfast's record is a subject for legitimate pride, but the chief concern of Ulster Unionists is to use it as a weapon against their political opponents. They inquire indignantly why Munster built no ships and Leinster no aeroplanes. When it is pointed out that the farmers of these provinces, if they did not feed the guns, fed the men that worked the guns, the invariable retort is that the Irish bacon, beef, and butter which helped to break down the submarine menace were produced not for love of England, but for love of England's money. One would imagine that Belfast gave lavishly, asking no return, whereas it is notorious that the city has never reaped a richer harvest than during the last four years.

The logic by which the Belfastman seeks to justify his claim to stand on a higher plane than his rivals is delightfully simple. Protestantism, he contends, is the only key to the riddle of why Belfast advances as Galway recedes, and those who reject this solution do so because they are unwilling to face unpalatable facts. The argument has an air of plausibility when one contrasts Belfast with Galway ; but its supporters are by no means so voluble when they are confronted with the baffling case of Derry. No Ulsterman will assert that the Protestantism of Derry is less fervent than that of Belfast, and the Maiden City possesses advantages denied to its younger rival. The district surrounding Derry, as Godkin points out in his *Land War in Ireland*, is not inferior in the quality of the soil, and its inhabitants lack neither enterprise nor intelligence. The Foyle is more navigable than the Lagan and better adapted to foreign, especially trans-

atlantic, trade; moreover, Belfast, unlike Derry, had no estate "granted by the Crown to assist in the development of civilisation, education, and commerce." If Protestantism is the sole stimulus required to achieve industrial prosperity, how comes it that Derry, with all the odds apparently in its favour, has lagged so far behind Belfast in the race for wealth?

Godkin, who went to history for facts instead of relying on prejudices, explains the mystery, as Cliffe Leslie and other unbiassed investigators have done, by showing that Belfast was the one Irish town in a position to take full advantage of the opportunity offered by the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century. Its greatest asset was less, as most chroniclers argue, that the linen-trade had been favoured while other Irish industries had been suppressed than that the financial difficulties of the Marquis of Donegall, the ground landlord of the town, compelled him to raise money by giving his tenants perpetuity leases. To these perpetuities, Godkin declares, "we must undoubtedly ascribe the existence of a middle class of remarkable independence of character, and the accumulation of capital for manufactures and commerce." "Had Lord Donegall," he continues, "been able to hold the town in a state of tutelage and dependence . . . Belfast might have been far behind Derry to-day. The agent would take care that no interests should grow up on the estate which his chief could not control or knock down. It is not likely that Lord Donegall would have suffered the landscape to be spoiled, the atmosphere of the deer-park and gardens tainted by the smoke of factory chimneys, which could add nothing to his rental, while crowding around him the race which his great progenitor did so much to extirpate."

Derry, on the contrary, had the full advantage of that paternalism which Sir Edward Carson proclaims

it is his ambition as well as his fixed determination to restore. At the time of the Plantation Derry city and county were allotted to the London companies, which explains the name Londonderry. These companies were to act as trustees for the colonists and such natives as were permitted to reside inside the confiscated territories, furthering their interests, and by their superior abilities as rulers and administrators raising the tenants higher and higher in the scale of civilisation until at last they reached the London level. Strange to say, the people of Derry, Protestant and Catholic alike, rewarded this devotion with the blackest ingratitude. Until the power of the Companies was finally broken in the nineteenth century, the history of the city is one long record of conflict with its benefactors as fierce, if not as bloody, as that waged against the forces of King James. To the Covenanters of to-day who are clamouring to have all their affairs regulated from London, it will seem monstrous that Derry's Protestant Corporation, well within the memory of men still living, should have struggled furiously against London's supervision of its municipal affairs, should have resented the fact that half the revenue these enlightened administrators drew from the town was eaten up in expenses of management, and denounced their autocratic rule as "a national grievance and insult." Godkin, writing as late as 1870, declares, "The city is overwhelmed with debt—debt for the new quays, debt for the new bridge, debt for the public works of the Corporation, which has struggled to improve the city under the incubus of this alien power, contending with debt, want of tenure, and other difficulties, which would all have been avoided if the city had held the lands which these Londoners hold in their possession, and use as their own pleasure dictates. . . . Belfast is now seven times the size of Derry, and

is in the possession of a trade and a trade capital which Derry can never hope to emulate, while smothered by the stick-in-the-mud policy of that miserable anachronism, the Irish Society." Protestantism, it would seem, is not the only explanation of the record progress of Belfast; and if Sir Edward Carson could be induced to study events in the history of Derry later than the siege, he might not be so confident that the absorption of Ulster in England would inaugurate the millenium in the six north-eastern counties.

In the popular speech of Ulster "Protestant" is an epithet which not only distinguishes differences of religion, but serves as a label to describe all kinds of excellence. So stereotyped is the use of the word in this sense that I have heard a Catholic farmer urge his labourers who were engaged on some special task to make "a good Protestant job" of it. This tradition of efficiency, and the desire to maintain it, are far and away the most valuable products of the gospel of work which Belfast preaches so strenuously. As a matter of fact, in his utterances on this subject the Northerner unconsciously does himself a grave injustice. He pretends to think that work in itself is the be-all and end-all of existence, and speaks as if he measured its value solely in terms of hard cash. This attitude has misled his friends as well as his foes, but to anyone who has taken the pains to go deeper than surface appearances it is obvious that, as a rule, he is merely repeating a formula which does not express his real convictions. Those who know the Ulster worker well are aware that though he may flaunt his "big money," as he calls it, as a final answer to his critics, it is not his sole, or even his greatest, compensation. He retains in a high degree the pride of craftsmanship, and this pride is based not only on his individual contribution to the finished product but on the finished product itself.

It is of course an axiom of the new economics that the dominance of the machine in modern industry has eliminated from labour the joy of the craftsman whose work permitted self-expression. Since Ruskin and William Morris the fashion is to deplore the hard fate of the machine minder who, it is taken for granted, has little interest in the processes in which he is individually engaged, and less than none in those outside his own ken. I do not dispute that this theory holds good as a general rule, for I have not collected evidence from a sufficient number of sources to disprove it. From my own experience, however, I should be chary of applying the rule rigidly in Belfast. Almost invariably I discovered when I got to know a worker well that though he might talk as if he measured the value of his firm's output in cash, and took a personal pride in a big turn-over which did not mean an extra farthing to him in wages, this was not, as hostile critics of Belfast are fond of asserting, a degrading survival of the spirit of serfdom and toadyism. On the contrary, the reflected glory which is derived from commercial success by those who have all the pains and little of the profits, springs from causes highly creditable to the Ulster worker. Get deep enough into his mind and one finds that his pride in the supremacy of Belfast ships and Belfast linen has in it more than a hint of the enthusiasm of the artist.

This spirit animates not only men who are engaged in highly-skilled work, but those whose labours are to all appearances purely mechanical. I always remember as typical of Belfast a man whose duty it was to stoke the furnaces in a bakehouse, and who in the intervals did what he called "donkey-work" wheeling in and out the trucks with their batches of bread. Few occupations would seem to be more deadening, yet my friend, as I discovered, had not

only the keenest sense of the importance of his own work, but a romantic delight in the whole mystery of baking from the mixing of the dough to the intricacies of cake ornamentation, an achievement of which he spoke much as a mediaeval mason might of the artist who painted cathedral frescoes. This fireman possessed in a rare degree the gift of racy speech, but I soon learned to distinguish something of the same spirit glimmering through the utterances of his fellows who lacked this gift, though it might not be always clearly expressed nor perhaps clearly felt by the men themselves. For my own part I frankly admit I could never trace any relation between this quality and Protestantism, particularly with the brand of Protestantism preached north of the Boyne. Yet I should not quarrel with a man who insisted that in the last analysis a religious element can be discerned, provided it is admitted that the religion is akin to that of the lines—

> " Who sweeps a room as in Thy sight
> Makes it and the action fine."

It would be grotesque to say that even a minority of Belfast workers dedicate themselves to the task of manipulating power-looms or driving rivets as Milton dedicated himself to the service of poetry. But they do in the mass value efficiency for its own sake, and as craftsmen appreciate not only the highly specialised processes in which they are engaged, but the result which these processes are employed to produce. A community in which such a spirit exists may choose, as Belfast does, to measure its good qualities by materialist standards, but I think it possesses virtues not usually associated with pure materialism.

The city in these days can lay claim to poets as well as plutocrats, and the latest and most

considerable of these, Mr. Richard Rowley, has worthily sung what he rightly describes as "the steely ardours" of his native town. In "The Islandmen," a poem inspired by the spectacle of the flood of shipyard workers pouring home through the dusk, Mr. Rowley has come very near to the secret of Belfast.

"Terrible as an army with banners,
The legions of labour
March endless o'er the Bridge.
Muffled on muddy pavements
The sound of their tramping feet
Throbs a sustaining bass
Beneath the clamorous music of city ways.
No proud trumpets call
With golden voices flattering their march.
No splendour and no pomp
Attends them as they go.

* * * *

But as they pass
The individual faces shine,
The faces of strong men.
Men who build ships!
And some are old,
Gaunt, grey-bearded, stooped
With many years of toil, but undejected,
Still they are proud,
They have seen the work of their hands
They have known that it is good.

And some are young,
Rejoicing in their youth,
Rejoicing in the strength they daily prove
Against the strength of steel;

Till from their mastery
The stubborn iron grows
A living thing, a noble shape,
A shape whose heart
Beats in the mighty pistons they have cast.
A living thing that treads
The stormy waters with a conquering step,
And by fierce winds and waves is unsubdued.

Only strong hands
Can give strength visible form ;
Only proud hearts
Can fashion shapes of pride.
Iron and steel are dead
Till man's creative will
Shall weld them to the image he desires,
Shall make a living symbol
Of the strength and the pride of his soul.
Splendid the ships they build,
More splendid far
The hearts that dare conceive
Such vastness and such power."

I suspect Mr. Rowley would not seriously dispute that the potentialities he discerns beneath the drabness of Belfast industrialism are not developed to the best advantage. As a matter of fact the danger under existing conditions is that they may be perverted to base uses. Admirable as pride is, the sort of pride that leads men to value their achievements less as a stepping-stone to greater things than as a pedestal mounted upon which they look down with scorn on others who have not been so fortunate, can be easily transformed from a virtue into a vice. Belfast is altogether too much inclined to take its ease in its commercial Zion, and to forget that only at their peril can cities as well as empires repudiate

humility and make a fetish of the will-to-power. Criticism is essential to modify a mental bias of this kind, but outside criticism, as I have said, is discounted in advance as a device of the enemy. Criticism from the inside as yet scarcely exists, and those who are capable of giving it fear, with some reason, that it may be twisted to the detriment of their cause. This fear is naturally fostered by the people who know they have laid themselves open to criticism; and it is a matter of common knowledge that some of those who deny most fiercely the existence of spots on the Ulster sun do so for the reason that their interest lies in preserving and extending the spots. For all his loyalty in public the Ulsterman in private does not lose his head. During the Carson campaign it was my fortune to be in close contact with some of the inner circle, and their blistering comments on many of the leaders, and most of the policies, would have suggested to a stranger that the movement was in imminent danger of collapse. Yet these politicians, though they declined to wear blinkers themselves, would have been the first to denounce as a traitor any man who had the hardihood to deny publicly that all was for the best in the best of all possible provinces.

Curiously enough, the augurs on each side can on occasion exchange a solemn wink. One of the features of the campaign was the struggle to influence English opinion. Liberal stalwarts were conveyed across the Channel by Nationalists, and harangued by eloquent orators in the intervals of sight-seeing and junketing. Unionists made a corner in the doubtful voters in English working-class constituencies in the North and the Midlands. These were shipped over in droves, whisked round boycotted farms, the Dublin slums, and select areas in Belfast, and sent home with their heads buzzing from the effects of Irish whiskey and loyalist statistics. And

both sides regarded their victims, as I may call them, with good-natured contempt as people who if they outlived Methuselah could never grasp the elements of the Irish question. I have heard a Nationalist and an Unionist agent matching stories of their experiences in shepherding these convoys that would have shocked their guests considerably. Again, before the war the Covenanter's trump-card was the backing of the Unionist Press. Every correspondent sent over with a brief to dispose of the Irish problem in a series of half a dozen articles manufactured out of material supplied by the Ulster Unionist Association, was hailed as a prophet from whose verdict there was no appeal. But when the Northcliffe Press began to flirt with the idea of an Irish settlement, and the rest of the Unionist journals joined in a chorus of approval, the Belfast papers, without as much as " by your leave," stole the Nationalist thunder, and denounced English dogmatism in Irish affairs with a wealth of indignation that the most perfervid Sinn Feiner might envy.

Destiny may have made the English arbiters in the Ulster quarrel, but their qualifications for the task impress the Orange section as little as the Green. If it is not quite correct to say that Ulster's loyalty is conditional—she must cling to England so long as she declines to unite with Ireland—she is convinced that she alone upholds the true ideal. British voters may be led astray by the wiles of Radicals or Nationalists ; Ulster never wavers from the straight and narrow path. This view was delightfully epitomised in the remark of a veteran Orangeman, who, at the time Devolution was in the air, heard the rumour that King Edward was not unfavourably inclined to the scheme. " Well, well," said he, more in sorrow than in anger, " I had always my doubts that he wasn't quite loyal."

If both Ulster parties react in the same fashion when England rubs them the wrong way, they display as against *franc-tireurs* and unauthorised combatants the freemasonry of professional soldiers. Sir Horace Plunkett—to whom we owe the saying "a man in Ireland without a party is like a dog in a tennis-court"—had the melancholy satisfaction of proving the truth of his own epigram when, on suspicion of a weakening in his opposition to Home Rule, the Ulster Unionists, who for years had been calling on the Nationalists to bow down to him as the ideal Irish statesman, bluntly told him to get back to his milk-cans and churns, and leave politics to those who understood them.* There was an even more glaring instance in the early days of the war when some well-intentioned folk sought to organise in Belfast a Home Defence Corps on the English model, free from any tinge of politics. The Unionists immediately declared that the proper place for any man who had not signed the Covenant was not in some "fancy" corps but in the Irish National Volunteers; the Nationalists were equally insistent that if anyone outside their organisation wanted to shoulder a rifle he should do so as an Ulster Volunteer. One is sometimes tempted to think that the paupers in Lady Gregory's comedy, who wrangle so venomously and yet are not happy away from one another, symbolise perfectly the spirit of political Ulster.

The Carson crusade had one result, unforseen by its authors, which may well prove of more importance in the history of Ulster than the din of its drums and

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* Sir Horace Plunkett's recent declaration in favour of Dominion Home Rule has led the Carsonite Press to label him "Ulster's inveterate enemy"; and the *Belfast Newsletter*, the official organ of Orangeism, denounces the founder of the co-operative movement as a "mischievous agitator" who will not "allow the Irish people to settle down to industry."

tramplings. If politically even its admirers would scarcely claim it as a liberalising force, socially it has served as a liberating agency by giving the younger generation an opportunity of asserting itself. In his amusing caricature of Sir Edward Carson, contributed to the series "Irishmen of To-day," Mr. St. John Ervine denounced the Ulster movement as one wholly dominated by old men. The comment is true as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. After all, it was no more unnatural that the opposition to the third Home Rule Bill should be led by veterans who had resisted the Gladstonian measures than that the commanders of the British Expeditionary Force in August, 1914, should have been officers who had made their mark in the Boer war. The dominance of age is by no means a phenomenon peculiar to Ulster; it is the rule throughout the other provinces as well, and its existence furnishes another proof against the "two nations" theory. Pagan Ireland named its heaven "Tir-na-n'Og," or the Land of Youth; latter-day Ireland was long accustomed to act as if it believed that the sole chance of realising heaven upon earth was to give to grey hairs authority and prestige equal to that exercised by the Elder Statesmen of Japan. In rural Ireland an unmarried son, whatever his age, is almost as completely under the control of his parents as if he were a schoolboy; and I have known of a woman of thirty who was ordered by her father to leave a place where she was engaged as housemaid to become one of a gang of potato lifters in Scotland. She abhorred the idea, as well she might, for a negro slave on a cotton plantation need not envy an Irish migratory labourer; but when her mistress urged her to obey her own instincts and refuse to make the sacrifice, she was as outraged as if she had been asked to commit a crime.

The revolt of the new generation against the supremacy of the old, which has become the stock theme of the later English dramatists, is still on the other side of the Irish Sea a revolutionary doctrine almost as subversive as Bolshevism. A man's duty is not only to do what his parents wish, but to think as they think, not necessarily because it is right, but because it is a command. It was seriously urged during the conscription agitation by no less a man than Mr. Standish O'Grady, the father of the Irish Literary Movement, that compulsory service should be welcomed because it would enable the youth of Ireland to break down parental tyranny. Men who hold very different views on politics from Mr. Standish O'Grady can be heard nowadays declaring that what he hailed as an unspeakable boon, and what they profess to fear as a prelude to the collapse of the fabric of society, has already come to pass with the emergence of Sinn Fein. In every election complaints are rife of mutinous sons and daughters who threaten to leave their fathers' fields untilled and cattle untended unless they will join in supporting the Republican candidates. It is difficult as yet to say in what degree the victory of Sinn Fein represents a triumph of youth over crabbed age, and whether the clash of opinion will affect other than political issues.

In the North, indeed, there has been no hint of a division of opinion ; young Ulster talks exactly as old Ulster did, except that the note of its war-cries is even fiercer and more uncompromising. Yet in the Carson campaign young men count for a good deal more than they did six or seven years ago, and are gradually becoming aware of their own power. Had the movement developed along the orthodox political lines of argument and intrigue, age might have held undisputed possession of the tiller. But when it came to camping in mud and rain with the Ulster

Volunteers, or careering round the country on a motor bicycle with a load of smuggled rifles, fifty and upwards with rheumatic joints had to give way to twenty-five. As yet twenty-five has been content to follow, but it is growing steadily more conscious of its ability no less than its right to lead ; and should it take over control, it is by no means certain that it will be satisfied to keep in the well-marked rut which its elders were content to tread.

The effect of the political upheaval is even more marked in the case of women. In the mass the working women of Belfast have always been fanatical partisans who take religious and political differences quite as seriously as their fathers and brothers, and give them a more personal application. It is notorious that most of the quarrels that lead to baton charges and broken heads are hatched by women in their workrooms. At seasons when feeling runs high it is the pleasant custom of members of rival parties to ease the strain of labour by chanting the war-songs of their sides, and taunts and challenges rise in a shrill crescendo above the din of machinery. Inevitably these verbal skirmishes develop into personal encounters after the mills and factories have closed, with the result that the male relatives of the combatants are called out to avenge injuries and insults to their women-folk. When the battle is joined with paving-stones and iron bolts, the women are not content to abide at home in prayer for the safety of their champions. Their shawls are an oriflamme in the thickest of the fighting, and their high-pitched voices hurling gibes and recriminations goad their opponents to madness. Anyone who has seen a mob of Belfast mill-doffers worked up to boiling point has no difficulty in understanding the devastating fury that animated the *tricoteuses* of the French Revolution.

By contrast the middle-class woman, who looked on manual labour as a degradation, has kept flying in Belfast the flag of Victorian respectability long after it was hauled down from what had been its strongest citadels. As her male relations shouted "no surrender," so she murmured "be ladylike," with even more earnestness than Uriah Heep's mother urged him to "be 'umble." And being "ladylike" means being colourless; it is less an appeal to do the right things than an exhortation to refrain from doing anything definite for fear it might prove to be wrong. This may appear to some as an ideal of wise passiveness much needed in our hustling age, but unfortunately the passiveness is usually about problems that matter. A girl who entertains views that do not square with orthodox opinion, whether those views are as revolutionary as a disbelief in the value of church-going or as harmless as a preference for the novels of Mr. Wells over those of Miss Barclay, is sure to find herself labelled a "new woman," that forgotten bogey of the last century which still haunts the imagination of dear old ladies in Belfast parlours. These questions, it is assumed, have been decided, or will be decided, by some mysterious tribunal, whose verdict it is the duty of women to accept and enforce as if it were a decree proclaimed from Sinai. In politics the correct thing was, and is, to hold the opinions of one's men-folk. A woman might be as narrowly bigoted as she pleased and no one thought any the worse of her, but if she sought reasons for the faith she professed, she was regarded with something of the suspicion which good Presbyterians reserve for members of their creed who ask for proofs of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. In practice active participation in politics was up till recently the monopoly of ladies of title on the one hand and working-women on the other. The duty of the

middle-classes was to contribute a decorative effect at public meetings, and on occasion to canvas for the Unionist candidates in elections. To thrust themselves more prominently into the limelight would have been regarded not only as presumptuous but "unladylike," though, strangely enough, a duchess or a marchioness gained prestige instead of losing caste by such performances.

When the Carson movement began it was taken for granted that women, as always in the past, would be content to remain in the background. The organisers had framed their plans solely with an eye to the male population. There was no place for women in the Ulster Volunteers or the Unionist Clubs, and they were expressly excluded from the Ulster Covenant. But women were not satisfied thus to be cold-shouldered. Before many weeks they were squibbing miniature rifles on the ranges, battalions of women signallers were flag-wagging from dawn to dusk, and if they were not permitted to sign the Covenant they made amends by drawing up an equally vehement declaration of their own. The enthusiasm was genuine beyond a doubt, but some old-fashioned Tories, however much they welcomed it in theory, were inclined to look askance at it in practice. They discerned behind this departure not only the driving force of Unionism, but the mailed fist of militant Feminism; and cynics who remembered the variegated abuse that had been hurled at Suffragist crusaders in Ulster found rich entertainment in the spectacle of these champions of the "ladylike" woman taking to their bosoms legions of armed amazons.

Since the war women in Belfast, as elsewhere, have been marching fast and far towards new horizons. Munition work, in particular, has taught them more about Labour than they could have gleaned from a

lifelong attendance at political meetings. Women who have encountered foremen at first hand, and learned by hard experience the manoeuvres by which employers keep down wages to a proper level, can be heard to-day using language which not so long ago they would have denounced as the blasphemous heresies of Syndicalism. It remains to be seen whether women of this type will be willing to return to their old groove, and accept with the same unquestioning faith the orthodox formulas of their class. Personally I have a suspicion that however thoroughly the problem of demobilisation may be carried out in a material sense, intellectually there will be no reversion to the old standard. Women have tasted the sweets of liberty of action and liberty of thought, and the shocked, if muffled, protests that are beginning to be heard from the dowagers and duennas of the old tradition are to me the best proof that the youthful generation will not readily abandon its new privileges.

There is nothing wrong with the Ulsterwoman's intelligence except the fact that up till lately she was forbidden to exercise it on serious problems. Some of these problems circumstances have compelled her to tackle for herself, and I believe that the experience has created an appetite which will lead her in the future to explore on her own account still more difficult paths. If her energies, which have hitherto frothed to little purpose in a febrile enthusiasm about the frills and trimmings of life, are directed to other ends, I have no doubt that the conclusions to which she will be led are more likely to shock than to gratify those to whom she still looks up with awe and admiration. One of the great barriers to change in Ulster has been the intellectual obscurantism which its women were taught to worship as a virtue. Altogether unwittingly Sir Edward Carson released forces which helped to break down the rigidity of

mind favourable to the triumph of obscurantism, and the process begun by him has been accelerated by the developments of the last four years. There may be no catastrophic upheaval, for things change slowly in Ulster; but I for one shall be greatly surprised if the new generation of Ulstermen and women is content to meet the demand not of Nationalist Ireland alone, but the challenge of democracy everywhere, with no response save the blank and stupid formula, "We won't have it."

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