The *Cork Free Press* In The Context Of The Parnell Split

The Restructuring Of Ireland 1890-1910

Preface by Jack Lane

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Preface

This book deals with a period and events that are written off and almost unknown in the official histories of the country—even in histories of Cork. Yet it was a period when a unique movement developed around here that had the potential to reshape Irish history. It was the *All-Ireland-League* led by William O'Brien. The *Cork Free Press* was its daily newspaper which is not to be found in any Irish library today. It developed an unique approach to the national question and to the social issues of the day—the land and labour questions. It destroyed the Redmondite Home Rule Party in 1910, winning 8 out of the 9 Parliamentary seats in the city and county of Cork. It liberated the area from the parliamentary cretinism of Redmond, which the rest of the country did eight years later after the slaughter of 50,000 Irishmen in England's war on Germany. Cork did not need to wait for such barbaric proof of the bankruptcy of Redmondism to dispense with it.

The liberating spirit of the movement paved the way for the physical liberation after 1918 and it explains why the most serious campaign of the War of Independence was fought in the same area. It is no accident that "the boys who beat the Black and Tans were the boys from the County Cork". This book helps to explain why.

We would like to thank IRD Duhallow for its financial support under the Leader II Programme which helped us produce this publication.

Jack Lane
President
Aubane Historical Society
November 1997

Introduction

The electoral overthrow of John Redmond's Home Rule Party is usually depicted by historians as a consequence of the Easter Rising and the shooting of prisoners-of-war by the British authorities after the suppression of the Rising. But Redmond's Party had lost all but one of its Cork seats long before 1916. It lost them in the General Elections of 1910.

Redmond's candidates were defeated by Independents in the Election of January 1910. The Independents constituted themselves into a party, the *All-For-Ireland League*, and defeated the Redmondites again in the Election of December 1910, which was the last Election before the First World War, the Easter Rising, and the general overthrow of Redmondism in 1918.

The *Cork Free Press* was the daily newspaper of the All-For-Ireland League. It was launched in June 1910 and continued publication until 1916, and during these years its circulation rivalled that of the Redmondite *Cork Examiner*.

In 1984 I edited a selection of *Cork Free Press* articles for pamphlet publication. That pamphlet sold out many years ago. I delayed reprinting it because I was dissatisfied with the Introduction. When I set about upgrading that Introduction it grew out of all bounds and became this book.

My understanding in 1984 of the circumstances that gave rise to the Cork Free Press was little deeper than the understanding in my youth in Slieve Luacra of the circumstances that gave rise to mushrooms. The understanding of mushrooms has progressed a great deal since then, and so has my understanding of the historical background which gave rise to the Cork Free Press and the All-For-Ireland League.

There are two major events in that background: The Parnell Split and the Land Purchase movement.

I remarked in the 1984 Introduction: "There is no history of land purchase. There is no book which deals with the Land Act of 1903—the most ambitious and effective piece of social legislation ever applied to Ireland, by means of which occurred perhaps the most thorough revolution ever achieved by reformist means. This period is overlapped by two volumes of the Gill & Macmillan 'History of Ireland' series of paperbacks. *The Modernisation Of Irish Society, 1848-1918* by Joseph Lee does not even mention the Land Act. Neither does John A. Murphy's *Ireland In The 20th Century*. And, needless to say, the Compulsory Purchase movement in Ulster doesn't get a look in."

This omission is all the more remarkable because these are two Cork Professors and land-purchase was Cork-centred.

I am not aware that there has been published since 1984 any history of the land purchase movement, with or without its conflicts and its political ramifications.

The Parnell Split has been much written about. But I found that, in order to get a grasp on it, and trace its connections with the political upheaval in Cork twenty years later, I had to read the newspapers and speeches of 1890-91.

Constitutional Nationalism—which is to say, the endeavour to promote Irish national aspiration within the parameters of the British Constitution—reached its high point under Parnell. If Home Rule had been carried by Gladstone, Parnell would have been the first Irish Prime Minister, in a devolved legislative assembly under Westminster hegemony. His Ministers would have been leaders of the Irish Parliamentary Party who combined that role with the organising of political agitation, partly under the mantle of the Parliamentary Party and partly outside it.

The Party was a combination of powerful elements. When the O'Shea divorce action precipitated the Split those elements separated out and developed on their own lines. The Split might be seen as the Big Bang from which the political universe of 20th century Ireland derives. Much of the present book is given over to tracing how the elements separated themselves in the Split and where they went subsequently.

In the course of writing it, I found a strong prejudice against Tim Healy dissolving. And I had to conclude that the first Governor General of the Free State had in 1890-91 done something which it was necessary to do, and had done it well.

I grew up in North Cork, which was the heartland of the All-For-Ireland League. I knew nothing about it. So many things had happened there between 1910 and 1950 that it had passed out of active memory. Redmondism ensured that the influence of Cork Conciliationism was confined in 1910 to Cork and a margin of Tipperary, Limerick and Kerry. And then Redmondism messed up Home Rule. And Britain tried to over-rule the Irish democracy by force. And so ten years later the Conciliationists became "the boys that beat the Black-and-Tans".

I was living in Belfast when the fierce conflict of 1969-70 erupted there. I made what sense I could of it. Then I rooted around in the history of the 'Ulster Problem' to see if anybody had made that kind of sense of it before me. And I found that the All-For-Ireland League, which originated where I originated, had made much the same kind of sense of it sixty years earlier. And, since I knew nothing directly about the AFIL, I can only suppose that it wove a strand into the culture of North Cork which caused me to see things in much the same way as it had seen them.

*

While dealing with the political history of the North, I came across what was called a *"transformation problem"*—the problem of how 18th century Presbyterian radicalism was transformed into 19th century Unionism. I concluded that it was mostly a problem of misconception.

I have now found another transformation problem. How did John Redmond, the intransigent, incorruptible Parnellite of the 1890s, the scourge of West Brits, become the dweller in the wonderland of Constitutional illusions, who carried nationalist Ireland to war in the cause of Greater Britain in 1914?

*

It has been put to me that, in the section on the land purchase movement, it would not now be generally understood what is meant by "twenty years' purchase". It means that the price of the freehold of the land is twenty years worth of rent.

*

Finally, I hope to produce a companion volume to this book before too long, which takes the history of this political conflict in Cork through from 1910 to 1916, and goes into the detail of the conflict in the various parts of the county—in other words, to produce the book that I started on this time, but which had to be cut short so that the background of historical emptiness could be filled in.

Brendan Clifford
November 1997

Part One

The Parnell Split

The phase of Irish politics covered by this book begins with the Parnell Split of 1890-91. The whole period from 1891 to 1916 might be described as a working-out of the consequences of the Split.

Parnell combined disparate social and political elements into a party which was both a debating party in Parliament and an agitating and organising party in the country. He did not achieve this by mere political talent. It was not something that could have been achieved through mere political talent. The particularity of his being was no less necessary to its accomplishment than his ability for doing. By his mode of social being he was alien to the burgeoning national society whose politics he took in hand for ten years. He was an Anglo-Irish Protestant gentleman by family background and upbringing. His class was the class that had assembled an Empire by a combination of militarism and statecraft that is unique in the modern world, and was occupied in administering it. His upbringing was the normal upbringing of a member of that class, according to a scheme set out in a child-rearing manual of early Elizabethan times—*The Governor* by Sir Thomas Elyot. Human impulses were warped in a way thought to be conducive to the formation of a magisterial temperament. Children were reared for statecraft with a thoroughness unequalled by the Jesuits. As adults they lived in a cold routine of dutiful arrogance. Their capacity for pleasure was either stunted or perverted. They were equally at home anywhere in the world because their only home was their state, and their state was a world-state, and the world at home and abroad was peopled by their inferiors. Alienation from the ruck of humanity was their essential condition of existence.

Parnell came of an Anglo-Irish family—a family of the English in Ireland—which was verging on being Irish, and he became leader of the Irish Party. But, in going beyond the political parameters of his class, he did not cease to display in his presence the characteristics of that class. And those characteristics undoubtedly helped him to achieve his apparent mastery over the Party, if only because they were not characteristics shared by his colleagues. He was a man apart. He could not, as party leader, be the first among equals, because he was not among equals. He was different in kind from his colleagues, and so they did not relate to him as they would have related to one of themselves as leader.

His alien quality combined with his political talent enabled him to assemble the extensive combination of elements that the Irish party was in 1890. He shaped these diverse elements into a Parliamentary bludgeon. He handled this bludgeon with an authority and disdain which misled himself into believing that it was his instrument

to use as he pleased. But the bludgeon understood its relationship with Parnell to be contractual. When he broke the terms of the contract—as he did indisputably in December 1890—the bludgeon upped and walked away from him—and thereby ceased to be a bludgeon.

The *"lieutenants"* of the Party under Parnell—that is how they are usually referred to—were Dillon, O'Brien, Healy, Redmond, Sexton and Harrington. The word 'lieutenant' in its English context does not describe what they were. In the English structure of military command, the subordinate officer *is* a blind instrument. Tennyson's lines, *"Theirs not to reason why,/ Their's but to do and and die"* sum up this position quite accurately. If the term is applicable at all, it is in the Prussian sense. The subordinate Prussian officer was under obligation to reason why. If Dillon, O'Brien etc. can be sensibly described as 'lieutenants' at all, they were lieutenants of the Prussian kind, who acted with understanding, and took orders to be loose guidelines.

But I think that even the analogy of the independently motivated Prussian officer is inadequate and misleading. What Tim Healy said is much closer to the truth: "We created Parnell and Parnell created us".

Parnell and Healy—the ultimate alien and the ultimate native—were the polar opposites within the leadership of the Party. Parnell thought he had created Healy and told him so. He was profoundly mistaken. When Healy said he was "no man's man", he was stating a plain fact. He said that at the outset of the Party crisis, when he was still supporting Parnell. He hinted clearly enough that the support was conditional on Parnell acting reasonably, and making a compromise which would enable the Party to get over the crisis of which Parnell was the cause. When Parnell declined to act reasonably—within the parameters set for reason by the political situation—it was Healy who ensured that the bulk of the party walked away from him.

Healy described Parnell as a "canvass" on which he and his colleagues had painted "a great national hero". There was undoubtedly something of that in it.

The Party was not simply a representative body. The society which the Party represented was itself in the throes of development. Pearse did exaggerate when, in 1913, he said the history of Ireland in the 19th century was the desperate attempt of a mob to realise itself as a nation. Indeed the effect of a hundred years of England's *"Glorious Revolution"* on Ireland was to reduce it to something less than a mob. O'Connell raised it to the status of a mob, and it was after O'Connell that it began to develop itself as a nation.

The society was in rapid development in the last third of the 19th century. The Party was a medium of development for it, as well as its representative body. Therefore what the Party represented was as much a projected ideal as an established entity. To say that the Party was creating what it represented would be paradoxical only if representation meant only what it means in the flat, empirical language of English philosophy—which was the domineering philosophy of an

Imperial state.

Having been reduced to nonentity by the grinding power of England and Anglo-Ireland, exercised destructively for a century and a half, Ireland could only become something in its own right by representing itself as more than it actually was at given moments. It represented itself to itself with a view to filling out the representation with actual existence.

Representation of this kind might be described as an ideal. But ideals in a society rescuing itself from nonentity are not the airy-fairy things they are in a powerful, consolidated state which is dominating the world. England could live in a routine of established power, but post-Famine Ireland was in process of forming itself into definite social existence, and ideals were therefore a basic functional necessity to it.

Parnell forged the Party into a powerful tactical instrument in Parliament. But the Party, and therefore the country, also used the exotic Parnell in the way described by Healy. His alien, detached quality made it possible for the Party membership to use him as a representation, in the sense of an ideal, through which they enlarged their sense of what they themselves were, or might be.

This alien dimension of the leader was wholly beneficial to the Party and its members during the 1880s. It put them ahead of themselves. It established space around them into which they had to grow. But, in the crisis of 1890, its effect was destructive. The leader did not know how to make the best of things. He acted as if the Party was his creation, to do as he pleased with. The result was that the majority of the Party walked away from him on December 6th, and he was left with a shrinking minority.

*

Healy's description of Parnell's relationship with the Party is well worth a longer quotation. It is from an interview given by Healy to the *Pall Mall Gazette* shortly after the Parliamentary Party split at Westminster (6th December, 1890) and before the split was carried into the constituencies in Ireland. The interview was published in Pall Mall Gazette "Extra", No. 54, January 1891: *The Story Of The Parnell Crisis: Told From Authentic Sources, Public And Private*:

> "'Mr. Parnell', replied his quondam secretary, 'is one of the most extraordinary men that ever lived. We created Parnell and Parnell created us, created the Irish party. We seized very early in the movement the idea of this man, with his superb silences, his historic name, his determination, his self-control, his aloofness—we seized that as the canvas of a great national hero. But, upon the other hand, with what I believe to be an entire absence of introspectiveness, Parnell placed himself in the hands of his friends. He has been largely created not only by himself and his colleagues, but by his enemies. He has been moulded, too, in a sort of English matrix'... 'Mr. Parnell', continued Mr. Healy, 'is in my judgment, an abler man in respect of reticence, determination, and unscrupulousness than any member of his party. We were conscious of these qualities, of which, perhaps, he at first was not wholly appreciative; and

worked him for all he was worth. He was a gentleman and a landlord; and one of the main things which influenced Ireland was the disinterestedness of his sisters—of whom Miss Anna Parnell, is one of the most remarkable women who ever lived; the other of whom, Miss Fanny Parnell, is dead, but whose name I can hardly mention without emotion. My chief regret these last days has been to think of the extraordinary poem she wrote, beginning "Shall mine eyes behold thy glory, O my country"'."

(When the Land League was suppressed in 1891, and its leaders were imprisoned, Anna Parnell formed the *Ladies Land League* to function in its place.)

*

The crisis arose entirely from Parnell's relationship with Mrs. O'Shea and her husband. A great many forests have been felled so that speculations about that triangular relationship could be printed. But the relevant facts are simple enough. Kitty O'Shea had been Parnell's mistress for ten years before her husband, Captain O'Shea, sued her for divorce, citing Parnell as co-respondent—an obsolete term meaning that she had committed adultery with Parnell. (I take it that adultery, though now legally obsolete, is still generally understood.)

It had for years been common knowledge among Members of Parliament that, when Parnell was in England, which was most of the time after 1886, he lived with Captain O'Shea's wife. But nothing was made of that fact until Captain O'Shea filed a petition for divorce.

The divorce petition was filed on 24th December, 1889. Parnell assured the leaders of the Party that he would be completely exonerated when the matter came to trial. In January 1890 resolutions of confidence in his leadership were adopted by branches of the Party around the country.

In February 1890 the Special Commission, inquiring into the *Times* allegation that Parnell was engaged in a conspiracy with the Fenians to achieve the separation of Ireland from Britain by means which included physical force, issued its Report, which exonerated Parnell. This spectacular triumph over the major institution of British journalism, combined with Parnell's own assurances and his attitude of unconcern, led to an expectation that he would score another triumph in the Divorce Court.

But, when the divorce trial began on 15th November, 1890, eleven months after the Petition was filed, it was found that, while a defence had been entered, the Court action was uncontested. And, even though the action was uncontested, a lurid story of adultery and deception had to be laid out in Court by the prosecution in order to gain the divorce.

The trial went on for two days, Saturday 15th November and Monday 17th November. Michael Davitt delayed publication of his paper, *The Labour World*, usually published on Saturday, and brought it out as a "Special Sunday Morning Edition (1.30 AM)" on 16th November in order to be able to report the proceedings of the first day of the trial. The following is his account of the opening of the proceedings:

"The trial of the petition O'Shea v. O'Shea and Parnell (Steele intervening) opened yesterday morning in the Probate Division of the High Court, before Mr. Justice Butt and a special jury. The suit was instituted by Captain O'Shea for a dissolution of his marriage on the ground of his wife's adultery with Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell, M.P. The Solicitor General, Mr. Inderwick, Q.C., and Mr. Lewis Coward appeared for Captain O'Shea; Mr. Lockwood, Q.C., and Mr. Pritchard, were for Mrs. O'Shea; and Mr. M'Coll represented Mrs. Steele. There was no appearance for Mr. Parnell.

"Mr. Lewis Coward formally opened the pleadings, stating that Captain O'Shea sought a dissolution of his marriage on the ground of the adultery of his wife, Catherine O'Shea, with the co-respondent, Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell.

"The respondent denied that she had committed adultery, and alleged also that the petitioner had been guilty of connivance and neglect conducting to the adultery. She also said that he had wilfully separated from her, and he had committed adultery, and that he had been guilty of unreasonable delay and of cruelty. Those charges the Petitioner denied.

"Mr. Lockwood, Q.C.: I am instructed, on behalf of Mrs. O'Shea, to take this opportunity of stating that I do not intend to cross-examine any witnesses, nor do I intend to call any witnesses to take any part in these proceedings.

"The Solicitor-General: Gentlemen of the Jury, the petitioner in this case claims a divorce from his wife, Mrs. O'Shea, on the ground of her adultery with Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell; and I may say that the announcement which my learned friend has just made was as unknown to me as it must have been to you, and it will materially alter the character of the case which it will be my duty to lay before my lord and you, because Mrs. O'Shea does not intend to take any part in the case.

"The Judge: Does any one appear for Mr. Parnell?

"No answer was given.

"The Solicitor-General, proceeding with his address, said: The case stands undefended, but I am bound to prove by evidence sufficient for you and my lord to form a judgment upon. While, however, it will not be necessary for me to enter into many of the details, I shall have to address you at some length, owing to the character of the defence put upon the record. The petition was filed on the 24th of December last year, and in due time Mr. Parnell applied to put in a simple denial.

Mrs. O'Shea Did Not Content Herself

with the denial, but made counter charges of adultery, in which she included the name of her own sister. She charged her husband with cruelty to her, and put on the record statements with regard to him, implying that he had connived at the adultery over a series of years. That almost amounted to a confession of adultery. This is so remarkable that I am bound, in Captain O'Shea's interest, to call attention to matters more in detail than would otherwise have

been necessary. It is said that the petitioner, from the autumn of 1880 to the spring of 1886, had connived at the adultery by directing the respondent to see the co-respondent alone, and by directing her to invite the co-respondent to the house.

The Petitioner First Accused

the respondent of adultery in 1881, and many times since. The statements of the wife were most grave and serious; so grave, in fact, that their withdrawal at the last moment cannot be any satisfaction to the husband. I am in a position to deny every possible suggestion of the kind referred to, and I shall not rest upon the testimony of witness speaking from the box alone, as I have before me the testimony of correspondence extending over hundreds of letters. Throughout the whole of them is not a word which can in the slightest degree support any of the charges made against Captain O'Shea, and, after I have read them, you will be able to form your judgment, and Captain O'Shea will be able to pass away from the court satisfied that he has been able to show that his conduct has been absolutely clear."

To enter a defence alleging both connivance by the husband of the wife's adultery, and adultery by the husband with the wife's sister (Mrs. Steele), and then to take no part in the court proceedings, was the worst possible course of action. An admission of connivance by Capt. O'Shea would have caused the divorce petition to fail. And so the prosecution had not only to make its case as if the action was being defended, but also had to refute the counter-charges. It was obliged to produce evidence in support of its case, but was placed in the unusual position of being able to present evidence which would not be tested by cross-examination.

Fourteen witnesses were called, most of them domestic servants who had been employed by Mrs. O'Shea. Their evidence naturally confirmed the prosecution case, that Captain O'Shea had been deceived by his wife and Parnell, who used the name, Charles Stuart. One of them, Caroline Pethers, told how on one occasion Parnell escaped from an upper story by the fire-escape as Captain O'Shea entered by the front door. This incident became a music-hall item, and a a Parnell fire-escape trinket appeared on the market.

Richard Wise, who was employed by Mrs. O'Shea, said she had a stable of three horses, and their names were President, Home Rule, and Dictator.

Mrs. Steele (a very respectable upper class Englishwoman) went into the witness box to deny the allegation made in the defence plea that Captain O'Shea (her brother-in-law) had committed adultery with her.

Captain O'Shea himself gave evidence at the outset. In the course of the trial a Juror expressed dissatisfaction at there being no cross-examination. The Judge agreed that it was unsatisfactory and Captain O'Shea returned to the witness box after all the witnesses had said their piece so that the jurors could question him. He said "he had always been a kind and affectionate husband and father. He was prevented by his Parliamentary duties from living constantly at Eltham". And the jury discovered no grounds for doubting that Parnell was a false friend who had

treacherously taken advantage of his absences.

The Judge ruled that there was no evidence to go to the jury about the defence allegation of Captain O'Shea's adultery with his wife's sister. The jury found "that the respondent Catherine O'Shea has committed adultery with the co-respondent Charles Stewart Parnell", and that there was no connivance by O'Shea.

Costs were awarded against Parnell, as co-respondent, and also against Mrs. O'Shea if it was shown that she had an estate separate from her husband. And Captain O'Shea was awarded custody of the children under sixteen. (It seems that Parnell was the biological father of these children.)

On 22nd November, along with the account of the second day of the trial, Davitt published the following editorial comment:

"No task that we have had to perform since the birth of **The Labour World** has been so repugnant as that which we have to face in this issue of our paper. It is a duty which we would gladly avoid if we could do so without earning by our silence the suspicion of indifference. Moreover, silence, under the circumstances, would certainly be misconstrued, and lead to misrepresentation of the views we entertain upon this grave matter.

"As might have been expected, *The Times* and the other Unionist organs have performed a wild dance of delight over what they triumphantly declare to be the political grave of Mr. Parnell. So impatient were some of these mouthpieces of Coercionist opinion, that they had not the decency to wait for the verdict of the jury before writing what one of them described as the Irish leader's obituarist dismissal from public life. This exhibition of brutal party animus has, as a matter of course, driven some of Mr. Parnell's friends and followers in Ireland into an opposite extreme, which is, we very much fear, likely to do far greater injury to the Home Rule cause and to Mr. Parnell's future usefulness, than the insane jubilation of the *Times* or the rancorous ranting of less noted Pigottist organs. [Pigott was the forger of a letter used by The Times to connect Parnell with the Phoenix ark killings.] It is a folly for the most devoted of Mr. Parnell's colleagues or supporters to say that the case which was proved against him in the Divorce Court leaves him, as a political leader, in the position which he held in the esteem of British Home Rulers a week ago. It is also exhibiting crass ignorance of the danger which now threatens to alienate a great measure of support from the Home Rule cause in Great Britain to assume that, because his followers say they now see Mr. Parnell in no worse light than heretofore, English, Scottish, and Welsh Home Rulers must therefore "grin and bear with" the new situation. It would be a cruel kindness for anyone to leave the Irish people under this delusion. It would be the worst possible kind of loyalty to Mr. Parnell to encourage him in a course which, if followed, will inevitably result in loss of political prestige to his leadership, and in possible ruin to the cause he leads, at the next general election.

"Mr. Parnell is under a moral cloud which he has brought upon himself. The crisis, into which he has thus precipitated the Home Rule movement, is the

gravest which has confronted it for the past ten years. This crisis has been brought about by no other agency than that of Mr. Parnell's own conduct; and we say emphatically, that both Irish and British Home Rulers have a right to look to him, and to him alone, to deliver the cause, of which he has been until now the trusted leader, from the deadliest peril by which it has yet been assailed. Mr. Parnell is called upon to make a sacrifice, a comparatively small one, in return for the many sacrifices which the most confiding and generous people who ever followed a political leader have made for him. He is called upon to study not his own political future..., he must consider what is the best course for him to adopt in the interests of Home Rule in Great Britain. We say there can be no two opinions as to what this course should be. He is urged by the highest considerations that could appeal to a leader to efface himself for a brief period from public life until the time which the law requires to elapse before a divorced woman can marry, enables him to come back, having paid the penalty which the public sentiment rightly inflicts for such transgressions as his.

"Mr. Parnell must remember that he defied the popular sentiment of Ireland, that he rode roughshod over the feelings and opinions of his own party, when, in 1886—in the presence of another serious crisis—he thrust this man O'Shea upon the electors of Galway. His action then left wounds in the minds of some of his ablest followers which time has not healed. It was loyalty to union, fidelity to the cause, which compelled his colleagues to gulp down the indignation which this act occasioned. Is Mr. Parnell now about to demand a similar sacrifice from the friends of Home Rule in Great Britain? Is their support of the Irish cause to be imperilled by a refusal on his part to separate his own personality from the interests of Home Rule? These are questions which we feel impelled to put to him at this moment.... Mr. Parnell's retirement for the brief space of a few months will in no way injure the cause of Ireland. He has been more or less in retirement from actual leadership during the last few years, so that his voluntary effacement now for a time will be a sacrifice, not of the welfare of his party or of Home Rule, but a purely personal one which is demanded of him in the vital interests of both...."

This was the first public call on Parnell to retire for a while from the Parliamentary leadership so that a political crisis might be averted. And it was made by the man who had done most to create Parnell's immense prestige in Ireland, and who had on a number of occasions refrained in the interest of national unity from giving public expression to policy disagreements with Parnell.

Michael Davitt

Michael Davitt was the founder of the Land League. He was born in 1846 in Straide, Co. Mayo, which was still a Gaelic speaking community at the time. His father was the head of the local group of the secret society of Ribbonmen. The family was evicted in 1852 and went to the Workhouse.

Davitt emigrated to Lancashire, where he lost his right arm in the machinery of a cotton-mill, got some education in a Wesleyan school, and acquired a very broad view of religious affairs. With his one arm and some education he got work with a printer. In 1865, at the age of 19, he joined the Fenian Brotherhood. He took part in an abortive assault on Chester Castle in 1867. In 1868 he became a commercial traveller for a fire-arms company and organised gun-running to Ireland. He was arrested in 1869 and sentenced to 15 years penal servitude. In 1877 he was released on ticket-of-leave. He rejoined the Fenians and tried to persuade the organisation to become an open agitational movement with a social reform programme.

He toured America in 1878, met Henry George (a famous social reformer of the time), and set out his scheme in a resolution proposed to a meeting in Boston in December 1878:

> "A demand for the immediate improvement of the Irish land system by such a thorough change as would prevent the peasantry from being further victimised by landlordism... This change to lead to a system of small proprietorship similar to what at present obtains in France, Belgium, and Prussia. Such land to be purchased or held directly from the State. The State to buy out the landlords and to fix the cultivators in the soil."

The agitation from which the Land League was constructed was launched in 1879 in Irishtown, Co. Mayo, against an estate which Canon Geoffrey Burke, the local Parish Priest, had inherited from his brother. The Canon found that the estate was burdened with large arrears of rent and he threatened evictions unless they were paid off. The fact that the local landlord was also the local priest was disabling local opinion. Davitt used his Fenian connection to organise a meeting in Irishtown against the landlord, taking no account of the incidental fact that he was also the Parish Priest, and he announced that a larger meeting would be held in Westport some weeks later, which he persuaded Parnell to attend.

The Archbishop of Tuam, John McHale, issued a condemnation of this meeting, and of Davitt, whom he described as an "unknown, strolling man", and tried to organise an alternative meeting on more moderate terms. Davitt engaged in a public dispute in the press with the Archbishop, and set up a meeting close by the Bishop's Palace which attracted a large attendance. The Archbishop backed down, and Davitt proceeded to establish the *Land League* as a federation which would give national coherence to the various tenants' associations which were dotted around the country.

Davitt hoped to develop the League into an all-Ireland movement on the lines of Gavan Duffy's "League of North and South" in the early 1850s, but that was made impracticable by the political situation. The League of North and South was not reborn until twenty years later, when, under the leadership of William O'Brien and T.W. Russell, it achieved the abolition of landlordism as a major economic institution in Ireland.

Parnell became President of the Land League, and it was that at least as much as his Parliamentary tactics that made him "the uncrowned King of Ireland"—as

Healy put it. The Presidency of the Land League was Davitt's gift to Parnell. Parnell was in no sense the founder or inspiration of the League. He judged that it would be politically advantageous to be associated with it because it was the most vigorous thing in Ireland.

Davitt was taken back to penal servitude for six months in 1881-2. The thoughts he had during his first term in prison gave rise to the Land League. His thoughts during his second term gave rise to the proposal that the Irish Party should become the party of advanced democracy at Westminster—with a programme of abolishing the House of Lords, democratising local government, introducing land taxes, old age pensions, and workers' compensation for industrial injuries—and that it should make an Irish seat available to an Indian reformer to demonstrate anti-imperialist solidarity. But Parnell wouldn't have it.

Davitt became increasingly involved in the general politics of democratic reform independent of Parnell. He disagreed with Parnell's 1885 tactic of weakening the Liberals by advising Irish voters in Britain to vote Tory, and thereby gaining balance-of-power leverage, and he issued his own counter-manifesto. In the late eighties he was increasingly drawn into Labour politics in alliance with the Liberals, and in 1890 he founded a Socialist paper, *The Labour World*, in London.

Davitt was absorbed in his Labour project, and was not a Member of Parliament, when the O'Shea divorce action came to Court. But whether in Parliament or not, he was a major force in Irish affairs.

Many years later Davitt described a discussion with Parnell some time before the divorce trial:

> "The shadow of an impending disaster fell across the movement after the public notice, referred to on a previous page [i.e., notice that the divorce petition had been filed], appeared in the press. Men said in private what they would not otherwise utter or write, and the evils of yet another crisis were anticipated... [The Special Commission investigating what the *Times* called "Parnellism and Crime" had been sitting for more than a year, and O'Shea had given evidence to it hostile to Parnell. It was drawing up its Report, which had to be favourable to Parnell because of the exposure of the Piggott forgery used by the Times (but it was much harder on Davitt), when O'Shea filed his divorce petition.] ...But none of his lieutenants would see him to seek an explanation that might encourage a hope or confirm a fear. They shrank from approaching him on a matter which was, in a political sense, almost as vital to them as to him, and more so to Ireland than to the whole parliamentary party. This extraordinary temper reflected the prevalent state of feeling in the ranks of his chief followers. It had been engendered by his growing reserve and absence from the party in recent years, and by the unwisely excessive laudation of his personality, which held him up as a man of superior mould to the men whom he led... And for months after this suit against him had first threatened the cause of Home Rule with a great danger, those who should have done their duty to that cause, by frankly asking Mr. Parnell what he intended to do so as to avert a calamity, consoled themselves by saying that it would 'blow over'; that it might be 'another plot', and that, after all, if the worst happened, it was nobody's affair but Mr. Parnell's.
>
> "This view was not a rational one, nor the one best calculated to serve the interests of a menaced leadership. I sought an interview with him in this expectant interval, which he readily granted. I told him what I wished to see him for, and I transcribe, from notes made at the time, what passed.
>
> "I asked him frankly what danger there was in the case, and whether he had anything to fear. This was his manner of replying:
>
> "'Before we talk on that subject', he remarked, with his usual serene smile, 'there is a matter I want to speak to you about. I don't approve of your labor organisation in the South of Ireland; it will lead to mischief and can do no good. What do laborers and artisans want that we cannot obtain for them by the efforts of the National League as well if not better than through those of this new combination?... What is trades-unionism but the landlordism of labor? I would not tolerate, if I were the head of a government, such bodies as trades unions. They are opposed to individual liberty and should be kept down, as Bismarck keeps them under in Germany... Whatever has to be done for the protection of the working-classes in the state should be the duty of the government, and not the work of men like John Burns and others who will by-and-by, unless prevented, organize the working-classes into a power that would be too strong for the government to deal with...'
>
> "'But——'
>
> "'Excuse me a moment. There is yet another consideration I want to insist upon. You are overlooking Mr. Gladstone's position and difficulties. Any agitation in Ireland, except one making directly for Home Rule, increases the obstacles he has to contend with over here. It diverts attention from the main issue of our movement, and your new labor organization in Cork will frighten the capitalist Liberals, and lead them to believe that a Parliament in Dublin might be used for the purpose of furthering some kind of Irish socialism. You ought to know that neither the Irish priests nor the farmers would support such principles. In any case, your laborers and artisans who have waited so long for special legislation can put up with their present conditions until we get Home Rule——'
>
> "'When, I suppose, you would deal with them as Bismarck does in Germany?'
>
> "This was Mr. Parnell's manner of discussing the subject we had met to consider! It was a superb piece of bluff, and was intended to warn all those who might think it a duty to meddle in 'his' affairs to attend to something else...
>
> "He finally assured me, in this last interview we were ever to have, that there was no peril of any kind to him or to the movement in Captain O'Shea's 'threatened proceedings'. He bade me to say to friends who might be anxious on the matter that he would emerge from the whole trouble without a stain on

his name or reputation. These words were afterwards denied by him, but they were spoken as written above. What was possibly working in his mind at the moment was a firm belief that the person who instituted the suit would be induced to withdraw it from the courts..." (*The Fall Of Feudalism In Ireland*, 1904, Chapter entitled, "Samson Agonistes").

The Liberal Response

The divorce trial was gleefully reported in the English press, both by the Tory/Unionist press and by that section of the press whose proper business it was to deliver sensationalist reports of salacious details from divorce actions. And, very quickly, Liberal opinion decided that the continuation of the Liberal/Home Rule alliance depended on Parnell retiring from the leadership of the Home Rule Party.

This may appear strange to the reader who knows that the era of England's greatness was founded on Henry the Eighth's divorce. But what might be called English national life—for want of a more accurately descriptive term—was strange to the point of being bizarre. The breach with Rome was enacted for reasons of state. In the course of it the state disrupted the traditional culture of England, but was unable to make a new national settlement—in effect, a new settlement of religion—in place of it. This unsettled condition of religion, persisting for century after century, gave rise to a frantic search for theological certainty which made England the most fertile producer of theological literature that the world has ever seen. And Ireland was the chief victim of English theological frenzy. The notorious Penal Laws were enacted by people who were as perversely principled as the framers of the notorious Nuremberg Laws in Nazi Germany.

The state-organised Reformation gave rise to two strains of Protestantism: a Protestantism of the state which was theologically inconsistent, and a Protestantism of the people which yearned for a perfect consistency at all costs. The latter was known as Puritanism. The Puritans achieved political power in 1649, but were unable to sustain it. From 1660 to 1832 the vigorous Puritan stratum was excluded from political power, but its religious prejudices were catered for by the ruling aristocracy, and it flourished economically as the middle class of the developing industrial capitalism. In 1832 it threatened rebellion and was admitted to political power by the introduction of a middle class electoral franchise. Puritanism in power (in conjunction with the 1688 aristocracy) led to the flowering of Victorian prudery and to a great resurgence of theological activity in popular form. By the end of the century, English theology, through taking itself too much in earnest as a science, had undermined itself: though the prudery outlasted its theological source by a number of generations, and in fact still survives as an unpleasant kind of voyeurism.

By 1890, the theological source of prudery had been destroyed in the minds of the middle class elite by the influence of Darwinism, and it was soon to be given the *coup de grace* at the popular level by the very influential pamphlets of the socialist writer, Robert Blatchford—though Blatchford's assault on prudery itself was much less successful. However, theology (with its implication of theocracy)

was only on the point of collapse as an actual medium of popular thought in 1890. The influence of the preacher, Spurgeon, the most popular London orator of the time, still rolled on. Charles Haddon Spurgeon approached, but did not quite reach, the status of an English Savonarola, but he reached the status of an English Ian Paisley. And 1890 was within the Spurgeon era. He was still alive—he died in 1892. He had been a Liberal, but since 1886 he had been persuading Non-conformist opinion away from the Liberal Party towards Liberal Unionism.

The Liberal Party was an uneasy combination of Whigs and Radicals, of 18th century aristocrats and 19th century agitators, of agnostic grandees catering to Christian prejudices and enthusiastic Christian believers. The Whigs, who enacted the 1832 Reform under Radical/Nonconformist (Puritan) pressure, took the Radicals under their wing with a view to civilising and sophisticating them. The Tories, who had opposed the 1832 Reform, had responded to it by re-shaping the loose Parliamentary party into a mass membership in the country, and the Whigs had done likewise and become the Liberal Party. Whig grandees were still a major influence in the Liberal Party in 1890, but they were organically connected with the mass membership structure of the party, where the Nonconformist Conscience had free rein. And the message that came through to Gladstone from the Annual Party Conference held in Sheffield on 20th and 21st November (in the same week as the divorce action) was that Parnell must go if the Liberal/Irish alliance was to be maintained for the purpose of bringing in another Home Rule Bill.

This has often been described as an instance of English humbug or hypocrisy or anti-Irish bias. I cannot see that it was any of those things. For all that it was the centre of a world Empire, England was in many features of its internal life primitive to the point of barbarism. And the barbarism operated through party-political structures over whose activities there was no referee. Since the Reform Act there had been no higher purpose guiding English political life than winning the next election. The Nonconformist Conscience (which was localised chiefly in Wales and the industrial North of England) was the element that gave vigour to the activity of the Liberal Party. The Nonconformist Conscience, both within and without the Liberal Party, was affronted by the divorce court proceedings. This was not some special sensitivity concocted for Irish affairs. It would have responded similarly to an English politician caught out in that way. (Four years earlier, in 1886, Sir Charles Dilke, a leading Liberal politician who was in the running to succeed Gladstone as Party leader, had been obliged to make a temporary retirement when he was cited as co-respondent in a divorce action, and his career never recovered.)

The following account of the Liberal response is from John Morley's *Life Of Gladstone*. (Morley was a sort of Liberal Chief Whip at the time of the Parnell crisis. He had been Irish Secretary in the Liberal Government of 1886 and became so again in 1892. He remained an old-fashioned Liberal of the Cobden and Bright school into the era of Liberal Imperialism, and he was the only Liberal to resign from Asquith's Cabinet in 1914 in protest against the British declaration of war on

Germany.)

"The court pronounced a condemnatory decree on Monday, November 17th. Parliament was appointed to meet on Tuesday, the 25th. There was only a week for the Irish and English to resolve what effect this condemnation should have upon Mr. Parnell's position as leader of one and ally of the other. Mr. Parnell wrote the ordinary letter to his parliamentary followers. The first impulses of Mr. Gladstone are indicated in a letter to me on the day after the decree:-

"'Nov. 18, 1890 ...I had noticed the Parnell circular, not without misgiving... But I think it plain that we have nothing to say and nothing to do in the matter.... I own to some surprise at the apparent facility with which the R.C. bishops and clergy appear to take the continued leadership, but they may have tried the ground and found it would not *bear*. It is the Irish parliamentary party, and that alone to which we have to look.

...'

"Three days after the decree in the court, the great English liberal organisation chanced to hold its annual meeting at Sheffield (November 21-22)...

"A fierce current was soon perceived to be running... Many were even violently and irrationally impatient that Mr. Gladstone had not peremptorily renounced the alliance on the very morrow of the decree...

"The facts were plain, and Mr. Gladstone was keenly alive to the full purport of every one of them. Men in whose hearts religion and morals held the first place, were strongly joined by men accustomed to settle political action by political considerations. Platform-men united with pulpit-men in swelling the whirlwind. Electoral calculation and moral faithfulness were held for once to point the same way...

"Of the general party opinion, there could be no shadow of doubt. It was no application of special rigour because Mr. Parnell was an Irishman. Any English politician of his rank would have fared the same or worse, and retirement, temporary or for ever, would have been inevitable...

"It was no question of the right of the nationalists to choose their own chief... The question was whether the present continuance of the Irish leadership with the silent assent of the British leaders, did not involve decisive abstention at the polls on the day when Irish policy could once more be submitted to the electors of Great Britain?

...

"Mr. Gladstone always steadfastly resisted every call to express an opinion of his own that the delinquency had made Mr. Parnell unfit and impossible. It was vain to tell him that the party would expect such a declaration, or that his reputation required that he should found his action on moral censure of his own... He adhered tenaciously to political ground. 'I have been for four years... endeavouring to persuade the voters to support Irish autonomy. Now the voter says to me, "If a certain thing happens—namely, the retention of the Irish leadership in its present hands—I will not support Irish autonomy". How

can I go on with the work? We laboriously rolled the great stone up to the top of the hill, and now it topples down to the bottom again, unless Mr. Parnell sees fit to go.' From the point of view of Irish policy this was absolutely unanswerable. It would have been just as unanswerable, even if all the dire confusion that afterwards came to pass had then been actually in sight. Its force was wholly independent... of any intention that might be formed by Mr. Parnell...

"As for that intention, let us turn to him for a moment. Who could dream that a man so resolute in facing facts as Mr. Parnell, would expect all to go on as before? ...A man might estimate as he pleased either the nonconformist conscience in England, or the catholic conscience in Ireland. But the most cynical of mere calculators—and I should be slow to say that this was Mr. Parnell—could not fall prey to such a hallucination as to suppose that a scandal so frightfully public, ...and which political passion was so interested in keeping in full blaze, would instantly drop out of the mind of two of the most religious communities in the world... The liberal leaders had a right to assume that the case must be as obvious to Mr. Parnell as it was to everybody else, and ... they had a right to look for his spontaneous action...

"The result of the calculation [between the Liberal leaders, Gladstone, Morley and William Harcourt] was the decisive letter addressed to me by Mr. Gladstone, its purport to be by me communicated to Mr. Parnell. As any one may see, its language was courteous and considerate... It was not written in view of publication, for that it was hoped would be unnecessary. It was written with the expectation of finding the personage concerned in his usual rational frame of mind, and with the intention of informing him of what it was right that he should know. The same evening Mr. McCarthy was placed in possession of Mr. Gladstone's views, to be laid before Mr. Parnell at the earliest moment...

"No direct communication had been possible, though every effort was made to open it...

"Mr. Parnell kept himself invisible and inaccessible alike to English and Irish friends until a few minutes before the meeting" (Life Of Gladstone, 1903, Book X, Chapter V; Justin McCarthy was Vice-Chairman of the Irish Party).

Gladstone's letter, which Morley attempted to show to Parnell before the meeting of Irish MPs at Westminster on 25th November, said:

"...While clinging to the hope of a communication from Mr. Parnell, ...I thought it necessary, viewing the arrangements for the commencement of the session to-morrow, to acquaint Mr. McCarthy with the conclusion at which, after using all the means of observation and reflection in my power, I had myself arrived. It was that notwithstanding the splendid services rendered by Mr. Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland. I think I may be warranted in asking you so far to expand the conclusion I have given above, as to add that the continuance I

have spoken of would not only place many hearty and effective friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the leadership of the Liberal party, based as it has been mainly on the prosecution of the Irish cause, almost a nullity. This explanation of my views I begged Mr. McCarthy to regard as confidential, and not intended for his colleagues generally, if he found Mr. Parnell contemplated spontaneous action; but I also begged that he would make known to the Irish party, at their meeting to-morrow afternoon, that such was my conclusion, if he should find that Mr. Parnell had not in contemplation any step of the nature indicated. I now write to you, in case Mr. McCarthy should be unable to communicate with Mr. Parnell, as I understand you may have an opening tomorrow through another channel..."

Morley did not succeed in meeting Parnell until after the Irish Party had met on the 26th, by which time Parnell had been re-elected as Chairman.

Response Of The Irish Party

There was a meeting of the Dublin Branch of the National League on 18th November, the day after the divorce trial, and it re-affirmed its support for Parnell.

A public meeting in support of evicted tenants—the Party crisis erupted in the middle of the agrarian agitation known as the *Plan of Campaign*—had been arranged for 20th November in the Leinster Hall in Dublin. It was changed at the last moment into a Parnell rally. A motion in support of Parnell was proposed by Justin Mc Carthy, and seconded by Tim Healy, and was carried by acclamation.

Five days later the Irish MPs assembled at Westminster and re-elected Parnell as their leader for the Parliamentary session, not knowing that the Liberal leaders had come to the conclusion that it would be electorally futile to go into the next election in a Home Rule alliance with the Irish Party if Parnell continued in the leadership. (Although Justin McCarthy, who was Vice-Chairman of the Party, had been personally informed of this by Gladstone the previous evening, he did not see it as his business to make Gladstone's position known to the Irish members before the leadership election.)

Morley met Parnell immediately after the Irish meeting, and Parnell casually mentioned that he had just been re-elected leader. When Gladstone heard this he decided to publish his letter to Morley. The Irish MPs heard rumours about this letter on the evening of the 25th and they read it in the papers the following morning. The Party met again on 26th November. This meeting was adjourned to 1st December. On resuming it went on for six days, in Committee Room 15. It ended with a majority of the MPs walking away from Parnell when his conduct as Chairman made it unlikely that they would ever be able to put a motion to the vote.

On 29th November—a few days after being re-elected Leader, and two days before the mammoth debate—Parnell had published a *Manifesto To The Irish People*, without consulting the Parliamentary Party or the National League (the Party organisation in the country). This Manifesto was an attack on both the Liberal Party

and the Irish Parliamentary Party.

On 6th December the majority of the Irish MPs walked away from Parnell. They had re-elected him leader on 25th November without knowing the important circumstance of which he was undoubtedly aware. They then found that the Home Rule alliance with the Liberals could not continue under his leadership. On 29th November they read in the papers his repudiation of both the Liberal alliance and themselves. And during the first six days of December they experienced his determination to remain Party leader even though opposed by a clear majority. So they walked away from him, the walk-out being led by Justin McCarthy.

They were then branded as "Seceders", traitors and apostates, who were willing to throw him to "the English wolves" at a word from Gladstone. They had encouraged him to remain on as Leader by their enthusiasm for him at the Leinster Hall meeting. They had re-elected him on 25th November. And then they had turned against him overnight at the behest of the "unrivalled sophist", Gladstone.

A special quality of contempt was reserved for Tim Healy, who had seconded the motion of support at the Leinster Hall meeting, thus encouraging Parnell to stay on as Leader, and who ten days later had led the attack on him in Committee Room 15.

This was the Parnellite case, extravagantly embroidered, which took nationalist Ireland to the brink of civil war during the following ten months.

This case depended essentially on the re-election of Parnell on 25th November. But that election was made on the supposition that Gladstone thought it possible to ride out the storm caused by the divorce trial. If Gladstone's position had been known to Irish MPs, it is highly improbable that they would simply have re-elected Parnell as Leader.

Genuine misunderstanding plays little part in politics. The misunderstanding on which the Irish MPs acted on 25th November was not genuine. It was a misunderstanding arranged by Parnell so that they would re-elect him in ignorance of a circumstance which was fundamental to Irish Parliamentary activity at Westminster.

Eight years earlier, he had offered his retirement from the Irish leadership to Gladstone, following the killing of two senior members of the Irish Administration in the Phoenix Park. This happened shortly after his release from prison under the terms of his bargain with Gladstone known as the Kilmainham Treaty. What Gladstone undertook to do in 1882 was very modest indeed—a mere softening of the regime of coercion, and a rebate of rent arrears—compared with the Home Rule policy to which he was committed in 1890. And Parnell had no responsibility for the Phoenix Park incident. Yet he offered his retirement then, if Gladstone thought it would make his task easier. But, in 1890, when much more was at stake in the alliance with Gladstone, and when the crisis was directly of Parnell's making, he not only made no approach to the Liberal leaders with a view to devising a compromise, but he made himself unreachable by them.

By the agreement he made with Parnell in 1882 as a condition of his release from

prison (the Kilmainham Treaty), Parnell had undertaken to conduct Irish nationalist affairs within the parameters of maintaining public order in the framework of the British Constitution. He held by that agreement all through the 1880s, and kept his distance from the agrarian agitation (known as the Plan of Campaign), which was launched in 1886, and continued up to the time of the Split. And, from 1886 to November, his Constitutional politics had to take the form of an alliance with the Liberal Party, which was very much an alliance with the Gladstone/Morley leadership. Gladstone had committed himself to Irish Home Rule in the last phase of his political life. (His age in 1890 was 81.) And the probability was that on his retirement the Liberals would put Home Rule on the long finger.

The whole strategy of the Irish Party at that point was to win the next election in alliance with Gladstone. Parnell judged that the Plan of Campaign (launched by Harrington, O'Brien, Dillon and Healy after the defeat of the First Home Rule Bill and of a Land Bill in 1886) would not be conducive to maximising the Liberal vote in Britain, and it was on that ground that he sought to persuade Davitt, who was in America when the Campaign was launched, not to support it on his return:

> "On my return from the United States early in 1887, he requested me not to take part in the new agitation until he had seen me... He complained that neither Mr. Dillon nor Mr. O'Brien communicated to him their intention to open up in this way the agrarian conflict again. He said not a word about motives, but he severely criticised the tactical unwisdom of the whole proceeding. The plan could not possibly be justified before English public opinion, which unfortunately had the fate of Home Rule at its disposal. Home Rule had been beaten by lies and tricks only, and this but in England. Scotland and Wales were sound, and it only needed the conversion of about one hundred thousand out of some four million English voters to enable Gladstone to win the next general election. Gladstone was now 'the one and only hope for Ireland'. He was seventy-six years of age. He had flung himself in the most courageous and chivalrous manner into the fight for an Irish parliament, and it was nothing short of cruel, apart from the merits of the scheme, which was a deliberate challenge to a new measure of coercion, to handicap the great Liberal leader in his mighty task by an agitation which would only wear a sordid character to the voting classes of Great Britain in comparison with the national interests and future welfare of Ireland embraced in the fortunes of Home Rule" (Fall Of Feudalism, p518).

It was thus Parnell's own doing that the Parliamentary Party was thrown into profound crisis when it realised on 26th November, 1890 that, by re-electing Parnell as Leader the previous day, it had jeopardised the alliance with the Liberals, and that Gladstone was considering retirement because he reckoned the next election to be unwinnable in Britain with Parnell as Irish leader.

Parnell apparently acted as if nothing of any particular consequence had happened since 15th November. The Party, both in Ireland and at Westminster, had done what it had been doing regularly for ten years—acclaimed him and elected

him Parliamentary Leader. He had been remote from the Party since 1886. There had in fact been little for him to do, other than wait for the next General Election, since he took no part in agrarian agitation and he took little interest in the legislative process at Westminster. And he behaved in the same off-hand way this year as he had done in previous years. He turned up a few minutes before the meeting to elect him as Leader for the coming session of Parliament, and treated the matter as routine.

But this apparent inaction is not believable. It was a facade designed to wrong-foot the Party. And behind the facade a group of personality-cultists, led by John Redmond, was doing his bidding.

The Party members who re-elected him on 25h November were not only kept in ignorance of Gladstone's position, but they were without the main leaders of the Party, and they had been given to understand that Parnell had a compromise in mind to get over any difficulties with the Liberal Party.

Parnell had long ceased to be the active leader of the Party on a day-to-day basis. And the leaders who had for years been maintaining the activity of the Party were all absent from the election. Half a dozen of them were in America avoiding imprisonment and/or collecting funds for the evicted tenants, and Healy was in Dublin ill with typhoid fever. That was the condition which enabled Parnell to act so destructively after years of inaction.

One of the better books about the crisis is *No Man's Man*, published in 1943 by Browne and Nolan, and written by Maev Sullivan, who was Healy's daughter. She gives this account of the Leinster Hall rally of 20th November:

> "Parnell's lieutenants were working at top speed. A Dublin meeting in support of the evicted tenants had been hastily called off when the verdict in the O'Shea case became known. It was advertised afresh and arrangements were made to turn it into a pro-Parnell demonstration. T.M.H. [Healy] had for weeks been prostrate with typhoid fever... He was strongly of opinion that it was Parnell's duty to resign for the time being... He therefore resisted all the efforts of his friend and physician, Dr. Kenny, to induce him to go to the re-organised meeting in Leinster Hall and advocate Parnell's retention. When hours of argument and pleading with his patient had proved vain, Kenny went in desperation to Father Tom Finlay, S.J., whom he knew to be a valued friend of T.M.H.'s and prevailed on him to use his influence with him... It was as a result of his urgent recommendations that T.M.H. consented to speak in Parnell's favour. I asked Father Finlay what motive had induced him to persuade T.M.H. to take this course. He replied that it was his desire to prevent a premature rupture and to keep the Irish Party together as long as a spark of hope of some peaceful settlement remained... 'But it was a mistake', Father Finlay said to me. 'Your father had been right to refuse to go. My advice put him in a false position...'
>
> "...T.M.H. himself believed that to have refused Parnell his support while the situation was still so obscure and while Parnell's intentions were still

undeclared, would indeed have been to prove himself too hasty to make war...

"After the Split he said that Parnell was dividing his opponents into two classes, those who had declared themselves too soon and thus (according to him) betrayed at the first opportunity a long-standing enmity; and those who had declared themselves too late and thus (still according to Parnell) deluded him into supposing them his friends; and that Parnell was blaming each class accordingly...

"At the meeting in Leinster Hall all sorts of devices were used by Parnellite promoters to make a good show. Justin McCarthy's presence was secured by means of a forged telegram purporting to come from T.M.H....

"Justin McCarthy ...and T.M.H. both, at this meeting, made the last of many attempts to uphold the prestige of a leader who had long neglected his country's interests" (No Man's Man, Chapter VI).

Healy's speech at the Leinster Hall meeting was brief, due to his illness, but was concentrated. It was here he said: "Servile to Mr. Parnell! Who is servile to him? I am no man's man but Ireland's! If I stand here to-night to second this resolution, I do so not for the sake of Parnell as an individual, but for the sake of Ireland as a nation." He also said:

"First let me say to friends in England that we are anxious to say or do nothing to lower... the moral standard of our people as they are. Secondly, let me say that Mr. Parnell has done nothing for the English people. He has done a great deal for us, and therefore we may be permitted to look at this question in a very different manner from the way in which they regard it... The dream of Grattan after the Union was the creation of a National party from Ireland—he did not live to see it. O'Connell in his proudest day never had 30 men to follow him in the House of Commons and of those 30 half of them were bribable. And when in 1852 a National party was attempted to be formed, it failed under the treason of Keogh and of Sadleir. And at length, when we have secured a National Party..., is it now at this moment, within sight of the Promised Land, that we are to be asked to throw our entire organisation back once more into the melting pot?"

Their English friends should remember that, for Irishmen, "Mr. Parnell is less a man than an institution. We have under the shadow of his name secured for Ireland a power and an authority in the councils of Great Britain and the world such as we never possessed before... Were Mr. Parnell tomorrow to resign his seat in Cork he would be instantly re-elected."

Then came the passage on servility. Followed by:

"We are not sentimental politicians. We have no room for sentiment. I think if it existed in our souls the ten years that we have gone through would have pretty well driven it out. But I say this, that when we have had a prolonged experience and when we have seen victory after victory achieved by our leader, while I subscribe to the Napoleonic doctrine that no man is indispensable, I say yet it would be criminal on our part...—aye, it would be absurd and foolish in

the highest degree—were we at a moment like this, because of a temporary outcry over a case that in London would be forgotten to-morrow, if there were a repetition of the Whitechapel murders, or some more scandals from the Gold Coast connected with Mr. Stanley's voyages—I say, we would be foolish and criminal if we, seasoned politicians, who had seen... the vagaries and tempests of political passion, ...surrendered the great chief who has led us so far forward...

"Let me, however, say this—that while we owe a duty to Parnell, Mr. Parnell owed a duty to us. We have stood by Mr. Parnell, Mr. Parnell must stand by us. As we have to consider our position, let him consider his. As we are acting with sole thought to the interests of Ireland, so we may fairly demand that in every act and determination of his he shall show a like singleness of purpose."

According to Maev Sullivan:

"After the meeting he charged Doctor Kenny, who was going to London, with a message for Parnell advising him to resign temporarily and assuring that, if he did so, his return to public life when the storm had blown over could be achieved".

(Dr. Kenny was one of the minority of MPs who went with Parnell in the Split, and was one of the Parnellite inner circle.)

Healy's illness prevented his going to London for the opening of Parliament. Justin McCarthy was the senior figure at the meeting that re-elected Parnell, and although he was Vice-Chairman, he was much more of a literary man than a politician. And, according to Maev Sullivan, the unconditional Parnellites arranged for the idea to get around the Irish MPs that it was Parnell's intention to retire:

"Members learned to their relief that it would not be necessary to take the painful course of deposing Parnell; he was about to resign. All he desired as a parting tribute of loyalty and gratitude from his party was that they should elect him for the last time to the Chair. Then, voluntarily and with a dignity befitting his office he would leave them. His Party seized on the opportunity offered them to spare their leader's feelings and their own, and to put a better face, before the world, on the humiliating predicament into which they had been thrust" (p70).

This is the kind of thing that one would not expect there to be documentary evidence of. But it is also the kind of thing which, in the light of the indisputable facts, and on the basis of some experience of political affairs, one would assume had been done. Maev Sullivan gives the names of five MPs who said they had been told Parnell intended to retire after the election. The sources of the information were Parnell's secretary, Henry Campbell, and the London correspondent of the main National paper, the *Freeman's Journal*, J.M. Tuohy.

But the next morning the Parliamentary Party found that the Home Rule alliance with the Liberals depended on Parnell's retirement and that Parnell was determined to stay on whatever the cost. And it coped with its dilemma by putting off a

decision:

"This is what actually happened at the meeting of the party on the 26th. When the party had been some time in the room Parnell entered, and went straight to the chair, looking calm, unconcerned, imperious. Mr. Barry immediately rose and asked whether in the light of Mr. Gladstone's letter it would not be the wisest course for Mr. Parnell to retire for a period from the leadership of the party.

"Dr. Commins felt that expediency demanded that Parnell should adopt this course, at any rate for a time.

"Mr. Justin McCarthy said that, having read Mr. Gladstone's letter, he had come to the conclusion that the situation had undergone a material change since the previous day, and ought now to be reconsidered. Mr. Sexton took the same view, suggesting that every member of the party should be asked his opinion on the question.

"Colonel Nolan urged Parnell to stand to his guns and to tolerate the dictation of no English party leader.

"Mr. Lane and Mr. Sheehy said that in the interest of the tenants on the Smith-Barry and Ponsonby estate Parnell ought to retire. Finally, it was agreed that the meeting should adjourn until Monday, December 1.

"Parnell sat attentively all the time, listening attentively but speaking not a word. Then he left the chair and the room." (*Life Of Parnell*, by Barry O'Brien, Chapter XXII.)

Barry O'Brien was a strongly Parnellite journalist. He recounts conversations he had during these days with an unnamed Irish MP who was inclined to support Parnell regardless, but who saw why others were not. After that meeting O'Brien asked him why it had decided nothing:

"'Because', he answered, 'if we had settled the question Parnell would no longer be leader of the Irish party. We [Parnellites] forced an adjournment to get time. It is a bad business, and you may take it from me now Parnell is going to be beaten'."

Parnell's Manifesto

Parnell responded to the publication of Gladstone's letter to Morley and the adjourned Party meeting by publishing on 29th November a Manifesto *To The People Of Ireland*. It began:

"The integrity and independence of a section of the Irish parliamentary party having been sapped and destroyed by the wirepullers of the English Liberal Party, it has become necessary for me, as the leader of the Irish nation, to take counsel with you, and, having given you the knowledge which is in my possession, to ask your judgment upon a matter which now solely devolves upon you to decide.

"The letter of Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Morley, written for the purpose of influencing the decision of the Irish party in their choice of leader, and claiming for the Liberal party and their leaders the right of veto upon that choice, is the immediate cause of this address to you, to remind you, and your parliamentary representatives that Ireland considers the independence of her party as her only safeguard within the constitution, and above and beyond all other considerations whatever. The threat in that letter, repeated so insolently on many English platforms and in numerous British newspapers, that unless Ireland concedes this right of veto to England she will indefinitely postpone her chances of obtaining Home Rule, compels me, while not for one moment admitting the slightest probability of such loss, to put before you information which until now, so far as my colleagues are concerned, has been solely in my possession, and which will enable you to understand the measure of the loss with which you are threatened, unless you consent to throw me to the English wolves now howling for my destruction."

In other words, he is now making public information of vital importance to a considered judgement, though he had withheld that information from his Parliamentary colleagues.

This information was twelve months old. It concerned a discussion he had with Gladstone in November 1889 about the kind of Home Rule Bill Gladstone had in mind. Gladstone told him that Irish representation at Westminster would be reduced from 103 to 32; that the land question would be reserved to the Imperial Parliament, and he would make no special effort to resolve it; that the Irish police would remain under Westminster control for an indefinite period, though Ireland would pay for them; and that Westminster would continue to appoint judges and magistrates for ten or twelve years.

He said he had objected strongly to the reduction of Irish members at Westminster while the land question remained unresolved and control of police and judiciary was withheld. But Gladstone wanted absolute secrecy about these differences until the election.

The Manifesto then described a disagreement he had with Morley about land purchase, related to a Tory Land Purchase Bill. He had urged Morley not to oppose the principle of state-aided land purchase, but Morley said the Radical section of the Liberal Party led by Labouchere was against it, and Parnell therefore agreed to oppose the Bill on the second reading, but he did so on the ground of detail: "I think this was false strategy, but it was strategy adopted out of regard to English prejudices and Radical peculiarities".

In a very recent discussion Morley had asked him if he would be willing to take the office of Irish Chief Secretary or allow another member of the party to take it, and put it to him that it would be desirable for one of the law offices to be filled by a member of the Irish Party. Parnell rejected these suggestions with amazement, and told Morley that his position remained what he had stated in Cork in 1880 and that the Irish Party would not allow itself to become absorbed into English politics.

Morley then said that a Liberal Government would be able to do nothing directly for evicted tenants on Plan of Campaign estates. Parnell said that funds from

however independent it was in the sense of keeping itself apart from English politics, was still entirely dependent on English politics for achieving its aims, because it constituted only an eighth of the House of Commons. It might have seemed for a while after Parnell had displaced Isaac Butt that this constitutional submission to English dictation had been broken, or was in process of being broken, but Parnell made his own submission in 1882 with the Kilmainham Treaty.

There were two influential members of the Irish Party who were attuned to political economy. They were Michael Davitt, the "New Departure" Fenian, the Fenian who revelled in sordid "agrarianism", and Tim Healy. Both of them had worked in the industrial North of England, and had an insight into the Nonconformist Conscience, and did not despise it. And both understood that the rhetoric against English dictation was mere verbiage in the mouth of the leader of an Irish party committed to exclusively constitutional methods.

Davitt had not agreed with the Kilmainham Treaty—which Parnell had made without consulting his colleagues—but he had gone along with it as an accomplished fact, rather than divide the movement. And, having acted in the spirit of it for eight years, he had no patience with Parnell's antics in November 1890. Here is how he described events in *The Fall Of Feudalism:*

> "The question of what Mr. Parnell would do, in the event of a verdict being obtained against him, had exercised the minds of friends and foes for a few weeks before the trial. Again the timid, temporizing spirit in his party, and in the country too, did mischief to him it was meant to serve. 'There must be no English dictation'; 'We will stand by our leader', and other thoughtless bravado did duty in the press and on the platform for common-sense and sane statesmanship. There was no issue of the kind at stake but one affecting Mr. Parnell's own duty to his responsibilities and position as Irish leader. This language and action encouraged him to pursue a course which he had probably determined upon all along. For he had evidently made up his mind to ignore the whole business as if nothing whatever had happened that required action or explanation on his part...
>
> "...Those who knew him best and who felt that he would not take a just or truly patriotic view of his position, if doing so should make any claim upon his inordinate pride, fully expected what happened. He would treat the party as his subordinates and self-confessed servitors...
>
> "The party met on Tuesday, November 25th, to elect a session chairman... One member, and only one, out of 59 of his colleagues assembled in committee room 15, ventured timidly to ask Mr. Parnell to do what was his own obvious and bounden duty to do, to retire temporarily from his position until the storm he alone had caused by his conduct should blow over. Not a single voice was added to Mr. Jeremiah Jordan's appeal...
>
> "It transpired that Mr. Gladstone had written a most friendly letter to Mr. Morley on the subject of Parnell's position, on failing to hear from the Irish leader what he intended doing in the face of the divorce-court verdict. This letter was to be read to Mr. Parnell, before the meeting of the party, and its purport was to be communicated to the members of the party only if the appeal which the letter addressed to Mr. Parnell's patriotism and good sense should not induce him to resign, for a time, his place at the head of the Home Rule movement. Mr. Parnell knew this letter was written, and what it asked him to do, but said never a word about it at the party meeting. Mr. Justin McCarthy was aware of the contents of the letter, but did not communicate a word of them to his colleagues until the election of Mr. Parnell had been decided. Mr. Gladstone, learning of the action of the party, and believing that Mr. McCarthy had informed his colleagues of what the Liberal leader had written, published his letter in the press to explain and justify his own position... Here the blame was all on the Irish side, and yet 'Mr. Gladstone's dictation', and not Mr. Parnell's deliberate wrong-doing, was to be made the battle-cry of faction".
>
> "The alliance with Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party was Mr. Parnell's own work, and the chief triumph of his political career. In that alliance he secured the adhesion of the foremost of England's statesmen and one of the two great English parties as the pledged allies of the Home Rule cause. It was he, and not Mr. Gladstone, who ruptured this alliance, honourable as it had been to both, and full of promise to Ireland. To maintain what he had thus created; to uphold the policy which he had wisely laid down in 1886; to continue the joint labors of Irish and British Home-Rulers in the cause of national self-government for Ireland, was what his oldest and ablest supporters determined he should not be permitted to undo for any personal issue, and it was his opposition to this resolve and to them, which caused and continued the disastrous 'split' in 1890."

Nevertheless I do not think the Manifesto was predestined to fail. It was in conception a very bold stroke. What it put me in mind of was Field Marshal Manstein's regrouping and redeployment of the German Army early in 1943 immediately following the shambles of the assault on Stalingrad. But Manstein had been Quarter-master General before becoming a General in the field and he had empirical knowledge of all the bits and pieces that needed gathering up for redeployment in force on a new front. His inspiration was made effective by his mastery of detail. But Parnell did not concern himself with the detail of available force, and his strategic redeployment on a new front was therefore only an empty gesture so far as it concerned the enemy. But it wreaked havoc on his own side.

Manstein might easily have created a shambles by his regrouping and redeployment if he had not tended sufficiently to the detail of the matter—and the war might have ended as an outright Russian victory in Europe in 1943-4. But he didn't. And Parnell might conceivably have redeployed the Party on a new front if he had done the necessary staff work with it. But he didn't. He created a shambles.

Committee Room 15

The adjourned meeting of 26th November reassembled on 1st December. Publication of Parnell's Manifesto on 29th November had hardened feeling against him, but it is possible that he would have overawed and bamboozled the meeting if Healy had not been present. That is why Healy came to be known as "the man in the gap". And, even with the presence of Healy, Parnell, by his use of the Chair, managed to string out the meeting for six days, and prevent the relevant motion from ever being put.

Healy matched Parnell for determination of will and more than matched him in the use of reason during these six days. And, under the intense provocation of being treated as an equal by Healy, Parnell said:

> "Mr. Healy has been trained in this warfare. Who trained him? Who saw his genius first? Who telegraphed to him from America? Who gave him his first opportunity and chance? Who got him his seat in Parliament? That Mr. Healy should be here today to destroy me is due to myself."

In the Manifesto Parnell said he was the creator of the Party and the leader of the nation. And the essential Parnellite position was that he was not only the appointed Party leader, but was the destined Leader of the nation, and that opposition to him was a kind of treason. It was the position that was put vehemently by the Redmondites after his death ten months later, and they behaved as true Parnellites of the final Parnell in putting it.

In his last but one public meeting, in Listowel in September 1891, he said the leadership issue had only provided the majority of the Parliamentary Party with,

> "the first chance of showing their weakness and their incapacity. They would have done so sooner or later on some other question. From the moment these men showed the cloven hoof in Committee Room No. 15, I decided that nothing would ever induce me to lead such a gang again."

And then:

> "We strive to preserve our own independence and the independence of our own country which these men say we are to give up to them, because they contend they are in the majority. How many of their so-called majority would have been in existence if I had not gone about the country during the conventions of '86 and got them elected? How many of them would ever have received their political baptism? Would that great statesman, Daniel Crilly, have been accepted in the county of Mayo? (No, no.) Would Mr. Jeremiah Jordan have been received in the county Clare? (Loud laughter.) And so I might go through the whole list.
>
> "A Voice—What about Mr. Abraham?
>
> "Mr. Parnell—Well, as regards Mr.Abraham, I shall draw the exception in his case, because I think he had earned his spurs as a Nationalist." (*United Ireland*. 19.9.1891. Mr. Abraham will reappear later.)

The message is clear enough. The angels in Heaven were fine fellows as long as they knew their place as creatures, but when they imagined that Heaven was a democracy and tried to take a vote on how it should be conducted, it was necessary for the Creator to put them in another place.

Now Parnell may well have had creatures in the Party. It is very probable that he had. I have never seen an analysis of the connections and motives of all the 29 MPs who supported him in the Split. Only half a dozen or so make an appearance as distinct personalities, and many of the others may well have been his virtuous creatures who knew that virtue in creatures means obedience. If they were not men of independent means, they were dependent on Party funds for a living because the state did not then pay MPs, and financial dependency on the Party would have made for strong attachment to the leader.

In representing himself as the creator of the Party, Parnell exaggerated the truth. It was a considerable exaggeration, but was recognisable as an exaggeration. But, when he claimed to be the creator of Tim Healy, he stated an absurdity.

Healy was conventional to the extent that he would have admitted to being created by God, but in every other respect he was his own man. He was an independent spirit, and if he was at times a wayward one, that was the price of being "no man's man". (William O'Brien, who had endless trouble with him, referred to him as "a true child of genius".)

He was not a mere talented individual plucked out of the raw mass by a great leader and given significance by him. He knew who he was. Parnell did not reveal to him who he was, as he may have done with others. Parnell could not tell him who he was, because he was who he was prior to Parnell.

Timothy Michael Healy was born in Bantry, in West Cork, in 1855. He was educated by the Christian Brothers until he was 13. Then he went to England to work, first to Manchester and then to Newcastle, where he became a railway clerk. He organised Irish literary and political societies in Tyneside. At the age of 23, in 1878, he moved to London and became Parliamentary correspondent of *The Nation*. Then Parnell "telegraphed to him from America", because he needed him in America.

Parnell and John Dillon went to America in January 1880 to collect funds for the Land League. And Parnell telegraphed Healy to follow them because he had been dependent on Healy and was helpless without him. Healy was extraordinarily well-informed, was a competent organiser, was skilled at handling the press, and was in a way the discoverer and inventor of Parnell, and therefore knew exactly what he should say and often said it for him in writing. The incident which precipitated his call to America was Parnell's surprise at finding, when invited to address a meeting at Springfield, that there were three cities called Springfield in the United States.

The Nation, of which Healy became Parliamentary Correspondent in 1878, was owned and edited by his uncles, A.M. and T.D. Sullivan. This was the paper founded by Thomas Davis and Gavan Duffy in 1842. The Sullivans bought the paper in the 1850s, after Duffy had given up in disgust and emigrated to Australia after the Sadleir and Keogh episode—that is, when members of the Independent

Irish Party, which he had organised, had been bought off by the Liberal Government. And they kept *The Nation* going in the Young Ireland spirit, with singable poems and readable historical narratives, through the long recession in national affairs. (Two of their Fenian songs were part of the culture in which I grew up: *Deep In The Canadian Woods* and *God Save Ireland*.)

A.M. Sullivan had a job on the Famine relief works in 1846-7, formed a Bantry Confederate Club, organised a reception for William Smith O'Brien in Bantry in 1848 shortly before the attempted revolution, went to Dublin in 1853 and worked as a commercial artist, moved to Liverpool where he was reporter on the *Liverpool Daily Post*, and returned to Dublin to work on The Nation, which was then being published daily. He had disagreement with James Stephens (founder of the Fenian Brotherhood), over physical force, but when the Fenian Council voted in 1865 to execute him nobody was willing to do it. In 1867 he got six months' jail for an article on the Manchester Martyrs. A collection was made for him while he was in prison, and when he got out he used the money for a statue of Henry Grattan. Dublin Corporation had voted the site for a statue of Prince Albert, but Sullivan got it changed.

A.M. took part in the launch of the Home Rule movement in 1870, and was elected MP for Louth in 1874. A couple of years later he concluded that Isaac Butt's approach was too conciliatory and he supported Joseph Biggar's tactic of obstructing Parliamentary business by making very long speeches. He died in 1884.

His brother, T.D., was active in the Land League and the Plan of Campaign. He was Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1886-7 and was MP successively for Westmeath, Dublin, and West Donegal..

The Sullivans were the core of a West Cork group, known as the *Bantry Band*, which became very influential in the political and commercial life of Dublin. The group included half a dozen MPs, one of whom was William Martin Murphy (a Sullivan cousin), who became notorious as the organiser of the employers in the great Dublin Strike and Lock-Out of 1913. Though it became customary to refer to him dismissively as a kind of gombeen man, he was in fact a substantial capitalist.

This was Tim Healy's molecule. And Parnell thought he had created him! Or, at least, Parnell claimed to have created him. Unless he suffered a severe memory loss, he cannot have thought he created him.

Parnell himself was brought on as a Home Rule MP in 1874 on the initiative of A.M. Sullivan, when there were some who thought it inappropriate to admit a young Protestant landlord who had never done anything, but chanced to have a famous name. And Sullivan helped to bring him on, even though on his first public outing he was tongue-tied and appeared utterly ignorant and incapable. He lost his first election, in Dublin, but won his second, in Meath, in 1875. And then Sullivan brought him into the Active Group in the Party which was dissatisfied with Butt's approach. Biggar (a Belfast Protestant Fenian who despised the British Empire) was launching his Obstructionism just as Parnell entered Parliament. The main Nationalist paper, the *Freeman's Journal*, continued to support Butt's approach. It

was only when Healy became Parliamentary correspondent of *The Nation* that Parnell's activity as an Obstructionist began to be presented to the Irish public as something admirable. Healy was, as it would be put nowadays, the creator of Parnell's media image.

In 1878 Parnell was 32 and Healy was 23. But Healy had been politically active for longer than Parnell, and his political activity had been more socially connected than Parnell's. He had from the age of 18 been the originator and organiser of Nationalist political and literary events on a steadily-increasing scale in the North of England. He had been active in the largely working class, and spiritually Fenian, Home Rule Confederation Of Great Britain, where support for Parnell as leader began.

After discovering Parnell to the Irish public, he became his organiser on behalf of the Active Group. And, whether because of lethargy, or family background, or women, Parnell needed a lot of organising. In 1879, to make sure that Parnell got to Ennis to address an election meeting on behalf of a candidate put up by the Active Group, Healy put him up at his own lodgings in London, woke him up in time, cooked his breakfast, took him to the railway station, and saw him onto the boat train.

So it is not surprising that Parnell felt lost without Healy in America. (£40,000 was collected in three weeks once he got there.)

Parnell was elected Chairman of the Parliamentary Party in May 1880. That was an event for which Healy and the Sullivan connection had been preparing the ground for a couple of years.

Later in 1880 Healy was elected MP for Wexford, following the death of John Redmond's father. But that was not a gift from Parnell. John Redmond asked for the nomination, but the Wexford Home Rulers wanted Healy, who was being prosecuted for land agitation in the Bantry area.

In 1883 Healy resigned the Wexford seat at Parnell's request and contested a by-election in Monaghan, and won. This was the first time a Nationalist won the representation of Monaghan. The reason why Healy could win it, when another might not, was his avid interest in land law and tenant-right. In the course of a very busy life he had found the time and energy to begin qualifying himself for the Bar. He became a Barrister in 1884, but by then he was already a legislator. He had proposed and carried an amendment, known as the Healy Clause, to the 1881 Land Act, protecting tenants from rent increases on improvements made by themselves. But, while becoming an effective legislator, he did not cease to be an agrarian agitator. It was because he was an agitator and legislator for tenant-right that he could win the representation of Monaghan. Tenant-right was the only issue that was common political ground between Catholics and Protestants.

These are some of the things done by Healy before December 1880. But his being was not the sum total of his doing, as might be the case with an individual who rises out of a raw mass by means of his talent. His being was prior to his doing. He had continuity of being—of subjective coherence—from railway clerk to MP and

Barrister, because all his doing was done as a member of the Sullivan connection—one of the large molecules of Irish social development.

He ended his close personal relationship with Parnell in 1881 because of an incident that happened in Paris. It was decided to transfer the funds of the Land League to Paris to secure them against the British Coercion regime that was in preparation. The Treasurer of the League, Patrick Egan, was to be met in Paris on a certain date to conclude the transaction. Healy, Biggar, John Dillon, J.J. O'Kelly, and T.D. Sullivan travelled to Paris together. Parnell was to join them the following day. A week after the appointed day he had not appeared or sent a message. Healy had been until this time Parnell's unpaid secretary, dealing with all his business, and authorised to open all his letters. He had with him a number of letters, all in the same hand, which he had preferred not to open, presumably because he preferred not to know what was in them. (Which means, of course, that he did know in a general way what was in them.) His colleagues asked him to open one as it might give a clue as to Parnell's whereabouts. He said he would do so only if they adopted a formal resolution directing them to do so, and if the letter was only read by two of them. This was done. Maev Sullivan says:

> "The letter read by Dillon and Egan had been written by the Manchester barmaid who Parnell had abandoned with her baby when another outrivalled her in his affections. Her letters had accumulated unopened... He was in the toils of Mrs. O'Shea" (p22).

Davitt says that the letter was from Mrs. O'Shea herself, but he was not present. And Maev Sullivan presumably was told about it by Healy. It may be that it was decided that the best thing for Parnell's image was to tell those who had to be told something that the letters were from Mrs. O'Shea.

Parnell turned up the next day just as Healy and Biggar were about to leave for the address in the letter in search of him.

Healy then decided that he would no longer act as Parnell's secretary. But, before breaking off, he found, and trained, a more secretarial secretary, Henry Campbell, who was still with Parnell, and doing his bidding, in 1890.

Further distancing occurred in 1886, when Parnell imposed Mrs. O'Shea's husband on the Galway constituency in a by-election, entirely against the wishes of the local party, and in defiance of all political logic. Captain O'Shea was to have the seat without taking the Party pledge. He had acted against the Party in the past and it was probable that he would do so again in the future.

Healy and Biggar, both of whom were well informed about the O'Shea aspect of things, wanted to force a showdown with Parnell in Galway by running a candidate against Captain O'Shea. They were not supported in this enterprise by any other leading member of the Party. When Parnell let it be known that he would come to the constituency and speak for Captain O'Shea, Healy backed down, though Biggar still wanted to fight it out with Parnell.

By December 1890, Biggar was dead, the other leading members were in America, and it was left to Healy to enable the bulk of the Party to do what they knew

they ought to do, but were fearful of actually doing.

When the adjourned meeting of 26th November re-convened on 1st December, Parnell was determined to prevent it from ever arriving at its only item of business. His immediate aim was to drag it out until the Christmas recess of Parliament, which was imminent, and then have a long adjournment. He failed in this when the majority of the Party walked out on him.

Healy became notorious for a remark made near the end of the debate. The incident is described as follows in *The Story Of The Parnell Crisis*, published as a *Pall Mall Gazette* "Extra" in January 1891:

> "The Irish leader... took to reading a newspaper, but it was evident... that he had little attention to give to its contents.
>
> "But whether his perusal of the paper was deep or superficial, Mr. Parnell was soon attracted from it by a startling interjection by Mr. T.M. Healy, perhaps the most piquant incident of the day. Mr. John O'Connor in the course of his speech, extending over fifty minutes, was insisting that the question had to become 'Was Mr. Gladstone to be the master of the Irish Party?' 'No', rapidly retorted Mr. Healy, in a voice in which fury and contempt were mingled, 'the question is "who is to be its mistress?"' There was a breathless hush for a moment or two, and then the Parnellites with one voice roared 'Shame' and 'Coward'. Mr. Parnell violently flung the newspaper from his hands; a spasm of pain passed over his face...."

The *Times* also published a book of the whole affair, *The Parnell Split, Or, The Disruption Of The Irish Party*, which gives a straight summary of the debate, without descriptive commentary:

> "*Mr. John O'Connor*:... He contended that any attempt of Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party at dictation would be resisted by the Irish people. Mr. Parnell's opponents were placing themselves unreservedly in the leadership of Mr. Gladstone. They said 'No' but let them read Sir William Harcourt's letter, and he said 'Treat with Mr. Gladstone'.
>
> *Mr. A. O'Connor:* He is not a member of the party.
>
> *Mr. J. Redmond:* The master of the party.
>
> *Mr. T. Healy:* Who is to be the mistress of the party? (Cries of 'Shame' and noise, several members calling out remarks which could not be distinguished in the uproar.)
>
> *Mr. W. Redmond:* They must be very badly off when they go to arguments like that.
>
> *A voice:* It is time.
>
> *Mr. A.O. Connor:* I appeal to my friend the Chairman. (Noise.)
>
> *Mr. Parnell:* Better appeal to your own friends; better appeal to that cowardly little scoundrel there (noise), that in an assembly of Irishmen dares to insult a woman. (Loud cheers and counter-cheers.)"

This incident occurred after six days of procedural division and delay by Parnell. Throughout those six days, Healy had met the Parnellite arguments on

their own ground. He met them on the level of analytical argument, but when they set the precedent for emotive repartee, he responded on the instant. And, unlike them, he did not take leave of fact and logic in his repartee. And I think that his notorious riposte to Redmond was not excusable: it was necessary. It was what in fact and logic the argument gave rise to at that juncture.

(The press was not admitted to the debate. The only reporters present were from the *Freeman's Journal*, which was strongly Parnellite, and their reports were scrutinised and amended, Hansard-fashion, by the editors and by Parnell. While only a marginal degree of misrepresentation was practicable, the fact that the official report as published was slanted against the majority gave the majority good reason for providing accounts of the meeting to the London papers.)

The *Manchester Guardian* commented on 1st December:

> "Against the reprobation which his [Parnell's] conduct has excited in this country he arrays the anti-English feeling bred among Irishmen by centuries of misgovernment and conflict. The vote to be taken today on the question of his continued leadership he treats as a mere incident in the war now declared, and defeated at Westminster, he will rally his forces for a campaign on Irish soil".

The "vote to be taken today" was never taken. And the *Guardian* commented on 8th December:

> "The forty-five... seceders claim that being an absolute majority in the party they have the right to exercise the power inherent in a majority, and that, acting under a sense of imperative obligation to their country, they have been driven to take the only means left to them of putting an end to a situation which had become impossible, and of finding a practical issue for a debate which promised to be interminable. Mr. Parnell and his friends, on the other hand, wholly deny the legality of this proceeding. They claim that the remnant which remained after the majority had withdrawn were the legal representatives of the party, that, Mr. Parnell was still chairman, and that the proceedings of the dissenting majority were utterly null and void. There will thus be two Irish parties in parliament, ...and the two stand face to face within the House, as they stand face to face in Ireland..."

The Party vs. Parnell

Healy was the most thorough Parliamentarian in the Irish Party. He was a Parliamentarian of an essentially different kind from Redmond, who had been a House of Commons clerk (like Erskine Childers a generation later) and a sort of Party manager for Parnell. He was an agrarian radical as well as a legislative reformer.

The Westminster Parliament was not then the trivial thing that it is now. It was the most powerful political body in the world but, as Macaulay observed a generation earlier, it still retained the atmosphere of a club. Its debates related to the exercise of immense power. Its members, elected on a franchise which was

extensive, though well short of democratic, were unpaid by the state and were therefore representative of substantial outside interests. It governed a society which was in a process of rapid change, and the process of change was both guided and accelerated by the activity of Parliament. Party structures were short-term combinations and party doctrines were tentative. In those circumstances there was considerable openness in debate, and what was said in debate filled many columns of the daily newspapers—while the empty and stilted Parliamentary oratory of the present day is buried in the columns of Hansard, except for the few sentences which make it as a sound-bite in the evening news on television.

Healy flourished in the governing assembly in which perpetual innovation was enacted under a veneer of hidebound traditional routine. He had a considerable appetite and aptitude for legislative activity, and his debating talents were sharpened by that activity. But, despite his interest in constructive legislation, he never ceased to be in the forefront of agrarian radicalism in Ireland.

The combination of agitator and Parliamentarian made him unusual in the Irish Party, though it was not at all unusual in the English politics of the time. And it was that combination that made him such an effective opponent of Parnell.

Healy knew Parnell better than his Parliamentary colleagues because he had played a part in the making of Parnell. Barry O'Brien, who was acquainted with Parnell from an early stage in his political career and was fascinated by him, says somewhere that he was by nature a leader and was incapable of accepting leadership. Healy recognised what was obvious, but what many could not bring themselves to see—that the Party majority carried no moral weight with Parnell, that he would lead whoever was leadable, and that he would destroy the existing party if he could.

Seeing this, Healy did not mope around in anguish. He accepted the terms of conflict set by Parnell.

"*'I will drive Parnell to death or madness'*, said the infamous spokesman of the Bantry Band". That is from the editorial of the Redmondite paper, *United Ireland*, in the issue after the death of Parnell (19th October, 1891). I assume Healy did say that, though I do not know the source. Whether he said it or not, those were the terms of conflict set by Parnell. Healy gave battle on the lines decided by Parnell.

Davitt too, understood Parnell very well, having also taken part in the making of him. And, in the months following the split he put all his energy into campaigning against Parnell at by-elections. But Davitt was himself not a member of the Parliamentary Party.

The first by-election was at Kilkenny, on 22nd December. Parnell's candidate lost heavily. By-elections in North Sligo in April 1891, and Carlow in July, had the same result. But Parnell was no more deterred by electoral majorities against him than by the majority in the Parliamentary Party. The main thing about those by-elections was that they showed that the Party majority had been made functional in the country.

The *Freeman's Journal* supported Parnell during the critical six months after

the Split. And, within days of the Split, Parnell took control of the weekly *United Ireland* by main force. Healy therefore set about organising the production of an anti-Parnell daily, and, with the help of his capitalist cousins from Bantry, the *National Press* made its appearance on 7th March, 1891. Here is an extract from the editorial of the first number:

"At The Outset.

"To-day a new force has been born in Ireland. For years it had been the hope of patriotic Irishmen to see established in our Capital an independent daily national journal. Towards so large an enterprise, however, action was naturally slow, and it needed the shock of a great betrayal to arouse men's minds to the necessity for action... In the agony of a people in travail, the *National Press* today issues upon its career. Events have already established its constituency. Elsewhere the newspaper creates its public. Here the public created its newspaper. The Nationalists of Ireland were being stifled for a breath of fresh air.

"There is no need to speak of the way this journal will wield its power. Friend and foe know it. We shall set up no idols. We shall swing no censor to make a smoke of sweet savour in the nostrils of any chief. We shall be no man's clansmen. We shall sustain the Irish Parliamentary Party in its policy and its endeavours...

"...Serene and confident we shall recommend to the country that policy which for years past was pursued by a united Irish Party. We are satisfied that both at home and in Great Britain the fruits of that policy will end in victory for the Irish Cause. By tender after tender of amity and brotherhood, the English, Scottish and Welsh peoples, at election after election, have declared their undoubted willingness to restore the plundered liberties of Irishmen. The *National Press* will be no party to flaunting insults in their faces..."

"Where The Blame Lies

"...We cannot suppose that any intelligent man is deluded by the intensity of Mr. Parnell's sudden discontent with the details of the Home Rule Bill. The pretence is too shallow to deceive the most credulous. The dates are in themselves conclusive on the subject. The private interview at Hawarden, at which he now declares Mr. Gladstone's perfidy was revealed to him, took place in December, 1889. The following day, at two great meetings at Liverpool, he expressed unbounded confidence in Mr. Gladstone's good intentions, and in his will and power to settle the Home Rule question on a satisfactory basis. Six months later at the banquet at the Westminster Palace Hotel, he warmly and strongly reiterated his reliance on the absolute good faith of the great Liberal Leader. Mr. Parnell alone of the Irish Party has applied the title of 'our leader' to Mr. Gladstone. But when the lamentable divorce disclosures extorted from Mr. Gladstone his letter of friendly warning to the Irish Party, Mr. Parnell's unmeasured praise was at once converted into

malevolent abuse, and 'our great leader' became a 'garrulous old man', and a 'grand old spider'. Moreover, the assurances regarding Irish police and land, which Mr. Parnell now denounces as illusory, are far in advance of the provisions on these subjects which he and the party accepted in 1886 on behalf of the Irish nation as a complete solution of the Irish question. In good truth, Mr. Parnell cares for none of these things. His own interests, not Ireland's, absorb him. For the last five years he entirely neglected the duties of the position of Irish leader, which he now modestly declares it is essential to the salvation of the country that he should retain. To adopt his own notable phrase at the Rotunda meeting, he 'retired into winter quarters' while the battle raged. While coercion and eviction made the land desolate he was absorbed in his own pleasures. He would not stir a finger to help the evicted tenants... He has deliberately sacrificed their prospects to his own ambition. Yet he is not ashamed by the most extravagant professions of sympathy now to bid for their support. His callous apathy while others suffered is changed to frantic activity when his own position is at stake... He has absolutely no policy except his fixed resolve to keep his own name before the public... At Roscommon he talked of yielding his place to Revolutionists who are to conquer Great Britain by force of arms. To Royal Meath he held out hopes of a republic. In Dublin he broadly hinted at striking up an alliance with Mr. Balfour and the coercionists. Under such a leadership Home Rule is impossible of achievement... The Home Rule democracy of Great Britain is against him. The Irish in Great Britain are against him. The bishops and priests of Ireland are against him... The great majority of the Irish Party, the overwhelming majority of the League branches and the constituencies are against him. His power for good has disappeared, his power for evil only remains. He may still—as at Kilkenny—for a brief space gather crowds and promote violence—his influence ends there."

Because the majority walked out of the meeting in Committee Room 15 on 6th December, Parnell's minority claimed to be the Party and used the title, National League. The majority launched a new political body, the National Federation, in early March, 1891. Addressing the inaugural meeting of the Federation, Healy set out the two dominant themes of the anti-Parnellites:

"A Roman collar is no disfranchisement. A man does not cease to be a Nationalist when he enters Maynooth. There is no disability in the sacrament of Holy Orders; at least there is none when a decree of the Divorce Court creates no disability...

"Mr. Parnell claimed to have a commission from the Irish race. If he had he holds it. We sought only to depose him from the sessional chairmanship—but we had no authority to depose him from the leadership of the Irish race. That power is resident in the Irish race, and if there exists, *in nubibus* or anywhere, such a post as leadership of the Irish race, it is in no way infringed, hurt or

touched by the attempts of the Irish Party to come to a decision. Our decision still left the hillside intact" National Press, 11th March, 1891).

Defence of the rights of clergy, as part of the people, to have a say in politics, and ridicule of Parnell's pseudo-Fenian, man-of-destiny posturing: these were the core of Healy's very effective campaign against Parnell.

The Conciliators

William O'Brien wrote by far the best book by any of the participants about the Parnell Split and its consequences over the next generation. It is in fact the only such book, but it is very likely that it would still be the best, even if there were others, because it is a very good book. It is called, *An Olive Branch In Ireland.*

O'Brien was an agitator, an organiser, a journalist, an orator, a political strategist, a novelist, a litterateur, a historian, and an honest man. But he was not much of a party-politician. And, when party-politics took the form of factional antagonism within a party, he was quite hopeless.

He was in America, avoiding imprisonment and collecting funds for the evicted tenants of the Plan of Campaign, when the crisis broke. With him were John Dillon, T.P. O'Connor, T.D. O'Sullivan, and Tim Harrington. When divorce seemed to be the only issue, this American group, with the exception of T.D. O'Sullivan, cabled a message of support for Parnell's continued leadership to the Leinster Hall meeting on 20th November. But, when the issue became the Home Rule alliance with the Liberals, and Parnell issued his Manifesto, they all (with the exception of Harrington) expressed the opinion that he should retire temporarily. But, being thousands of miles away, they were effectively out of the game during the critical weeks.

Here is O'Brien's account:

"...when the announcement [of the divorce petition] was first made public property, I wrote to him from Glengarriff, where I was then in the thick of the fierce hostilities of the Plan of Campaign struggle, a letter in which, while giving him the assurance of my ardent sympathy, I was still able to write confidently of a triumphant result. The reply was one which, while it spoke with complete tranquillity of the legal victory, gave me the first shuddering apprehension as to the substantial character of the danger. The latter was lost in the confusion of my arrest three or four days after, but one phrase remains engraven on my memory as in letters of fire. It was, almost verbatim, this:

"'You may rest quite sure that, if this proceeding ever comes to trial (which I very much doubt), it is not I who will quit the court with discredit.'

"When the blow fell, Mr. Dillon and myself, who had escaped to France in a fishing boat from a Coercion Court in Tipperary under circumstances of some excitement in order to rouse the United States to our assistance, were prosecuting our appeal to America with a substantial success."

They held meetings in New York and Chicago at which Parnell was acclaimed and money poured in:

"But in the meantime, the judgment in the Divorce Court, Parnell's re-

election by the Irish Party, and Gladstone's answering letter had come, thunder-clap after thunder-clap, and the rending process in Committee Room 15 had begun, and by one of those dramatic transformations which Greek tragedy itself would have hesitated to invent, those thousands of men who had counted upon a night of mad enthusiasm and triumph without allay, sat there facing us, sick with doubt and fear...

"The action of most Irishmen in the Parnell crisis (certainly, it must be frankly stated, my own) was not determined by the verdict in the Divorce Court... For myself, I should no more have voted Parnell's displacement on the Divorce Court proceedings alone than England would have thought of changing the command on the eve of Trafalgar in a holy horror of the frailties of Lady Hamilton and her lover. But English Puritans, for whom Parnell bore no such argosy of their nation's fortunes in his bosom, were wholly within their rights in repelling the co-respondent of the Divorce Court as their ally with the ruthless righteousness of their Ironside fathers; and it was just that inexorable attitude of the Liberal Nonconformists, inspired not by any crooked design against Home Rule, but on the contrary by the persuasion that an act of deference to the national conscience alone could save Home Rule at the polls—this was the *anauke* which, added to the moral argument that would have been fatal in the case of any other man, the argument of national interest as well, and with whatever misgiving and misery of heart for Irishmen, turned the scale against the continuance of Parnell in the Irish leadership. Gladstone or his advisers may have been wrong in their estimate of the strength of the Nonconformist sentiment, but they alone were qualified to make a correct estimate on the subject...

"If, as soon as the result of the Divorce Action was certain, Parnell had taken his own followers and his English co-partners candidly and without *arriere-pensée* into his confidence and said, 'Here's how matters stand: let us put our heads together and see how the danger can be minimised... I am in your hands', had he taken this course... every element of honesty in the party in Ireland would instantly have flown to his side in a passion of indignation...

"Fate willed otherwise. Parnell chose to be guided by the astuteness of the party politician rather than by the magnanimity of the national liberator" (An Olive Branch In Ireland, 1910, pp2-9).

What happened then is described by Sophie Raffalovich, O'Brien's wife, in a Preface to the 1958 reprint of O'Brien's novel, *Grace O'Malley: A Queen Of Men*, which O'Brien began while in Galway Jail in 1891:

"William O'Brien was in America with John Dillon... appealing for the evicted tenants in the autumn of 1890... Soon after, however, the Parnell split tore the country. The Irish-Americans refused to give any more money until peace was made in Ireland.

"The colleagues of William O'Brien sent him to France to try and put an end to dissension. If he had been free to go to Ireland he would have made peace,

but the sentence passed on him made it impossible. In France the difficulties were increased. ...However he tried hard and threw himself with ardour into what has been called the Boulogne negotiations. He failed, and nothing remained for him and Dillon but to go to jail. As long as the sentence hung on their heads, they could not work for Ireland.

"On February 11th 1891, they started... When we reached England, the two men were arrested" [and were taken to Galway to serve their sentences].

It was implicit in O'Brien's approach that misunderstandings had been a major factor in causing the split, and that the division continued because of personal antagonism which had arisen from misunderstanding.

O'Brien landed in France in late December 1890. He had his first meeting with Parnell in Boulogne on 31st December, and his mediation efforts continued into February 1891.

Healy did not approve of O'Brien's peacemaking efforts. I think he had good reason not to be. It all depends on whether you think the split had its source in misunderstandings or purely personal conflicts. Healy considered that he had acted reasonably throughout; he had given Parnell the benefit of the doubt while there was any doubt; when it became evident that Parnell was absolutely intent on rupturing relations between the Irish Party and the Liberal Party and taking Home Rule off the immediate agenda of British politics, he adopted a stance of intransigent opposition to Parnell; and Parnell's attitude made it impossible that there should be political opposition without personal antagonism. Healy accepted Parnell's terms of dispute. The Split was an accomplished fact. And it was a fact made necessary by Parnell's position. Healy therefore expected the American group, if they rejected the Manifesto, to line up against Parnell. The way to minimise the disruptive effect of Parnell's conduct was to mobilise the strongest possible political array against him at the outset.

Parnell, on the other hand, had nothing to lose by pretending to agree to mediation. The mediators had rejected his Manifesto and all it implied. If he rejected mediation they would have to line up against him. While they were mediating, they would be neutralised and his position would not seem as weak as it actually was. And it might even be that, through personal contact, they might succumb to his charisma. The following exchange at the first meeting indicates that Parnell began by trying to hustle O'Brien out of his negotiating position by personal influence:

"'How am I to abandon the country to such a pack of sheep?'

"'Parnell', I said, 'for God's sake let us not drift into a controversy as to whether the fault was with the sheep or with the shepherd'."

This approach having failed, Parnell strung out the negotiations for six weeks, allowing them at times to seem to be on the brink of success, but always being able to arrange that they should not actually succeed.

At the start of the Boulogne negotiations, the *Daily News* (the main Liberal newspaper) published the following editorial comment:

"We may look on it as certain that in any conversations which Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Parnell have had in Boulogne, or may yet have..., the deposition of MPs is accepted as a fact upon which there is no going back.... 'The wrecks come to the shore—the shore does not go to the wrecks' was the fine saying of the Count de Chambard. It has a more practical application to the condition of the Irish Parliamentary Party. The members of that party could hardly be expected to go far out of their way to meet the wrecks of Mr. Parnell's enterprise. The success of the majority of the Irish party thus far must have astonished even themselves. They have things very much their own way. Their country, and their countrymen in England, are recognising the strength of their position more and more clearly every day. Mr. O'Brien... has no commission from the Irish party to speak on their behalf with their late leader. He never asked for any such authority. He is making a generous and a thoroughly characteristic effort to secure the peaceful withdrawal of Mr. Parnell from a position of antagonism to the majority of the party, which antagonism can bring nothing but confusion, and bitterness, and futile strife, and unnecessary danger. We cannot believe that he has any other danger than that.

"Mr. Parnell can do mischief if he holds to his present policy of unscrupulous and persistent opposition. But such a policy could only do mischief for a time. It must break down before long. The worst he can do in that way would not be half so mischievous to the cause of Home Rule as any manner of compromise which might tend even to allow him the appearance of being once again the dictator of Irish affairs. It is not in the least degree probable that the men who deposed him would now permit him to dictate to them, even through the unselfish and generous mediation of Mr. William O'Brien... They are the men who for ten years have kept the Irish party alive. They are the men who fought its battles, sometimes under Mr. Parnell's leadership—much more often without it. We speak of such men as Mr. O'Brien himself, as Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Healy, Mr. T.P. O'Connor, Mr. Sullivan and others. We have all seen what Mr. Sullivan said the other day in Dublin, and we know that Mr. Sullivan regarded the day of Mr. Parnell's leadership as absolutely done. It does not seem to us that much or anything can be gained by the further conferences between Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Parnell. If Mr. Parnell be a sincere patriot, filled with the Mahomet-like conviction that he, and only he, can save his country, it is not probable that he will give up the struggle because of any appeal which Mr. O'Brien could make to him, or any term of compromise which Mr. O'Brien could offer. If, on the other hand, he is merely an unscrupulous egotist, the pure, unselfish enthusiasm of a man like Mr. O'Brien will not fill him with any sacred fire. It is to be regretted that the conferences or conversations should be continued any further. They can only tend to disquiet the public mind with a sense of uncertainty where no real uncertainty exists. Mr. Parnell has ceased to be the Dictator of Ireland, and

there is an end of the matter. All the King's horses and all the King's men, as Mr. Chamberlain says, could not set him up in dictatorship again. But nothing could be more absurd than the talk of people who try to persuade themselves that because Mr. Parnell as dictator has gone Home Rule has gone with him. Mr. Chamberlain says now... that he had found out Mr. Parnell from the very first. But was it not Mr. Chamberlain who conducted the confidential negotiations negotiations for Mr. Parnell's Kilmainham Treaty? Was not the inspiring principle of that treaty to be the acceptance of Mr. Parnell's word as the security of peace and order in Ireland? However that may be, it is certain that the Home Rule cause has suffered no damage whatever in sound English public opinion from the events that have lately happened. On the contrary, we feel convinced that sound English opinion is more than ever inclined to admit the justice of the Irish National claim. Ireland has passed through a terrible ordeal, and has borne a fearful strain. She has proved that she has the power to think, decide, and act for herself. She has governed herself, and thus in the most emphatic and practical way has testified to her fitness for self-government.

"What was the charge most constantly made against the Irish people by the enemies of the Irish cause? It was that they had no minds of their own—that they could only follow some leader with blind devotion, believe in grievances because he told them they were aggrieved, and put faith in remedies because he assured them the remedies could be had and would bring healing. This used to be said in the days of O'Connell. It used to be said in the days of Parnell. Surely it can hardly be said any longer...

"We do not and cannot believe that Mr. O'Brien has the remotest intention of trying to reinstate Mr. Parnell... But the whole interval or episode is calculated to give encouragement to wrong impressions, and to delay the general settling down to a recognition and acceptance of actual facts and conditions. The interval, however, cannot be much further prolonged. Mr. O'Brien will probably soon find out that there is nothing to be done with Mr. Parnell, and Mr. Parnell will discover that there is not much to be got out of Mr. O'Brien—and there an end, as the old poets would say." (2nd January, 1891.)

But O'Brien was soft on Parnell, and he persisted with the Boulogne negotiations long after a politician with an eye for functional realities would have given them up as worse than useless.

His proposal was that the proceedings in Committee Room 15 should be cancelled; that Justin McCarthy should be unanimously elected Chairman of the Parliamentary Party, with Parnell continuing as Chairman of the Party organisation, the National League; and that the Party should organise a public tribute to Parnell.

Parnell agreed to give up the Parliamentary chairmanship on the condition that he was succeeded, not by McCarthy, but by O'Brien himself. O'Brien replied that that was out of the question, and that Dillon was the man best fitted to take over from Parnell. "A cloud immediately fell upon Parnell's brow. He could not be induced to break silence as to his objection, but he returned again and again to the dogged

formula—'You are the only man among them I could give way to'" (Olive Branch, p28).

Parnell then proposed his condition, which was that guarantees should be got from Gladstone about the next Home Rule Bill, particularly with regard to the police (the Royal Irish Constabulary to be reduced to an unarmed civil police), and the land (which should be settled within three years by the Westminster Parliament or else the responsibility transferred to the Irish Parliament).

On 6th January O'Brien made it a condition of further discussion that Parnell should accept Dillon as his successor, that McCarthy and Sexton of the anti-Parnell majority should be kept informed of the negotiations between O'Brien and Parnell, and that McCarthy should take part with O'Brien and Parnell in judging the adequacy of the Liberal guarantees.

"Once more, he objected flatly to Mr. Dillon's nomination with such persistency that I found it necessary to break off the interview altogether and quit the room; and once more Mr. Redmond, M.P. and Mr. Clancy M.P., took up the advocacy of peace with a zeal so resolute that after an hour or two they had at last (in their own phrase) 'bullied' Parnell into acceptance of Dillon's name" (p34).

Dillon was not at Boulogne at this period, and one feels that the fact that O'Brien had to keep him fully informed at every stage of the proceedings helped O'Brien himself to keep his bearings. Political in-fighting was not O'Brien's strong point and he needed the restraining influence of his absent colleague, who had a much more hard-headed idea of Parnell.

Gladstone agreed to state his intentions about Home Rule in a Memorandum to be shown to the Irish factions. Although Parnell still raised some quibbles, the Liberal Memorandum was on the whole judged to be adequate. (That issue was in any case no more than a red herring brought in by Parnell after the meeting of 26th November. Healy jeered that, if Gladstone brought in a Bill giving Ireland no more than the rights of a Parish Council, Parnell would, if he was the leader of the Party, declare it to be Home Rule. He had, after all, declared his acceptance of the modest 1886 Bill as a final settlement.)

With the Liberal guarantees on the table, O'Brien thought the matter was settled. The last meeting, to make the final arrangements on the basis of what had been agreed, was held at Calais. Dillon attended. Parnell spoke of taking a holiday in America. "He gave Mr. Dillon much detailed advice as to the future management of the party". Then they got down to discussing the administration of the Paris Funds—Land League money lodged in an American bank in Paris in the names of Parnell, McCarthy and Dr. Kenny.

"We suggested that the funds should be transferred to the joint credit of Mr. Dillon, as chairman of the party..., and Mr. McCarthy. Parnell objected that this would amount to throwing over Dr. Kenny. 'Don't you think, Dillon', he said, 'it will answer all purposes if the funds are placed in your name and mine?' 'Yes, indeed, and the first time I am in a fix leave me without a pound

to pay the men'.

"Parnell started and grew pale as if a pistol had been fired into his face... 'Dillon', he said with that power of his to produce the effect of ice and of fire at the same moment; 'Dillon, that is not the kind of expression I had a right to expect from you after the way I have behaved to you.' He said nothing more on the point. We strove desperately to restore the happy current of the conversation by various conciliatory suggestions. He himself quickly recovered his coolness, and resumed a courteous but henceforth carefully reserved part in the conversation during the interminable half-hour before the boat for Dover was to start; reverting now obstinately to points in which he found the Liberal memorandum defective. But we all spoke with the unreality of physicians prescribing for a patient who had already expired under our eyes. I accompanied Parnell to the gangway of the Dover boat... Parnell was perfectly calm, but wore an air which there was no misreading. 'O'Brien', he said, as we shook hands, 'you have all but achieved the impossible. You and I could have done anything, but what are you to do with a man like that?'

"We went on with our efforts to get the necessary emendations made by the Liberal leaders, but it was now with all but a certainty that any difficulties in that direction would only be used as pretexts for a rupture of the peace negotiations. When the reply came from the Liberal leaders that 'they will not alter a comma', we could not quarrel with the decision, however unwisely it was phrased" (p47).

Without doubting the accuracy of this account (because I have found O'Brien to be, with Gavan Duffy, amongst the most scrupulous and reliable of politician-historians), I can only regard it as a fantasy. O'Brien describes what he saw, but I doubt that what he saw was what happened.

He prefaces this account by saying, "There is no longer any reason why what 'went wrong at Calais' should not now be dispassionately narrated" (p45). And, although in 1910 O'Brien and Dillon had become political enemies, I do not doubt that the account he wrote was accurate in its details.

O'Brien also holds the Redmondites responsible for the final rupture of the Party because of their failure to act towards Parnell on his return to London in accordance with an understanding which O'Brien thought they had made with him:

> "...if men of the stamp of Messrs. Redmond, Harrington, Clancy, Kenny and Leary—the brains-carriers and debaters of his following—had the moral courage... to press their own convictions upon him stoutly as they had done in the two Boulogne interviews, the result would have been equally satisfactory" (p50).

But, if they had been capable of pressing their own convictions on Parnell, would they have been Parnellites? Even if they had convictions that might be called their own, would they have been Parnellites?

Redmond's "bullying" of Parnell at Boulogne I take to have been of a kind with Brunnhilde's opposition to Wotan. In opposing Wotan, Brunnhilde acted as his

'wish-child', and in the same way Redmond bullied Parnell. Parnell wanted to test O'Brien's obstinacy by pushing it to the point of apparent rupture, and, when O'Brien proved to be obstinate on the point, relations were restored, because Parnell did not wish them to be ruptured just yet. To camouflage what happened, Parnell got himself bullied by Redmond into conceding a point—which, along with restoring the connection with O'Brien, also made Redmond feel good.

The Parnellite residue in the Parliamentary Party consisted of personality cultists. The politics of the Manifesto were altogether impractical in terms of the framework of action which Parnell himself had constructed. The Liberal alliance was the only possible alliance worth contemplating. In 1885 there had been a choice of allies, and Parnell had exhorted the Irish in Britain to vote Tory in order to emphasise and maximise his freedom of action. In 1886 he had made his choice and stuck to it until November 1890. The Manifesto revoked the alliance with the Liberals, but did so on grounds which could only convince a Parnell devotee, and in circumstances in which an alliance with the Tories was not on the cards (because the Tories were being reinvigorated through a developing alliance with the Liberal Unionists). It was, for an Irish *Parliamentary* Party, the Liberal alliance or nothing. That is why the Parnellite Parliamentarians can only be described as personality cultists.

(This reasoning applies only to the Parliamentarians—the Redmondites. The small Fenian element in the Parliamentary Party and the much greater Fenian element in the country had sound reasons for fuelling the Parnell cult, despite its impracticability in constitutional politics—indeed *because of* its constitutional impracticability. The Liberal alliance could only debilitate the pure and simple Fenian spirit.)

While O'Brien was conducting his hopeless negotiations with Parnell at Boulogne, Parnell was in control of O'Brien's weekly newspaper, *United Ireland*. Parnell seized the paper by physical force within days of the Split. An edition of the paper, which had just been produced when Parnell took control, was suppressed by him. But the Acting Editor, Mr. Bodkin, got it printed by the *Irish Catholic*, and it was issued as the *"Suppressed" United Ireland*.

On 6th December, the day of the Split, the editorial of United Ireland said:

> *"This Week's Work.*
>
> "For the nine years that it has been established, under the editorship of William O'Brien, *United Ireland*, in the face of danger, prosecution, suppression, has advocated the cause of Ireland—that, and that only. It will not, while Mr. *William O'Brien* is four thousand miles away, violate this honourable record. While he is editor it will speak out the truth fearlessly, fearing no man, sparing no man. For those nine years Mr. *O'Brien* has taken on his own shoulders the perils of the editor, no light burden in the fighting days of Coercion. When the ban of suppression was upon it, he wrote in is cell in Kilmainham the entire paper that was published in Paris. He answered for *United Ireland* in the libel

actions by which he exposed and crushed the nameless infamies of the Castle. He answered for *United Ireland* when he stood in the dock in Green-street before a carefully-packed jury to be tried on a charge of seditious libel, of which the punishment was penal servitude if convicted...

"During that time no one has shared with him the responsibility or the danger; no one attempted to control his absolute discretion. To the entreaties of his colleagues he denied the right to be responsible to the Coercion Government for their own words, monopolising to himself all peril and suffering, as is his wont. The attempt to set his authority aside has been made at last. On Tuesday evening the following telegram was received by the writer of this paragraph, whom *William O'Brien* had appointed his responsible deputy in his absence, and whose own strong views of the unhappy controversy were strengthened and confirmed by cablegrams from his chief:—

"'Must insist that your leading article next issue of *United Ireland* being submitted to me before printing, otherwise I must make other arrangements.—*Parnell.*'

"To this mandatory telegram no answer was returned. It is to our readers who have heretofore honoured us with our confidence, and whose confidence we still hope to deserve, our answer is made. There will be no Press censorship in *United Ireland* in favour of any man. While *William O'Brien's* representative sits in his editorial chair so long will its voice be bold and free in Ireland's cause, speaking the truth as heretofore regardless of consequences. Whether Mr.. *Parnell* has `seen beforehand" and revised the leading articles that have been elsewhere published in his favour we have no means of knowing. But this we do know, the liberty of the Press will not be violated where it has been so long and so fearlessly maintained until a man of his own sits in *O'Brien's* chair. He must dismiss *William O'Brien* from his post as editor before *William O'Brien's* sentiments are belied in *United* Ireland."

By the following issue (13th December), Parnellites had taken over the paper and Mr. Bodkin had produced the first issue of *"Suppressed" United Ireland.* Parnell's edition commented:

"The Bodkin number of United Ireland was published yesterday at the *Irish Catholic* or *Nation* office. Two van loads of papers were dispatched to Kingsbridge terminus about 5 a.m., but we are informed that only one reached its destination; the parcels which were in the other van are by this time at sea". It explained that the second van was held up and the bundles of the paper were thrown in the Liffey.

"Suppressed" United Ireland (also dated 13th December) explained:

"In our last issue we said that the sentiments of William O'Brien should never be belied in *United Ireland*, until he was dismissed from his post as Editor. This has been attempted to be done by mob violence. A mere creature of Mr. Parnell has been foisted into Mr. O'Brien's chair."

A special edition had been produced at the request of the Party leader, Justin McCarthy, when Parnell, his Secretary, a couple of other MPs, and "some other persons" showed up and told the Acting Editor he was sacked. The Acting Editor denied Parnell's authority and said he would only submit to brute force.

"In a few moments Mr. John Clancy, who has been the most violent partisan of Mr. Parnell, and organised all the rowdyism on his behalf in Dublin, broke into the room at the head of an uproarious mob of about fifty persons, and advanced threateningly to the Acting Editor."

This was conceded to be the authority of brute force, and the office was vacated. The whole edition of the anti-Parnell issue of the paper was burned. It was then reconstructed elsewhere, only to have half of it seized on the quays and thrown into the river.

O'Brien's supporters in Dublin quickly organised the publication of a new paper and issued it as a daily. They called it *The Insuppressible*, and underneath the title it declared itself to be *William O'Brien's Paper.*

Every issue, under the headline, *'William O'Brien Speaks'*, carried a letter from O'Brien to Bodkin, dated New York, 11th December, saying:

"Mournful to think that the paper which for Ten Years has borne all the assaults of Dublin Castle, should receive its worst stab from the Leader I all but worshipped.

"Proud to know that 'United Ireland' continues insuppressible.

"Cannot possibly believe that my true-hearted countrymen will countenance the outrage committed in my absence, and whilst my hands are bound".

The Insuppressible was forthrightly hostile to Parnell. On the ground in Dublin it was necessary to be one thing or the other. The new Parnellism had a strong base there, and forthright hostility to it was the only practical alternative to being swept along by it.

Here are a couple of samples:

5th January 1891: "Does it never strike the Parnellites that they have as little right to dictate to the National Party as the Orangemen of the North have to dictate to the people of Ireland? There are many points of resemblance between them. Both delight to style themselves 'the loyal minority'. Both have about equal right to the name. Whatever cavil there may be to their claim to be considered 'loyal', their right to be called the minority is at least beyond dispute. Both minorities—the Parnellite and the Orange—arrogate to themselves the rights of the 'majority', and both are strongly backed in their preposterous pretensions by the English Coercionists. They are both playing, on different tables, the old game of Ireland's enemies—'Divide and be conquered'."

19th January: "If Mr. Parnell did not mean mischief at Tralee, it is

impossible to say what he did mean. He merely harked back to questions of abstract policy which will arise when the General Election is won, and threw out insinuations against the good faith of the English Home Rulers with whom he has been acting in the utmost harmony till the question of his own leadership became involved... He also... bitterly attacked his own party. Though he did not explain how he only discovered their baseness when they desired to depose him, he was kind enough to admit that they had not all been contaminated by residence in England. We have no desire to say the harsh things which Mr. Parnell's own language necessarily provokes. But we think he would be well advised to leave the question of contamination in England out of his speeches. It is very suggestive of a disagreeable retort. It is very unlucky for Mr. Parnell that in his allusions to previous visits to Ireland he has to go back a very long time. It was twelve years, he reminded them, since ha had been in Tralee; during the long interval he had been residing in the contaminating atmosphere of England. Of the real controversy which he has forced... on a disgusted country, he had not one word to say."

22nd January: [It distinguished between bravery and bravado, and then commented:] "We suppose we will be told forthwith that we are sneering at the gallant hillside men, the pioneers of Irish nationality, because we resent the transparent efforts of knaves or fools to gull them. The spectacle of Mr. Pierce Mahony or Mr. Henry Campbell [the Secretary found for Parnell by Healy in 1881] patronising the old-time Fenians would be ludicrous, if it were not absolutely loathsome... What Mr. Campbell's title to play the patron may be we cannot tell. We have never hesitated to speak our mind plainly of the devoted men who risked life and liberty in desperate, despairing effort for their country's freedom. Some little time ago *United Ireland*, before it passed by the influence of the crowbar into the hands of Mr. Campbell, published a cartoon depicting the tomb of the Manchester Martyrs, on which Ireland laid a wreath of fame, and England of remorse. Since this controversy began, our most earnest and most respectful appeals have been to the old guard of Irish Nationality. It was such an appeal that brought the crowbar brigade to the offices of *United Ireland*. The paper that contained it was vainly attempted to be suppressed by Mr. Parnell, who now bids so wildly for the hillside men's support. The men of the 'sixty-seven are not to be beguiled by the fulsome flattery by which they are assailed. It is quite safe now to express the utmost sympathy with physical force. A man may walk down O'Connell-street at noon and proclaim himself a Fenian to every policeman he meets, and yet provoke only a good-humoured smile. It was not always so. There was a time when that Fenianism meant death, or life-long imprisonment, to the man who professed it. Then Fenians were heroes. Now, too often fools and knaves masquerade in their cast-off clothes. But the Castle regards publicly professed Fenianism with the same complacency and indulgence, not to say encouragement, with which it regards the pretensions of Mr. Parnell—and for the same reason. They are no longer dangerous to the

Castle. They are dangerous only to the Home Rule movement, whose success means the death-blow of the Castle and of Coercion. Irish Nationalists are rational beings... The very best and bravest of the hillside men have abandoned their beautiful wild dream of restoring Irish Nationality by force of arms. They have taken to means, less glorious, perhaps, but far more feasible. They have reverently put aside the pike and assumed the weapons of constitutional agitation. If there be a reproach in this Mr. Parnell surely shares it. This is the doctrine he all his life preached... Mr. Parnell never hinted a doubt of the certainty or sufficiency of Home rule until the question of his leadership was touched."

Two days after this issue, *The Insuppressible* appeared without the sub-title, "William O'Brien's Paper". It carried a letter from O'Brien asking that his name should no longer be used in connection with it. And it was announced that, since it was no longer to be William O'Brien's paper, it would no longer be published.

On 22nd January it had commented on the Boulogne negotiations, under the headline, *Speed The Work*:

"The country, at the instance of Dillon and O'Brien, is willing to be generous in the terms she pays for peace. But generosity may be pushed to weakness. The country asks that both sides may be rapid in their decision... If peace be possible, let it come at once. If there must be a fight, the sooner it is fought and over the better."

O'Brien did not want his paper to comment on the Boulogne negotiations. But that was not a possibility of practical politics in Ireland. The Parnellite press was taking maximum advantage of the negotiations to represent O'Brien as being virtually aligned with Parnell.

These are some Parnellite *United Ireland* headlines:

3rd January: The Conference At Boulogne/ Messrs. Parnell And O'Brien Meet/ Friendliness All round/ The Conference To Be Resumed.

10th January: The Conference At Boulogne/ A Basis Of Settlement Come To.

7th February: Splendid Letter From William O'Brien.

On 21st February, *United Ireland* carried the text of a letter from Parnell to O'Brien, dated 11th February:

"...I regret it has not been rendered possible for me to consider the National interests so safeguarded that I could feel there would be no danger to the cause in my now surrendering the responsibility which has been placed upon me, and which I have accepted at the hands of our nation and our race. I had been ready to act up to the letter and spirit of our understanding to the last moment, and I regret there is no course left to me now but to withdraw from the negotiations. The seal of confidence, which covers what passed between us, renders it impossible to invite the public judgment upon them at the present time, but, if ever that seal be removed, I feel confident that I will be held to have done everything in my power consistent with the National interest to promote the

Redmondism: The First Phase

Parnell died on 6th October 1891. And Redmond, who organised the funeral ceremonies, conducted himself in a way that puts one in mind of Stalin upon the death of Lenin thirty years later. But, in this historical repetition, the farce came first.

The Redmondite paper, *United Ireland*, carried this fierce denunciation on 10th October, 1891:

> "Slain, sacrificed by Irishmen on the altar of English Liberalism, he, the greatest Chief that this land has known in the struggle of centuries, has been murdered by the men whom he dragged from obscurity and who hated him, even while they fawned upon him, because they could never repay all he had done for them personally. Murdered he has been as certainly as if the gang of conspirators had surrounded him and hacked him to pieces. 'I will drive Parnell to death or madness', said the infamous spokesman of the Bantry Band. And the leprous traitors—the Abrahams and the Barrys who talk of morality with a lie in their hearts—they may rejoice to-day that their purpose has been accomplished. Is Mr. John Dillon satisfied now? Is Mr. William O'Brien—dead Caesar's Brutus? Are they as happy as Mr. Thomas Sexton, who plotted the great Betrayal of November last? Shall Ireland exact no punishment for what has been done? Shall this fatal perfidy, this slow torture unto death of our beloved leader go unavenged?"

William Redmond (who was to be killed 28 years later while assisting in Britain's greatest and most blood-stained imperialist adventure) also contributed to the cry for vengeance in October 1891:

> "The greatest enemy of British tyranny... is killed by the foulest slander, hunted to death, that the virtue of Ireland might be vindicated to the satisfaction of the Pharisees and hypocrites of holy England. The Nonconformist conscience is now at ease; the scandalmongers and canters of Great Britain are satisfied... The virtue of Ireland having been vindicated, the orders of our English masters having been carried out, the noblest, bravest and truest of Irishmen having been driven broken-hearted to the grave, Ireland will now receive at the gracious hands of England some measure of freedom. Perhaps, indeed, we may be ordered to forget the very name of him to whose matchless labours any liberty we receive will be due... Yes, but by the memory of the dead we never, never will forget the price our masters exacted for it. Millions alive, and millions and millions yet unborn, will remember that before England removed one finger of her blood-stained hand from Ireland's throat she ordered us to break the heart of our best and truest chief." (I quote this from the biography of John Redmond by his nephew, L.G. Redmond-Howard.)

On 10th October, United Ireland appeared with black borders on its columns, and confronted a guilty nation with its guilt. The editorial was titled, *Done To Death*:

> "Does Ireland know that the mightiest intellect that has given itself to her cause for two hundred years has ceased to think and plan for her? Ah, fellow-countrymen, you turned upon him in his hour of trial. Do you feel happy this morning as the news flashes over the hills of Ireland that *he is dead*?...
>
> "Men like William O'Brien will pause in the presence of this Death. It strikes them to the heart, asks them questions they cannot answer, bids them, in the name of Ireland, stand and deliver.
>
> "They have killed him—*him*, the greatest son of Banba since the day in 1649 when *Owen Roe O'Neill* breathed his last 'at Clough Oughter upon St. Leonard's Day'.
>
> "...they have driven to his grave a son of Ireland, truer than *Tone*, abler than *Grattan*, greater than *O'Connell*, and full of love for us as *Davis* himself—the only Irish Chief for two hundred years fit to stand on an Irish hill beard to beard, foot to foot, with the Englishman."

On 17th October the editorial was headlined, *"No!"*:

> "No, we cannot make friends with you. We cannot join hands over his grave with the people who killed him. We cannot, even if for Ireland it were good, smile today in the faces of men who turned their back upon him when he stood at bay, a hundred thousand Saxons howling for his life. No, no!... We are a predestined nation. More than once in our brave island story we faltered; more than once the Teuton tripped us up... But God guarded Erin". He guarded us by giving us Sarsfield, Tone, Davis, Mitchel, 'Stephens and his Fenian boys', and now Parnell."

(The reference to "the Teuton" is interesting in the light of the fact that, 23 years later, Redmond committed nationalist Ireland to total war against Teutonic 'savagery'. But, whereas the Saxon was the Teuton in 1891, by 1914, the Teuton had become German and the Saxon was the saviour of civilisation!

Amidst this wild extravagance of language, there is a rather ludicrously factual element—the comparison with Owen Roe O'Neill. Owen roe was on his way to give battle to Cromwell when he died. But for three years before that he had been making war on the Irish Confederation, and during the previous year he had been in a military alliance with the Cromwellians—see *Spotlights On Irish History*, Aubane Historical Society.)

In accordance with its flirtation with Young Ireland and Fenianism, *United Ireland* carried a series of articles on *Edward Walsh: Poet and Shanachie* in July and August. On 3rd October it issued as a Supplement a signed portrait of James Stephens. On 10th October there was an article, *Mr. Parnell As I Knew Him*, by *A Physical force Man*. On 31st October, the front page carried a drawing of *Mr. James Stephens At The Grave Of Mr. Parnell*, and this editorial remark:

> "The West-British party in Ireland have taken advantage of an explosion which occurred in the offices of the *National Press* on Tuesday night to organise a dynamite scare."

On 7th November it carried a jubilant headline: *Healy Horsewhipped!!* By Mr. Parnell's Nephew/ Extraordinary Scene At Four Courts.

Amidst all the Fenian posturing, the future of Redmondism was foreshadowed by *United Ireland* on 14th February, 1891, when it issued as a Supplement a portrait of the great Imperialist, Cecil Rhodes. (Rhodes had made a handsome donation to Parnell's finances.

The *Freeman's Journal*, which supported Parnell for six months after the Split, re-aligned itself with the majority in July 1891. Parnell then set about organising a daily paper of his own. It appeared two months after his death, with the title, *Irish Daily Independent*. Here is a sample of the editorial in the first number:

> "Deprived of a journal now discredited beyond recovery by the meanest act of political and turncoat treachery in newspaper annals, and chafing under the grossest misrepresentation from the pens of the organ of scurrility and deadly treason to the unity of the Irish race and the martyred Irish leader, our countrymen have awaited with eagerness the hour when a National mouthpiece would be at their service... and when they would in capital and country be no longer compelled to sit worse than dumb while their principles were travestied, their motives malignantly aspersed, and the programme and policy carried to the gates of victory by Charles Stewart Parnell distorted and abandoned. The final work upon which Mr. Parnell was engaged was the establishment and issue of this journal, which he named *The Independent.*" (18th December, 1891.)

There might have been some future for the politics of Parnell's Manifesto under the leadership of Parnell. Parnellism without Parnell was never more than a small, but intensely rancorous, faction within the Parliamentary Nationalist movement whose main purpose was to keep up bad feeling in honour of Parnell's memory. It is conceivable that Parnell himself might have broken the bounds of constitutional action and become a Fenian, a Republican, in some mode of his own devising. That would have been fundamentally inconsistent with the whole of his political activity up to mid-November 1890, which Mrs. O'Shea quite fairly describes as, "the betterment of England's government of Ireland". But sheer disgruntlement might well have led him to it. (Erskine Childers, an offspring of the same class as Parnell, and a more overt and active British Imperialist than Parnell had ever been, became a Home Ruler a generation later for the purpose of improving the political structure of the Empire, and then became a Republican when the Home Rule project was messed up by Britain.) But it was never on the cards that Redmond should do more than flirt with Fenianism for the purpose of using Republican sentiment in the country as fuel for a campaign of mere vindictiveness against all who in 1891 had acted out of a calculation of interest, instead of out of a blind reflex of personal loyalty to "the greatest chief this land has known".

O'Brien, though acting with Dillon, was of two minds while Parnell lived. But he had no time for Parnellism as Redmondism:

> "As long as Parnell lived there was always in the background his magic gift of leadership to justify his followers in running even the wildest risks. There was no longer that justification or any justification whatever for giving a new start and fresh venom to a strife amidst which the national cause was perishing visibly and with shame. It was to be no longer a question of Parnell's leadership but of vengeance for his wrongs; no longer a question of reuniting the country but of immolating her to his manes" (p61; *Manes* = spirits of the dead).

When the general appeal to the people was made in the General Election of July 1892, the trend of the by-elections of the preceding eighteen months was confirmed. The Parnellites, who had 30 MPs going into the elections, fielded 45 candidates, but only won 9 seats. The anti-Parnellites won 71 seats.

The Election returned a Home Rule (i.e. Liberal plus Nationalist) majority of 40. The Parnellites

> "devoted themselves in scarcely disguised concert with the Unionist opposition to sowing tares in the seed-ground of the Home Rule Government and discrediting and obstructing the Home Rule Bill... The Home Rule Bill was one which satisfied Parnell's largest stipulations... Nevertheless Mr. Redmond and his friends pursued the Home Rule Bill throughout all the battles and ambuscades of its passage through the House of Commons with that species of fatal friendship which is the deadliest of Parliamentary weapons. He who, in the Boulogne letters, had paid such scant respect to Parnell's ingenious attempts to pick holes in the Liberal Memorandum now himself raised points very much more futile and pressed them home amidst the joyous cheers of the enemies of Home Rule and with their ardent support, in the division lobbies. He who who was constitutionally an Irish Nationalist of the most moderate type threw out hints and vague demands which alarmed a good many honest but uninformed Britons, and gave the Whiggish section of the Liberal Party a plausible pretext for separating themselves from what they nicknamed 'Fenian Home Rule'" (Olive Branch, p69).

On the Third Reading of the Bill (30th August, 1893), Redmond said, "This Bill, as it now stands, cannot under any conceivable circumstances if it passes into law afford a full, a final, or a satisfactory settlement of this question".

The Bill was passed by the Commons and vetoed by the Lords.

Given that the governing party did not have a majority in the Commons, and that the Irish representatives who acted in the name of Parnell declared that the Bill was unsatisfactory, it can hardly be said that the Lords' Veto was exercised unreasonably. It was, of course, unreasonable that an Irish majority should not have the right to determine whether or not Ireland should form part of the United Kingdom state. But the Home Rule movement accepted in principle that the UK Parliament had the right of decision, and that a Home Rule settlement should be within the framework of the British Constitution. It was therefore not unreasonable for the Lords to strike down a Bill which the Parnellites had rejected as a basis of settlement.

The flavour of Redmondism can be gathered from *The Parnellite*, a "Newspaper/ Magazine" published in 1895. It was directed against "McCarthyism" (i.e. Justin McCarthy, Vice-Chairman under Parnell, who led the walk-out from Committee

Room 15), and "West Britonism". It carried photographic portraits on the front page, and they included John O'Leary, the Fenian; John Mitchel, who preached revolution as a member of the Young Ireland group in the 1840s; "the Late Duchess of Leinster"; and Maud Gonne with wolfhound.

A sample of the contents is given below.

"Wanted—Fight!

"Independent Nationalists will rejoice to know that Mr. John Redmond has returned to Ireland greatly restored by his sea voyage...

"The question... arises whether the Nationalist vote should or should not be solidly cast against the various Bills which various coteries in the Liberal Party are endeavouring to promote.

"Now, let us say at the outset that we do not preach... any useless or purely vindictive hostility towards any class or party in Great Britain. We are trying to reason the matter out purely as a matter of business and of principle.

"...Speaking at Listowel on Sunday last, Mr. Thomas Sexton dwelt with glowing verbosity on a long list of Democratic reforms which the present Administration has conferred upon the British people, by the grace and favour of the Party to which he belongs—and so far as the Peers are concerned there is no reason why this process should not be continued. But will its continuance serve the cause of Ireland?

"We say no—a thousand times, no! Ireland has nothing to gain by Welsh Disestablishment, or Local Veto, or Registration Reform, or Extension of the Franchise...

"An English Party believes it will make a heavy party gain given by various alterations in the Franchise and Registration Laws. Skilled Liberal Organisers believe such an alteration would mean a difference of at least 30 or 40 seats to them at any General Election. May we ask what difference would Franchise and Registration Reform make to the cause of Irish Nationality? Would it mean the capture of more than two or three seats from the Irish Unionists? And would such a gain be in the least commensurate with the gains which are expected and which will probably be secured by the English Liberals?

"Oh! but we shall be told that the strengthening of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons will strengthen the fight against the House of Lords, and that British Democracy, brimming over with gratitude to its Irish benefactors, will hurl itself with frenzied enthusiasm into the struggle for a Parliament in College Green.

"We loathe the humbug about the gratitude of British Democracy. There is no gratitude in Politics. There is certainly no gratitude in British Politics. The British Electors are in the main business-like fellows who sell their political favours as they sell their cotton or their iron. We don't blame them for it. We don't rant about people being selfish because they don't agitate themselves about grievances which they have never felt. We don't believe that Irishmen would go into hysterics about the hardships of the Scotch Crofters or the

London Poor. But we do ask our fellow-countrymen not to be such ninnies as to fancy that when Ireland ceases to block the way, Ireland can possibly expect a redressal of her grievances by a British majority in a British Parliament... [Not even an amnesty was given by the Liberals in return for all the Irish Party has done for them.]

"Let us get back to the bulldog policy of Biggar and Parnell, or let us own ourselves beaten, get about our business, and let other men and other methods have their chance" (19th January 1895).

"Gloves Off!

[Begins by listing reform measures to come before Parliament. Welsh Disestablishment, Factory Acts, etc:]

"A vital question now arises. When these Bill... are submitted to the House of Commons, ought they or ought they not to receive the Irish Nationalists vote?

"We say, no. We are sick of timidity and finesse, and compromise. We are still more sick with the attempt to cheat and bamboozle our fellow-countrymen in the name of the British Democracy. That British Democracy may still have grievances—that sections of it may still be poor, or neglected, or downtrodden—we do not wish to deny. But it cannot be disputed by any other than an extremely ignorant person that the average British Democrat is the fattest, best clothed, best housed, and best paid Democrat in the wide world... In the teeth of this, Irish Nationalist Members of Parliament, are invited, with cool affrontery, to come to the aid of the poor, downtrodden British Democracy, while their own fellow-countrymen are more or less courteously invited to take a back seat." (9th February, 1895.)

Among the issues agitated by *The Parnellite* was the hanging of John Twiss of Glenlara, a townland west of Newmarket in North Cork, where I once cut turf. I cannot recall the exact details of the Twiss case. The late Pat Lynch published a book about it, but it is not available to me at the moment. The gist of it is that the crime for which he was executed was a trumped-up charge, and that he was really killed for being a physical force man. In the course of a meeting in Newmarket 95 years later, I made reference to Twiss to illustrate some point I was making about the mixed origins of the people in that strongly traditional area. I took it that the general view of Twiss was that he was a Fenian murdered by the Crown on a trumped up charge, and I was greatly surprised to find that it was still a contentious issue in the Newmarket region. *The Parnellite* saw the execution as "shocking proof of the tenacity with which the mire of Dublin Castle clings to the skirts of the present Government":

"The Hanging Of Twiss

"John Twiss was hanged on Saturday, calmly and firmly protesting his innocence to the last. The agitation for his reprieve was without parallel in Ireland for its earnestness, its spontaneousness, and for the fact that it was an

agitation in which thousands of men of every creed and class and party were joined together. Never was there an appeal for a reprieve to which Ministers might have acceded with greater justness and dignity. And never, perhaps, was a more perfect contempt for Irish opinion displayed than when this appeal for John Twiss was rudely brushed aside.

"...he was adjudged guilty of the capital offence on the evidence of a dirty informer and a child of seven years old" (16th February, 1895).

The editorial of the following week referred to "the judicial murder of John Twiss", and commented:

"We are in a position to state that Ireland was never more completely under police rule than she is at the present day... If no prominent victims have yet been secured, if no extensive... imprisonments have yet taken place, it is because a majority of Irish Nationalists are quiescent under the spell of West Britonism, and because Mr. Morley desires 'a peaceful Ireland' for show purposes on Liberal platforms. If the Irish people were to awaken from their trance to-morrow morning, and to insist on a stop being put to the indefinite postponement of Home Rule for the benefit of the British Democracy, they would find the Morley *regime* to be as bitter and unscrupulous as any they have experienced within living memory" (23rd February, 1895).

West Britonism is a recurring theme in *The Parnellite*. On 30th March it referred to its nationalist opponents as "candidates of the comfortable West British Order". And on 4th May: "The West British Party has little to be proud of. It has retained a seat in East Wicklow by a majority reduced from 238 to 62."

The latter comment is made in an editorial entitled, *More Catholic Than The Church*, which says further:

"It is the Brass Band Policy, root and branch, and line by line—with the same truckling to 'a friendly government', the same drivel about the wicked Tories, the same childish jargon about the gratitude of the British Democracy, and, especially, with the same episcopal patronage and clerical influence at its back."

Another Brass Band? was the title of an editorial 5th January. Commenting on a speech by Tim Healy at Crossmaglen, it suggested that the Bishops might now like to see an end of the Nationalist Party altogether. Healy had served their purpose and O'Brien and Dillon were not being sufficiently obedient to episcopal instructions.

"In fact, Ireland is threatened with another Brass Band... History repeats itself, particularly in Ireland; and if the Keogh-Sadleir tragedy of '52 is not to be re-enacted in or about the year '95, the Independent Nationalists of Ireland must be up and doing."

The Pope's Brass Band was the name given to the Sadleir and Keogh tendency in 1852. In the aftermath of the Famine, Gavan Duffy, founder of *The Nation* along with Thomas Davis, and its editor, got together an Independent Irish Party which did very well in the election of 1852. Its basic programme was to gain the enactment of a law of tenant-right and it was therefore functional in the Protestant parts of

Ulster, as O'Connell's party had never been. Its candidates were pledged to act as a party at Westminster and not to accept any Government offers as individuals. Michael Sadleir and John Keogh broke their pledges and accepted minor positions from the Whig/Liberal Government. They were given the "Pope's Brass Band" label because of their vociferous opposition to an anti-Catholic law enacted in 1851, the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

But Sharman Crawford, an Ulster Protestant Liberal or Radical, also defected from the Party when the Government offered a minor concession. Gavan Duffy emigrated to Australia in disgust, and for the next twenty years there was no semblance of an Irish party.

The situation after 1890 certainly bore some resemblance to the situation after 1852. But Healy and Dillon were no Sadleir and Keogh, and it was O'Brien who resembled Gavan Duffy with his multiple abilities as strategist, agitator, organiser, journalist and historian. It is hard to see where Redmond fits in.

Clericalism

O'Brien writes somewhere of an "unchaining of minds" being one of the consequences of the Split, and he thought this happened because others acted hastily. He did not see that, by committing his own influence to the futile activity of attempting to reconcile positions and factions which were in principle and practice irreconcilable, he himself contributed to the unchaining process. If, on his return from America, he had supported Parnell, he might have halted the Parnellite development of a spurious, radical-chic, Fenian posturing, and given a more useful tactical implementation to the strategy implicit in the Manifesto. Or, if he had joined Healy, he might have retarded the tendency towards Clericalism on the anti-Parnell side—by virtue of the weight he added to it, rather than because he was personally more anti-clerical than Healy. But he wasted his influence in 1891 by deploying it in pursuit of an unachievable object.

He was understandably reluctant to let go of the combination built up in the 1880s in conjunction with Parnell, and he would not see that it had already gone because Parnell had set himself against it. By refusing to let go of what had already gone, and by withholding his support from the Party majority, even though he agreed with it that the Liberal alliance must be maintained and Parnell must retire, he acted as an irritant. It would not be too much to say that he acted as a solvent and helped to bring about the very thing he wished to avert—the "unchaining" of the complex combination, breaking it down into its component elements.

There was undoubtedly a great increase in Catholic Clericalism after the Parnell Split. But that happened because of the Split. It was not the case that the Catholic clergy, who were an element in the political combination of the 1880s, had grown discontented with the restrictions imposed on them by that combination, and seized the opportunity of the O'Shea divorce action to free themselves from it by bringing down Parnell. The Hierarchy did not issue a statement against Parnell continuing in the Parliamentary leadership until 3rd December—after the Gladstone letter,

after Parnell's Manifesto, and after it became evident that Parnell was forming a faction to act against the Party majority.

It was not in December 1890 that the priests entered the life of the Irish Party. And it was not because of the priests that a majority of the Party rejected Parnell's leadership. The priests had been brought into politics by Parnell as part of his great national combination. It was his doing that parish clergy were *ex officio* members of election committees in the National League.

Parnell harnessed clerical influence to the Party in the days when he appeared to be its absolute master. By 1890, the priests were not much less Parnellite than the people. Two of the Archbishops were strongly Parnellite: Croke in Cashel and Walsh in Dublin, and the appointment of the latter was seen as a victory for Parnellite influence over British influence in the Vatican.

Frank Hugh O'Donnell, a member of the original Irish Party under Isaac Butt, rejected Parnellism early on and thereby made himself a marginal figure in Irish politics. When Mrs. O'Shea's memoirs were published in 1914, O'Donnell published, anonymously, an Address to Archbishop Walsh, in which he suggested that Mrs. O'Shea was a punishment of the Hierarchy for its betrayal of Butt. The Address is entitled, *The Lost Hat*—meaning that the Dublin Archdiocese lost a Cardinal's hat because of Walsh's enthusiasm for Parnell.

(The opening paragraph is worth retrieving from obscurity:

> "Most Reverend Lord Archbishop: In the most conspicuous street in your Archdiocese the semi-Pagan inspiration of a great American sculptor has erected a Phallic Pillar as the completion and culmination of a congenial statue to the late Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell. It may not be complimentary to the Cathedral City, but it was painfully adequate to the subject commemorated."

O'Donnell explains that he is addressing the Archbishop on the subject,

> "because you are the leading survivor of the distinguished churchmen who supported Parnell's destruction of Mr. Butt's Home Rule party, and who collected from Irish congregations the golden coin which supported the expenses of Parnell's hidden life in London" [i.e., the £40,000 raised for Parnell when he was thought to be close to bankruptcy].

And, "the Dublin Archdiocese lost the Red Hat" because of it.)

The initiating cause in the dethroning of Parnell was religious in character, but it did not come from the priestcraft of Rome. It came from the anti-priestcraft of England. It came from the Nonconformist preachers who were a power in the Liberal Party and who made a great virtue of not being priests. The anti-priests of the Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists etc. had unbridled consciences. When denunciation welled up in them there was no curbing it.

Their only real point of unity amongst themselves was anti-Catholicism. Their inherited view of Catholicism was that it fostered idolatry, superstition, spiritual slavery to Mammon, and loose living. The atrocities connected with English rule

in Ireland, from the Rule of the Saints under Cromwell (who broke their power in England but gave them Ireland as compensation), to the Famine, and the post-Famine evictions, were justified by the Divine obligation imposed on England to Christianise the world. Catholic Emancipation, enacted by the pre-Reform Tories in defiance of the Nonconformist Conscience, sparked off the great Protestant Crusade in Ireland. The safety of the English Constitution, whose linch-pin was Protestant Ascendancy, could only be ensured following the admission of Catholics to Parliament by the conversion of Ireland. The Famine was seen as a helping hand to the conversion process by the Almighty. Lurid exposés were published of the sinful practices preserved by Papist religion—practices which survived in Slieve Luacra long enough for me to grow up amongst them, e.g., Stations and Well Days.

Cardinal Cullen's reconstruction of the Catholic Church after 1850 was conducted in rivalry with the Protestant Crusade and took on some of the Puritan features of the Crusade. Cullen suppressed Stations and Well Days wherever he could, and the Protestant Crusade petered out. But, as long as English Protestantism remained true to its origins—which is to say, as long as it remained as an actual theological medium of thought—it could not fail to see Papist Ireland as being prone to moral laxity. And the initial response of Papist Ireland to the O'Shea divorce case confirmed that view.

Parnell was toppled by the anti-Priests of Nonconformist Christianity—by the berserkers of what Walter Cox in the early 19th century had appropriately named "English religion". English religion did not, at least in this instance, make up special rules for Irish politicians. As Bishop O'Donnell of Raphoe said:

> "...with his eyes open he pursued a career that he knew was calculated to bring ruin on himself and on his country. He had before him during the years of his iniquity the case of Sir Charles Dilke who was ignominiously driven from public life in England owing to a charge of gross immorality unsuccessfully repelled in the Courts. And if a man who was spoken of as a future Prime Minister received such treatment from his own countrymen, what was to be expected by a leader... in a strange land, who was bound by every patriotic duty to make Home Rule reputable and attractive in England? I say that he knowingly and deliberately did what he knew to be fraught with fatal consequences to the interests of Ireland." (Quoted by Maev Sullivan, p41.)

It was, of course, contrary to natural justice to apply the rules of English religion to Irish affairs, and it was particularly unfair to let the Nonconformist Conscience loose on Ireland. But the Home Rule movement, by seeking to achieve its object through a reform of the British Constitution enacted by Westminster, submitted itself to the conglomeration of powers and passions which make up that Constitution.

The Nonconformist Conscience was one of the sacred cows of the English Constitution. That was part of the bargain of the long Glorious Revolution of 1688-1714. The gentry were to have a monopoly of state power through the mechanism of the conscienceless Established Church, but the Nonconformist Conscience was to be free in the sphere of civil society. The repeal of the Test Act, the 1832 Reform,

and the development consequent on the Reform, made the term Nonconformist increasingly meaningless. But the less the term had meaning as a dissent from established political structures, the more sacred it became.

Nonconformism had no general existence. It was the name for a number of highly particular theological sects, each of which was rigorously conformist in its own affairs. It was not the case that Nonconformist sects asserted the right of each individual to act according to impulses. There was much greater freedom for individual impulse in either the Catholic Church or the Anglican Church. What Nonconformism refused to conform to was the lax practices and self-contradictory theology of the Established Church. Each Nonconformist Church was in its own affairs the essence of conformism.

The 18th century was, in English life, the great century of nonconformism in the literal meaning of the word, because the Nonconformists were excluded from political power. With the admission of the Nonconformists to political power in 1832, the great era of English conformism begins. And it was a point of general agreement among Nonconformists that the wayward sexual impulse in humans could be, and must be, made to conform to a strict standard.

How far the post-Famine development of Catholicism in Ireland on Puritan lines—the unique Catholicism *"du type Irlandais"*, as J.J. O'Riordan of Kiskeam has put it—how far it was due to the pressure of English Puritanism on a society demoralised by Famine, and how far it resulted simply from a naive acceptance of the Catechism as a rule of life in a society whose traditional culture had finally been broken down after seven centuries of destructive English pressure, is something I have never seen discussed. But it is an obvious fact that, in the second half of the 19th century, Catholicism in Ireland was ceasing to be one thread in the variegated fabric of a traditional culture, and had begun to weave itself into a comprehensive culture. And the successful assault of the anti-Priests of English Liberalism on Parnell had the inevitable consequence of intensifying that development.

It did this in two ways.

Britain was the most powerful state in the world, and it was asserting universal standards of morality for the world. In its attempt to achieve by agreement a measure of national autonomy from this state, Ireland had to adapt itself in a considerable degree to English morality. And the destruction of Parnell by the Puritan conscience of England cannot have failed to accelerate the Puritan tendency that was already developing in Irish Catholicism.

Secondly, the Puritan assault on Parnell, and Parnell's response to it, had the effect of breaking up the political combination of the 1880s, in which the Church was content to have a place alongside other elements. If that political combination had continued, I doubt if certain events of the following generation, such as the promulgation of the *Ne Temere* decree, would have happened. The Church does not act without regard for the political forces with which it is allied, and a Parnellite Party would hardly have encouraged the Ne Temere decree. As it was, the Church found itself effectively in a political vacuum after 1891.

The order of responsibility for the destruction of the Irish Party I see as being in the first place, the Liberal Party with its imperative of the Nonconformist Conscience; then Parnell himself for his refusal to enact a short-term compromise; and then O'Brien and Dillon for their long delay in taking sides.

Healy's only responsibility is for doing what it was necessary to do if the majority was to prevail.

I once (I cannot remember where) used the phrase, *"an oblique dictatorship"*, to describe the Parnell regime of the 1880s. The obliqueness was made possible by Parnell's alien qualities, and it was a condition of that strange dictatorship which operated through democratic forms.

It is possible for different elements to function together in a dictatorship which, if brought into a direct democratic relationship with each other would be antagonistic. And that fact—rather than the conventional *"lust for power"* explanation—is very often why dictatorships are formed.

Parnellite Ireland had the best of both worlds.

But Parnellite Ireland ceased to be in December 1890, when Parnell, having asserted a right superior to the will of the majority of the Party on the grounds that he represented the will of the people, then proceeded to disregard the will of the people, as manifested in the Kilkenny by-election. He continued to disregard it, although it was confirmed by further by-elections. And, when the obliqueness went, so did the possibility of dictatorship.

Healy did what was necessary to make the will of the majority effective. And, since he had to do so without the support of the two big guns of the Party, he had to rely more on support by the clergy. He had not previously shown himself to be a Clericalist. And, in 1891, it was as a democrat that he elicited the support of the clergy—because the Priests were of the people in Ireland no less than the Methodist anti-Priests were in Wales.

Appendix On Kitty O'Shea

Kitty O'Shea was, of course, the cause of it all—or the *sine qua non* of it all. If there had not been about her something which made the alien, Parnell, yearn for domesticity, everything would have been different.

Kitty O'Shea must be the most misleading name anybody has ever had. Here is her background:

> "The Woods, from which I am descended, were for hundreds of years owners of Hareston Manor, Brixton, a small village near Plymouth... The Hareston Woods died out, but a younger branch settled at Tiverton, the head of which manufactured lace and serge, and to him was born and duly apprenticed as a lad, Matthew. He soon started a business on his own account, and eventually became a successful hop merchant, being chosen Lord Mayor of London in 1815 and 1816. He represented the City in nine successive Parliaments, and was as fearless in defending the cause of Queen Caroline..., as he was in all matters aldermanic and magisterial. When Lord Mayor he

faced, practically alone, a riotous mob, whose leader was exhorting his followers to storm the Bank of England. Mr. Wood, running out into the crowd, pulled the ring-leader off his horse, and dragged him inside the Bank railings, a prisoner.

"In 1829 the Alderman was sitting in his counting-house when an agent of the Duke of Kent, calling late on Saturday afternoon, asked Matthew Wood for the loan of £10,000. The agent explained it was important for reasons of State that the expected baby (later Queen Victoria) of the Duchess of Kent, who was in Ostend, should be born in England, and that his Royal Highness the Duke could not cross over unless he received that sum of money to satisfy his more pressing creditors. Mr. Wood promised to reply on the Monday, after consulting his patrons; the agent urged, however, that the state of the Duchess's health admitted of no delay and that she ought to cross immediately, so my grandfather gave him the cheque.

"My mother... came of a race of Cornish squires...

"I was born at the Vicarage, Cressing, a village near Braintree, Essex... My father, educated at Winchester and Cambridge, visited as a lad the Field of Waterloo a few days after the 18th of June, 1818... My father took a degree early in 1820, and was immediately appointed Chaplain and Private Secretary to Queen Caroline."

That account of the family was written by Kitty O'Shea's brother, Field Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, in his memoirs, *From Midshipman To Field Marshal* (1910). Sir Evelyn's military career began in the Crimean War, and after that it progressed through a succession of conflicts which in the high noon of Imperial Britain were frankly called Small Wars—wars against inferior peoples. He took part in the indiscriminate slaughter by which the Indian Mutiny was suppressed, and then in the Ashanti War, the Kaffir Campaign, the Zulu Campaign, the Egyptian Expedition, and the Sudan Expedition.

So Catherine Wood came from the top drawer of Imperial Britain. And, when introducing herself to Gladstone in 1882, to act as intermediary between him and Parnell, she had only to say that Lord Hatherly was her uncle. Hatherly had been Gladstone's Lord Chancellor.

She married O'Shea, a dashing young Hussar officer, in 1867, and had children by him, before taking up with Parnell in 1880. O'Shea was a Home Ruler of sorts, and was elected as such for Clare in 1880, but he soon made connections with English governing circles which were more to his taste. (Though imposed on Galway by Parnell in January 1886, he did not vote for the Home Rule Bill a few months later.)

Whatever the domestic relationship was between Mr. and Mrs. O'Shea after she became Parnell's mistress, they both acted as intermediaries between him and the Government during his stay in Kilmainham Jail in 1881-2; Mrs. O'Shea with Gladstone, and Mr. O'Shea with Joseph Chamberlain, who led the other wing of the Liberal Party. What is known as the Kilmainham Treaty was finalised on the basis

of a letter from Parnell to O'Shea.

Parnell was imprisoned on the orders of the Government in 1881 in an attempt to curb the agrarian agitation in which "boycotting" was invented. But the country proved to be even less amenable to the rule of law with Parnell in prison than it had been when he was outside stirring it up.

It seems that Parnell himself had not expected this turn of events. In his letter of 13th October to Mrs. O'Shea, telling her that he had been arrested, he remarked: "Politically it is a fortunate thing for me that I have been arrested, as the movement is breaking fast, and all will be quiet in a few months, when I shall be released".

The Government response to the No Rent Manifesto was to make the Land League an illegal organisation. But the banning of the League only led to an increase in lawlessness. Gladstone's Irish Secretary (Forster), given the task of engendering respect for law by use of force, found that the quantity and quality of force at his disposal only provoked a popular determination to over-ride the law, and he asked for a substantial increase in the apparatus of coercion. Gladstone was ideologically unhappy about this, although there seemed to be no practical alternative to it from the viewpoint of British interest. That was when Parnell came to his rescue with an offer to call off the agrarian agitation and in future conduct Irish politics within parameters acceptable to Britain, in exchange for the release of himself and the other prisoners and a Bill to ease the position of tenants with rent arrears.

That was the Kilmainham Treaty. And Parnell abided by it for as long as it was within his power to break it. He refused to associate himself with the Plan of Campaign, launched by Harrington, O'Brien and Dillon in 1886, because it went beyond the parameters of his 1882 understanding with Gladstone. In December 1890 he broke the Kilmainham Treaty in an attempt to regain the power which he had lost, but the damage he did in breaking it was not to the British interest.

He made the Kilmainham Treaty in April 1882 for private reasons, without consulting his colleagues. And he broke it in December 1890, again without consulting his colleagues.

His reasons for signing it were private: an urge to be with Mrs. O'Shea, and concern about the lawlessness of the country. The latter is properly described as private because it did not arise from a position which he had ever put to his Party.

Davitt, who knew what real imprisonment was, commented as follows on Parnell's imprisonment:

"He was virtually under no prison rules except a bar against his walking out of Kilmainham. No indignity beyond detention was offered to him, and he wanted for no luxury which funds or friends could supply. He had also the association of intimates and colleagues, and could not, in addition, deny himself the keen satisfaction derived from seeing the complete failure of his jailers to rule the country and subdue the people after locking him up. But nature and temperament did not intend Mr. Parnell ever to be a prisoner. Restraint to him was a torture and an insult. His disposition rebelled against

it, and his inordinate pride caused him to feel heavily the outrage he was subjected to by a man whom he considered both an unscrupulous assailant and a social inferior. But it is now manifest that there were two other influences of even a more stimulating character at work to induce him to seek a release from prison. One of these influences can be inferred from the discovery made in Paris in February, 1881, by his colleagues on opening his letter [i.e. Mrs. O'Shea]. The other was probably the determining factor in causing him to open up negotiations with Mr. Gladstone. It was this: Extreme men, not necessarily belonging to the Fenian body, had become, in a sense, masters of the situation outside by the imprisonment of all the moral force local leaders. They struck at the law which had a doubly obnoxious character to them in being alien and coercive... The general state of the country under these circumstances seems to have greatly alarmed him...

"It was a dramatic coincidence that both the prisoner and his jailer were alike alarmed at a state of things which ought to have appealed to Parnell to concern himself only with scientific studies in the tranquil repose of Kilmainham, and to allow Ireland's enemies to reap the full reward of the brutal coercive and eviction policy they had so long pursued.

"It was a vital turning-point in Mr. Parnell's career, and he unfortunately turned in the wrong direction. He had hitherto been in everything but name a revolutionary reformer and had won many triumphs at the head of the most powerful organisation any Irish leader had at his back for a century. He now resolved to surrender the Land League, and to enter the new stage of his political fortunes as an opportunist statesman" (*The Fall Of Feudalism*, p348).

Davitt's view of the Kilmainham agreement is confirmed by Mrs. O'Shea in her book, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, published in 1914. I quote from the one-volume edition published in London in 1921:

"I had reason to know, from various sources of information kept open by me on Parnell's behalf during his imprisonment, that the Government would liberate him with considerable relief given any surety of conciliatory policy on his part. Parnell at liberty was a disturbing force, and the culminating embarrassment of English government in Ireland, but Parnell in prison had become a concentrated embarrassment in that there was no governmental possibility of dealing with the reactionary spirit he had let loose in Ireland—a spirit that was at least better controllable as a weapon in Parnell's hand than as the scattered and absolutely irresponsible fulminations, unreasoning and motiveless, of lawless desperadoes...

"I had never before ventured to influence Parnell in any way politically; but now I greatly dreaded for him this latter policy of the extremists and the perpetual strain of watchfulness and control it engendered—with the Coercion Laws such a policy must, in the long run, inevitably produce, unless, indeed, England was prepared to yield to force; an unthinkable proposition.

"So now I threw the whole of my influence on the side of the treaty of

conciliation and urged upon him the greater good for Ireland likely to accrue in the making with him of immediate peace. I was very anxious that he should 'reign' by constitutional means, and had every hope of establishing such amicable communications between him and Government as would lead to that end. But he had this great force now to reckon with—the force of centuries of cruelty, wrong and oppression that had bred an irresponsibility and callous disregard of suffering, nay, rather a vindicative madness and lust of destruction in Ireland. In seeking for a weapon to use for the betterment of England's government of Ireland Parnell had discovered this underlying force of hate, and, using the influence of his personality, he strove to direct it into the service of the Ireland that he loved. But he afterwards stood appalled at the intensity of the passion of hate he had loosed, and no one but he—and I with him—knew the awful strength of that force of destruction that was only held in subservience by the sheer dominance of his will. He replied to my pleadings—'Yes, I hold them now with my back to the wall, but if I turn to the Government I turn my back to them—and then—?

"But my fear for him won his decision for peace, and he wrote and signed the 'letter' that Willie wanted to take to the Government."

And so Parnell made his Treaty with Gladstone. The Land League was replaced by the National League (an organisation of the Party). The land question was put on the back burner. And the political manoeuvring began which led to the introduction of the First Home Rule Bill by Gladstone in 1886.

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The following passage on the Kilmainham Treaty is from J.L. Hammond's *Gladstone And The Irish Nation* (1938):

"Gladstone always denounced the use of the word 'Treaty' as applied to the arrangements under which Parnell left Kilmainham jail. His critics regarded his fierce protestations as merely another instance of his enjoyment of confusing and darkening dialectic; his dislike of calling anything by its naked name; his incorrigible casuistry. Yet his case for his own view of the transaction, put more concisely than was his habit, in the *Nineteenth Century* a few years later, was unanswerable. He pointed out that the Act under which Parnell was in prison enabled the Government to lock up a man 'on reasonable suspicion' of inciting to violence and disturbing the maintenance of law and order.

"'What the Executive Government had to do was simply to ascertain, or rather to receive through the unsolicited office of a friend, what was the state of Mr. Parnell's mind on the subject which had led to his imprisonment. A physician does not negotiate with his patient but examines him. The simple fact of scrutiny into the present did not of itself, according to the view of the Ministry, determine the future.'

"But there is good reason for Gladstone's vehemence in resisting the use of the term 'Treaty'. He was one of the two men in the Cabinet who expected a

good deal from Parnell's co-operation in Ireland and he knew that once Parnell could be represented as a renegade his power to co-operate would be gone" (p269).

During the debate in Committee Room 15, it was decided to consult Gladstone on the points raised by Parnell regarding his intentions for Home Rule. "'Gentlemen', said Parnell, 'it is for you to act on this matter. You are dealing with a man who is an unrivalled sophist. You are dealing with a man to whom it is impossible to give a direct answer to a plain and simple question." (B. O'Brien, Ch. XXIII.)

But what is a sophist? And what, in the highly volatile condition of England in the 1890s, is a plain and simple question? I made the acquaintance of the Sophists when I read Plato's dialogues in Gneeves in the mid-fifties. I have never since read those dialogues, and my reading of them forty years ago has left me with a strong dislike of Socrates, and therefore without any feeling of hostility towards the Sophists. About thirty years ago I came across a statement by Gladstone, that "England has her constancy no less than Rome". (It was actually said in Latin, but that is how somebody translated it for me.) I was quite impressed by that for a while—and I suppose it made Gladstone a modern Socrates-cum-Aristotle. But then I figured out that it was not true. The only English constancy is the constancy of state power maintained over three centuries, in shifting circumstances, without inner consistency, and at great cost to the rest of the world, excepting the United States and a couple of white colonies. So if England is not Socratic, I suppose it must be Sophistical.

(The lack of constancy in Gladstone's own political career is total. He began as a theocrat and a Tory, and held senior positions in Tory Governments. He shifted by degrees to the extreme opposite position. And in 1890 he refused to admit that Parnell's Divorce Court episode had any necessary political implication, although in 1857 he had been absolutely opposed to the establishment of the Divorce Court.)

Anybody attempting to achieve anything by constitutional means within the sphere of British state power must in some degree play the political game by English rules, but if the game is not to be lost, it must never be forgotten that, in the final analysis, England doesn't recognise any rules, only power. And, when one sees how Redmondism lost itself because of its inadequate understanding of the British Constitution, one can only admire the sheer virtuosity with which Provisional Sinn Fein is playing the game by the rules of the real English Constitution. Constitutionalist England is intensely irritated by having its sophistry played back at it so skillfully by a force which estimates the game at its real value.

The pity of it is that Parnell did not have it in him to play the game by the rules of sophistry for a while after the divorce trial.

Appendix On Honour

Forty years later Henry Harrison published a book called, *Parnell Vindicated: The Lifting Of The Veil.* Harrison was in 1890 a young gentleman fresh down (or is it up?) from Oxford. He had been offered a Liberal candidacy for the coming

General Election, but preferred to stand as a Nationalist in a Tipperary by-election in 1890, and he left Balliol College without taking his degree in order to do so. He says that he first set eyes on Parnell when they were re-electing him as Chairman a couple of days after the divorce action. He was an ardent Parnellite for ever after.

The book has an epigraph:

"I would rather appear to be dishonourable than be dishonourable". Parnell in Committee Room No. 15.

He sets out to demonstrate that Parnell acted entirely honourably in his personal relations with Captain and Mrs. O'Shea. And he accepts Parnell's view that there was a Chinese Wall between public and private life:

"The dividing line between public career and private life was strictly drawn by Parnell himself. In this he was well within his rights, and the general usage of his day completely justified him. But history requires broader effects and the breaking down of minor obstacles to a comprehensive vision" (p15).

It may well be that Parnell's domestic conduct was entirely honourable, even though he allowed it to appear entirely dishonourable. (The truth of domestic situations can never be known to anybody who is not a participant, and it often appears not to be knowable by the participants.) But, if one holds that there is a Chinese Wall between private and public, and yet engages in an extensive public discussion of a private situation, that is inconsistent. The infinite subtleties of private relationships are squashed into a form suitable for the application of public standards to them, and what is then judged is not what existed, but what is presented. It is not merely the case that what was private ceases to be private when made the subject of a public presentation, but that it becomes something else in the transference from the sphere of private existence to the sphere of public appearance: it is made crude so that the crudity of public judgment according to a general standard can be applied to it.

Furthermore, the very idea of private honour is problematical. Honour belongs essentially to the realm of appearances. Everybody must know this from personal experience or observation. An honourable person is a person who was not caught out—that is not the whole of it, but it is a very great part of it. Somebody—it might be Goethe—said that only gods and beasts have a sense of integrity that is beyond the reach of appearances. Appearance is essential to social existence, and honour is a form of social appearance. Its meaning is diluted in private application. It is only slightly diluted when somebody is held to be honourable although made to seem dishonourable by knavery. Numerous stories have been written about honour besmirched by the knavery of a third party, but regained by valiant effort or a mere stroke of good fortune. But, when the person who is being dishonoured facilitates the knave who is dishonouring him and is content to be presented in a false public appearance, then dilution is carried to the point of washout.

Davitt quite rightly takes "the facts disclosed in evidence" to be the facts which related to public affairs. What in law is a fact may in private life be a lie. (Some years ago, I had to make my own defence in the High Court in Belfast against a libel

action brought against me by Mary McAleese, who is contending for the Irish Presidency as I write, and the insight it gave me into the British legal process more than confirmed my opinion of these things.)

But, when facts are established in Court by being asserted without dispute, those are the facts which concern public affairs. It might never have happened that Parnell escaped out of the bedroom window as Captain O'Shea was entering the front door. It might be that the Captain was never deceived; that he had come to a parting of the ways with his wife and knew all along that she was sleeping with Parnell. It might not be that he had fathered two children with her during the Parnell years, and that those children were Parnell's. And it might be that all three conspired to keep up appearances which misrepresented reality. But none of that matters because Captain O'Shea told the court a story of deceptive adultery by his wife with Parnell during the years when he himself had relations with her that might have led to the fathering of two children with her, and neither his wife nor Parnell contradicted that story.

Even if the Judge and jury had all known that what was said in the witness box was a tissue of lies, those lies would have had to be taken by them for the fabric of truth, because the English common law is the ultimate development of Jesuitry. The only reality it knows is the established appearance, and it does not matter a straw that this appearance may be a pretence.

An English Court is not concerned with what may be behind the presented appearance. The presented appearance is its truth, and on the whole English society has lived by that rule. That is why there was a stink of treason when British Government Ministers, including Prime Minister Major, said that Gerry Adams is a member of the Army Council of the IRA. Adams was subjected to a trial at law for membership of the IRA and was found Not Guilty. Maintenance of the rule of law requires that affairs of state be conducted on the basis of that legal fact. The Prime Minister debased the rule of law when he made public statements that went behind the legal fact to what he took to be the private truth of the matter. Sauce for the goose must also be sauce for the gander. If it was right and necessary to act publicly on the legal facts established about Parnell in the O'Shea divorce action, even though most of those concerned thought they knew that the private truth was very different, then it is right and necessary to act in the same manner with regard to everybody else.

The Land Act

The United Irish League

In 1895 ten years of Unionist government began. Home Rule was off the agenda. The Irish Party existed in three distinct factions: the majority, led by John Dillon, were called the *National Federation*; the Parnell cultists, led by John Redmond, were called *National League*; and Tim Healy's *People's Rights' Association.*

It was out of the question that the Unionist Government, with a secure majority, should have anything to do with Home Rule. And, on Gladstone's retirement, the Liberal Party began to undergo a sea change. His successor, Lord Roseberry, was not a Home Ruler. And Roseberry set in motion the process of change within Liberalism that led to the rise to dominance of Liberal Imperialism during the next generation.

In these circumstances a party whose only policy was Home Rule, and which was committed to constitutional action, could do nothing but wait.

Another event that happened in 1895 was that William O'Brien retired from politics and went to live in a cottage in Co. Mayo, where he completed the novel that he began in Galway Jail in 1891.

O'Brien had continued to support Dillon as the best leader of the Party after Parnell, but he had little taste for the factional conflicts between the fragments of Parnell's Party, and it was not in his nature to wait passively on events. (Dillon replaced McCarthy as leader in 1896.)

The occasion of his retirement from Parliament was a bill for legal costs incurred during the Plan of Campaign:

> "An enormous claim was brought against me personally for law costs, which were only incurred as part of the national resistance against the Coercionist régime, and the payment of which it was always the honourable understanding on all sides was a first charge on the Paris Funds—a charge in due time recognised and satisfied" (Olive branch, 076).

But "due time" lay in the future. There was little space for honour in the factional atmosphere of 1895. O'Brien was held to owe £8,000. The object was to disqualify him for Parliament by bankrupting him. So he gave up his seat in Parliament and retired with his wife—the "Russian Jewess" of a Redmondite slogan of later times—to a cottage near Croagh Patrick, where they settled down to a period of domesticity, and she had her first experience of housekeeping.

Sophie O'Brien made a discovery which to a Continental was astonishing:

> "It is a characteristic of the Irish race to look on food as a very second-rate

America would support the evicted tenants for as long as necessary:

"I allude to this matter only because within the last few days a strong argument in many minds for my expulsion has been that, unless the Liberals come into power at the next general election, the Plan of Campaign tenants will suffer. As I have shown, the Liberals propose to do nothing for the Plan of Campaign tenants by direct action..., but I am entitled to ask that the existence of these tenants, whom I have supported in every way in the past, and whom I shall continue to support in future, shall not constitute a reason for my expulsion from Irish politics."

He concluded the Manifesto by saying,

"Sixteen years ago I conceived the idea of an Irish parliamentary party independent of all English parties. Ten years ago I was elected the leader of an independent Irish parliamentary party."

Home Rule would be achieved provided the Party remained independent. But,

"postponement would be preferable to a compromise of our national rights by the acceptance of a measure which would not realise the aspirations of our race."

The Manifesto was a burning of bridges with the Liberals, a gesture towards the Tories (land purchase), an attempt to link up with the agrarian agitation from which he had kept his distance up to this point, and an effective move to tap into Fenian sentiment.

(Gladstone and Morley rejected Parnell's account of their views about the next Home Rule Bill: "Mr. Gladstone asserted that the whole discussion [at Hawarden a year earlier] was one of those informal exchanges of view which go to all political action, and in which men feel the ground and discover the leanings of one another's minds. No single proposal was made, no proposition was mentioned to which a binding assent was sought... Apart from this denial, men asked themselves how it was if Mr. Parnell knew that the cause was already betrayed, he yet for a year kept the black secret to himself, and blew Mr. Gladstone's praise with as loud a trumpet as before—Morley, Life Of Gladstone, Bk. X, Ch. V.)

Barry O'Brien relates that, on the evening of 28th November, Parnell read the Manifesto to half a dozen Irish Members. John and William Redmond, J.J. O'Kelly, Mr. Leamy, Colonel Nolan and Dr. Fitzgerald.

"'Well', he said, as his friends gathered around him, 'if we go down we shall go down with our flag flying. I have written a paper which I shall send to the Press to-night. Before sending it I wish to read it to you'."

But, before reading it, he sent for Justin McCarthy.

When Parnell finished reading, McCarthy said he disapproved of every word of it. Parnell said he was ready to consider suggestions.

"'It is all objectionable, Parnell', said Mr. McCarthy; 'it is offensive to our English allies'.

"'Point out what you consider offensive', still urged Parnell.

"'Well' said Mr. McCarthy, 'take the words "English wolves".

"'Then', said Parnell, 'I will not change them. Whatever goes out, these words shall not go out.'

"I do not think, Parnell', continued Mr. McCarthy, 'that there is much use in discussing the matter. You have made up your mind. You have asked for my opinion. I have given it to you. I will say no more'." (Life Of Parnell, Chapter XXIII.)

It can hardly be that Parnell got McCarthy to be present at this pre-publication reading of the Manifesto in the hope of getting the Vice-Chairman to agree to it. So it must be that he had decided not only to split the Party, but to do so as abrasively as possible.

Here is a further extract from Barry O'Brien:

"That letter [Gladstone's] drove every Irish Nationalist who had not been demoralised by agrarianism, or Liberalism, to the side of Parnell...

"'To me' an Irish Nationalist said, 'the question now was one between an Englishman and an Irishman... It did not matter to me whether he was right or wrong the moment that issue was raised'.

"'I did not trouble myself much about the matter', said an old Fenian leader, 'until the Grand Old Man [Gladstone] interfered. Of course the divorce business was horrible, but was it worse than all that had been going on for the past ten years—outrages, murders, boycotting, the Plan of Campaign, New Tipperary, and everything that was criminal and idiotic?—and yet these Liberals surrendered to this kind of thing, practically condoned the whole business, and were coming in shoals to Ireland, encouraging every madcap in the country in every immoral and insane plan he could think of—and then suddenly they get a fit of virtue over this divorce affair. These English are the most extraordinary people in the world. You can never make out what is virtue or what is not virtue with them, except mainly that virtue is always on their side, whatever their side is. Well, the divorce case was nothing to me. It was for the Grand Young Man to get out of his scrape as well as he could... But when the Grand Old Man interfered, that gave a new aspect to the affair. It then became a question of submitting to the dictation of an Englishman, and for the first time I resolved to support Parnell'."

The blend of theology and political economy in the rigorous structure of the Nonconformist mind was outside the range of pure and simple Fenianism, which had little time for either theology or political economy. And what England picked out to be virtue or vice at any given moment probably did seem to the Fenian to be decided upon by caprice or prejudice. But Ireland was destined to develop through the logic of English political economy—which was what gave irresistible purpose to the sordid business of "agrarianism". And Ireland therefore had to live with the vagaries of English theology.

As for "submitting to dictation": that submission was implicit in the formation of an Irish Parliamentary Party committed to constitutional means. The Irish Party,

however independent it was in the sense of keeping itself apart from English politics, was still entirely dependent on English politics for achieving its aims, because it constituted only an eighth of the House of Commons. It might have seemed for a while after Parnell had displaced Isaac Butt that this constitutional submission to English dictation had been broken, or was in process of being broken, but Parnell made his own submission in 1882 with the Kilmainham Treaty.

There were two influential members of the Irish Party who were attuned to political economy. They were Michael Davitt, the "New Departure" Fenian, the Fenian who revelled in sordid "agrarianism", and Tim Healy. Both of them had worked in the industrial North of England, and had an insight into the Nonconformist Conscience, and did not despise it. And both understood that the rhetoric against English dictation was mere verbiage in the mouth of the leader of an Irish party committed to exclusively constitutional methods.

Davitt had not agreed with the Kilmainham Treaty—which Parnell had made without consulting his colleagues—but he had gone along with it as an accomplished fact, rather than divide the movement. And, having acted in the spirit of it for eight years, he had no patience with Parnell's antics in November 1890. Here is how he described events in *The Fall Of Feudalism:*

> "The question of what Mr. Parnell would do, in the event of a verdict being obtained against him, had exercised the minds of friends and foes for a few weeks before the trial. Again the timid, temporizing spirit in his party, and in the country too, did mischief to him it was meant to serve. 'There must be no English dictation'; 'We will stand by our leader', and other thoughtless bravado did duty in the press and on the platform for common-sense and sane statesmanship. There was no issue of the kind at stake but one affecting Mr. Parnell's own duty to his responsibilities and position as Irish leader. This language and action encouraged him to pursue a course which he had probably determined upon all along. For he had evidently made up his mind to ignore the whole business as if nothing whatever had happened that required action or explanation on his part...
>
> "...Those who knew him best and who felt that he would not take a just or truly patriotic view of his position, if doing so should make any claim upon his inordinate pride, fully expected what happened. He would treat the party as his subordinates and self-confessed servitors...
>
> "The party met on Tuesday, November 25th, to elect a session chairman... One member, and only one, out of 59 of his colleagues assembled in committee room 15, ventured timidly to ask Mr. Parnell to do what was his own obvious and bounden duty to do, to retire temporarily from his position until the storm he alone had caused by his conduct should blow over. Not a single voice was added to Mr. Jeremiah Jordan's appeal...
>
> "It transpired that Mr. Gladstone had written a most friendly letter to Mr. Morley on the subject of Parnell's position, on failing to hear from the Irish leader what he intended doing in the face of the divorce-court verdict. This letter was to be read to Mr. Parnell, before the meeting of the party, and its purport was to be communicated to the members of the party only if the appeal which the letter addressed to Mr. Parnell's patriotism and good sense should not induce him to resign, for a time, his place at the head of the Home Rule movement. Mr. Parnell knew this letter was written, and what it asked him to do, but said never a word about it at the party meeting. Mr. Justin McCarthy was aware of the contents of the letter, but did not communicate a word of them to his colleagues until the election of Mr. Parnell had been decided. Mr. Gladstone, learning of the action of the party, and believing that Mr. McCarthy had informed his colleagues of what the Liberal leader had written, published his letter in the press to explain and justify his own position... Here the blame was all on the Irish side, and yet 'Mr. Gladstone's dictation', and not Mr. Parnell's deliberate wrong-doing, was to be made the battle-cry of faction".
>
> "The alliance with Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party was Mr. Parnell's own work, and the chief triumph of his political career. In that alliance he secured the adhesion of the foremost of England's statesmen and one of the two great English parties as the pledged allies of the Home Rule cause. It was he, and not Mr. Gladstone, who ruptured this alliance, honourable as it had been to both, and full of promise to Ireland. To maintain what he had thus created; to uphold the policy which he had wisely laid down in 1886; to continue the joint labors of Irish and British Home-Rulers in the cause of national self-government for Ireland, was what his oldest and ablest supporters determined he should not be permitted to undo for any personal issue, and it was his opposition to this resolve and to them, which caused and continued the disastrous 'split' in 1890."

Nevertheless I do not think the Manifesto was predestined to fail. It was in conception a very bold stroke. What it put me in mind of was Field Marshal Manstein's regrouping and redeployment of the German Army early in 1943 immediately following the shambles of the assault on Stalingrad. But Manstein had been Quarter-master General before becoming a General in the field and he had empirical knowledge of all the bits and pieces that needed gathering up for redeployment in force on a new front. His inspiration was made effective by his mastery of detail. But Parnell did not concern himself with the detail of available force, and his strategic redeployment on a new front was therefore only an empty gesture so far as it concerned the enemy. But it wreaked havoc on his own side.

Manstein might easily have created a shambles by his regrouping and redeployment if he had not tended sufficiently to the detail of the matter—and the war might have ended as an outright Russian victory in Europe in 1943-4. But he didn't. And Parnell might conceivably have redeployed the Party on a new front if he had done the necessary staff work with it. But he didn't. He created a shambles.

Committee Room 15

The adjourned meeting of 26th November reassembled on 1st December. Publication of Parnell's Manifesto on 29th November had hardened feeling against him, but it is possible that he would have overawed and bamboozled the meeting if Healy had not been present. That is why Healy came to be known as "the man in the gap". And, even with the presence of Healy, Parnell, by his use of the Chair, managed to string out the meeting for six days, and prevent the relevant motion from ever being put.

Healy matched Parnell for determination of will and more than matched him in the use of reason during these six days. And, under the intense provocation of being treated as an equal by Healy, Parnell said:

> "Mr. Healy has been trained in this warfare. Who trained him? Who saw his genius first? Who telegraphed to him from America? Who gave him his first opportunity and chance? Who got him his seat in Parliament? That Mr. Healy should be here today to destroy me is due to myself."

In the Manifesto Parnell said he was the creator of the Party and the leader of the nation. And the essential Parnellite position was that he was not only the appointed Party leader, but was the destined Leader of the nation, and that opposition to him was a kind of treason. It was the position that was put vehemently by the Redmondites after his death ten months later, and they behaved as true Parnellites of the final Parnell in putting it.

In his last but one public meeting, in Listowel in September 1891, he said the leadership issue had only provided the majority of the Parliamentary Party with,

> "the first chance of showing their weakness and their incapacity. They would have done so sooner or later on some other question. From the moment these men showed the cloven hoof in Committee Room No. 15, I decided that nothing would ever induce me to lead such a gang again."

And then:

> "We strive to preserve our own independence and the independence of our own country which these men say we are to give up to them, because they contend they are in the majority. How many of their so-called majority would have been in existence if I had not gone about the country during the conventions of '86 and got them elected? How many of them would ever have received their political baptism? Would that great statesman, Daniel Crilly, have been accepted in the county of Mayo? (No, no.) Would Mr. Jeremiah Jordan have been received in the county Clare? (Loud laughter.) And so I might go through the whole list.
>
> "A Voice—What about Mr. Abraham?
>
> "Mr. Parnell—Well, as regards Mr.Abraham, I shall draw the exception in his case, because I think he had earned his spurs as a Nationalist." (*United Ireland*. 19.9.1891. Mr. Abraham will reappear later.)

The message is clear enough. The angels in Heaven were fine fellows as long as they knew their place as creatures, but when they imagined that Heaven was a democracy and tried to take a vote on how it should be conducted, it was necessary for the Creator to put them in another place.

Now Parnell may well have had creatures in the Party. It is very probable that he had. I have never seen an analysis of the connections and motives of all the 29 MPs who supported him in the Split. Only half a dozen or so make an appearance as distinct personalities, and many of the others may well have been his virtuous creatures who knew that virtue in creatures means obedience. If they were not men of independent means, they were dependent on Party funds for a living because the state did not then pay MPs, and financial dependency on the Party would have made for strong attachment to the leader.

In representing himself as the creator of the Party, Parnell exaggerated the truth. It was a considerable exaggeration, but was recognisable as an exaggeration. But, when he claimed to be the creator of Tim Healy, he stated an absurdity.

Healy was conventional to the extent that he would have admitted to being created by God, but in every other respect he was his own man. He was an independent spirit, and if he was at times a wayward one, that was the price of being "no man's man". (William O'Brien, who had endless trouble with him, referred to him as "a true child of genius".)

He was not a mere talented individual plucked out of the raw mass by a great leader and given significance by him. He knew who he was. Parnell did not reveal to him who he was, as he may have done with others. Parnell could not tell him who he was, because he was who he was prior to Parnell.

Timothy Michael Healy was born in Bantry, in West Cork, in 1855. He was educated by the Christian Brothers until he was 13. Then he went to England to work, first to Manchester and then to Newcastle, where he became a railway clerk. He organised Irish literary and political societies in Tyneside. At the age of 23, in 1878, he moved to London and became Parliamentary correspondent of *The Nation*. Then Parnell "telegraphed to him from America", because he needed him in America.

Parnell and John Dillon went to America in January 1880 to collect funds for the Land League. And Parnell telegraphed Healy to follow them because he had been dependent on Healy and was helpless without him. Healy was extraordinarily well-informed, was a competent organiser, was skilled at handling the press, and was in a way the discoverer and inventor of Parnell, and therefore knew exactly what he should say and often said it for him in writing. The incident which precipitated his call to America was Parnell's surprise at finding, when invited to address a meeting at Springfield, that there were three cities called Springfield in the United States.

The Nation, of which Healy became Parliamentary Correspondent in 1878, was owned and edited by his uncles, A.M. and T.D. Sullivan. This was the paper founded by Thomas Davis and Gavan Duffy in 1842. The Sullivans bought the paper in the 1850s, after Duffy had given up in disgust and emigrated to Australia after the Sadleir and Keogh episode—that is, when members of the Independent

Irish Party, which he had organised, had been bought off by the Liberal Government. And they kept *The Nation* going in the Young Ireland spirit, with singable poems and readable historical narratives, through the long recession in national affairs. (Two of their Fenian songs were part of the culture in which I grew up: *Deep In The Canadian Woods* and *God Save Ireland*.)

A.M. Sullivan had a job on the Famine relief works in 1846-7, formed a Bantry Confederate Club, organised a reception for William Smith O'Brien in Bantry in 1848 shortly before the attempted revolution, went to Dublin in 1853 and worked as a commercial artist, moved to Liverpool where he was reporter on the *Liverpool Daily Post*, and returned to Dublin to work on The Nation, which was then being published daily. He had disagreement with James Stephens (founder of the Fenian Brotherhood), over physical force, but when the Fenian Council voted in 1865 to execute him nobody was willing to do it. In 1867 he got six months' jail for an article on the Manchester Martyrs. A collection was made for him while he was in prison, and when he got out he used the money for a statue of Henry Grattan. Dublin Corporation had voted the site for a statue of Prince Albert, but Sullivan got it changed.

A.M. took part in the launch of the Home Rule movement in 1870, and was elected MP for Louth in 1874. A couple of years later he concluded that Isaac Butt's approach was too conciliatory and he supported Joseph Biggar's tactic of obstructing Parliamentary business by making very long speeches. He died in 1884.

His brother, T.D., was active in the Land League and the Plan of Campaign. He was Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1886-7 and was MP successively for Westmeath, Dublin, and West Donegal..

The Sullivans were the core of a West Cork group, known as the *Bantry Band*, which became very influential in the political and commercial life of Dublin. The group included half a dozen MPs, one of whom was William Martin Murphy (a Sullivan cousin), who became notorious as the organiser of the employers in the great Dublin Strike and Lock-Out of 1913. Though it became customary to refer to him dismissively as a kind of gombeen man, he was in fact a substantial capitalist.

This was Tim Healy's molecule. And Parnell thought he had created him! Or, at least, Parnell claimed to have created him. Unless he suffered a severe memory loss, he cannot have thought he created him.

Parnell himself was brought on as a Home Rule MP in 1874 on the initiative of A.M. Sullivan, when there were some who thought it inappropriate to admit a young Protestant landlord who had never done anything, but chanced to have a famous name. And Sullivan helped to bring him on, even though on his first public outing he was tongue-tied and appeared utterly ignorant and incapable. He lost his first election, in Dublin, but won his second, in Meath, in 1875. And then Sullivan brought him into the Active Group in the Party which was dissatisfied with Butt's approach. Biggar (a Belfast Protestant Fenian who despised the British Empire) was launching his Obstructionism just as Parnell entered Parliament. The main Nationalist paper, the *Freeman's Journal*, continued to support Butt's approach. It

was only when Healy became Parliamentary correspondent of *The Nation* that Parnell's activity as an Obstructionist began to be presented to the Irish public as something admirable. Healy was, as it would be put nowadays, the creator of Parnell's media image.

In 1878 Parnell was 32 and Healy was 23. But Healy had been politically active for longer than Parnell, and his political activity had been more socially connected than Parnell's. He had from the age of 18 been the originator and organiser of Nationalist political and literary events on a steadily-increasing scale in the North of England. He had been active in the largely working class, and spiritually Fenian, Home Rule Confederation Of Great Britain, where support for Parnell as leader began.

After discovering Parnell to the Irish public, he became his organiser on behalf of the Active Group. And, whether because of lethargy, or family background, or women, Parnell needed a lot of organising. In 1879, to make sure that Parnell got to Ennis to address an election meeting on behalf of a candidate put up by the Active Group, Healy put him up at his own lodgings in London, woke him up in time, cooked his breakfast, took him to the railway station, and saw him onto the boat train.

So it is not surprising that Parnell felt lost without Healy in America. (£40,000 was collected in three weeks once he got there.)

Parnell was elected Chairman of the Parliamentary Party in May 1880. That was an event for which Healy and the Sullivan connection had been preparing the ground for a couple of years.

Later in 1880 Healy was elected MP for Wexford, following the death of John Redmond's father. But that was not a gift from Parnell. John Redmond asked for the nomination, but the Wexford Home Rulers wanted Healy, who was being prosecuted for land agitation in the Bantry area.

In 1883 Healy resigned the Wexford seat at Parnell's request and contested a by-election in Monaghan, and won. This was the first time a Nationalist won the representation of Monaghan. The reason why Healy could win it, when another might not, was his avid interest in land law and tenant-right. In the course of a very busy life he had found the time and energy to begin qualifying himself for the Bar. He became a Barrister in 1884, but by then he was already a legislator. He had proposed and carried an amendment, known as the Healy Clause, to the 1881 Land Act, protecting tenants from rent increases on improvements made by themselves. But, while becoming an effective legislator, he did not cease to be an agrarian agitator. It was because he was an agitator and legislator for tenant-right that he could win the representation of Monaghan. Tenant-right was the only issue that was common political ground between Catholics and Protestants.

These are some of the things done by Healy before December 1880. But his being was not the sum total of his doing, as might be the case with an individual who rises out of a raw mass by means of his talent. His being was prior to his doing. He had continuity of being—of subjective coherence—from railway clerk to MP and

Barrister, because all his doing was done as a member of the Sullivan connection—one of the large molecules of Irish social development.

He ended his close personal relationship with Parnell in 1881 because of an incident that happened in Paris. It was decided to transfer the funds of the Land League to Paris to secure them against the British Coercion regime that was in preparation. The Treasurer of the League, Patrick Egan, was to be met in Paris on a certain date to conclude the transaction. Healy, Biggar, John Dillon, J.J. O'Kelly, and T.D. Sullivan travelled to Paris together. Parnell was to join them the following day. A week after the appointed day he had not appeared or sent a message. Healy had been until this time Parnell's unpaid secretary, dealing with all his business, and authorised to open all his letters. He had with him a number of letters, all in the same hand, which he had preferred not to open, presumably because he preferred not to know what was in them. (Which means, of course, that he did know in a general way what was in them.) His colleagues asked him to open one as it might give a clue as to Parnell's whereabouts. He said he would do so only if they adopted a formal resolution directing them to do so, and if the letter was only read by two of them. This was done. Maev Sullivan says:

> "The letter read by Dillon and Egan had been written by the Manchester barmaid who Parnell had abandoned with her baby when another outrivalled her in his affections. Her letters had accumulated unopened... He was in the toils of Mrs. O'Shea" (p22).

Davitt says that the letter was from Mrs. O'Shea herself, but he was not present. And Maev Sullivan presumably was told about it by Healy. It may be that it was decided that the best thing for Parnell's image was to tell those who had to be told something that the letters were from Mrs. O'Shea.

Parnell turned up the next day just as Healy and Biggar were about to leave for the address in the letter in search of him.

Healy then decided that he would no longer act as Parnell's secretary. But, before breaking off, he found, and trained, a more secretarial secretary, Henry Campbell, who was still with Parnell, and doing his bidding, in 1890.

Further distancing occurred in 1886, when Parnell imposed Mrs. O'Shea's husband on the Galway constituency in a by-election, entirely against the wishes of the local party, and in defiance of all political logic. Captain O'Shea was to have the seat without taking the Party pledge. He had acted against the Party in the past and it was probable that he would do so again in the future.

Healy and Biggar, both of whom were well informed about the O'Shea aspect of things, wanted to force a showdown with Parnell in Galway by running a candidate against Captain O'Shea. They were not supported in this enterprise by any other leading member of the Party. When Parnell let it be known that he would come to the constituency and speak for Captain O'Shea, Healy backed down, though Biggar still wanted to fight it out with Parnell.

By December 1890, Biggar was dead, the other leading members were in America, and it was left to Healy to enable the bulk of the Party to do what they knew

they ought to do, but were fearful of actually doing.

When the adjourned meeting of 26th November re-convened on 1st December, Parnell was determined to prevent it from ever arriving at its only item of business. His immediate aim was to drag it out until the Christmas recess of Parliament, which was imminent, and then have a long adjournment. He failed in this when the majority of the Party walked out on him.

Healy became notorious for a remark made near the end of the debate. The incident is described as follows in *The Story Of The Parnell Crisis*, published as a *Pall Mall Gazette* "Extra" in January 1891:

> "The Irish leader... took to reading a newspaper, but it was evident... that he had little attention to give to its contents.
>
> "But whether his perusal of the paper was deep or superficial, Mr. Parnell was soon attracted from it by a startling interjection by Mr. T.M. Healy, perhaps the most piquant incident of the day. Mr. John O'Connor in the course of his speech, extending over fifty minutes, was insisting that the question had to become 'Was Mr. Gladstone to be the master of the Irish Party?' 'No', rapidly retorted Mr. Healy, in a voice in which fury and contempt were mingled, 'the question is "who is to be its mistress?"' There was a breathless hush for a moment or two, and then the Parnellites with one voice roared 'Shame' and 'Coward'. Mr. Parnell violently flung the newspaper from his hands; a spasm of pain passed over his face...."

The *Times* also published a book of the whole affair, *The Parnell Split, Or, The Disruption Of The Irish Party*, which gives a straight summary of the debate, without descriptive commentary:

> "*Mr. John O'Connor*:... He contended that any attempt of Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party at dictation would be resisted by the Irish people. Mr. Parnell's opponents were placing themselves unreservedly in the leadership of Mr. Gladstone. They said 'No' but let them read Sir William Harcourt's letter, and he said 'Treat with Mr. Gladstone'.
>
> *Mr. A. O'Connor:* He is not a member of the party.
>
> *Mr. J. Redmond:* The master of the party.
>
> *Mr. T. Healy:* Who is to be the mistress of the party? (Cries of 'Shame' and noise, several members calling out remarks which could not be distinguished in the uproar.)
>
> *Mr. W. Redmond:* They must be very badly off when they go to arguments like that.
>
> *A voice:* It is time.
>
> *Mr. A.O. Connor:* I appeal to my friend the Chairman. (Noise.)
>
> *Mr. Parnell:* Better appeal to your own friends; better appeal to that cowardly little scoundrel there (noise), that in an assembly of Irishmen dares to insult a woman. (Loud cheers and counter-cheers.)"

This incident occurred after six days of procedural division and delay by Parnell. Throughout those six days, Healy had met the Parnellite arguments on

their own ground. He met them on the level of analytical argument, but when they set the precedent for emotive repartee, he responded on the instant. And, unlike them, he did not take leave of fact and logic in his repartee. And I think that his notorious riposte to Redmond was not excusable: it was necessary. It was what in fact and logic the argument gave rise to at that juncture.

(The press was not admitted to the debate. The only reporters present were from the *Freeman's Journal*, which was strongly Parnellite, and their reports were scrutinised and amended, Hansard-fashion, by the editors and by Parnell. While only a marginal degree of misrepresentation was practicable, the fact that the official report as published was slanted against the majority gave the majority good reason for providing accounts of the meeting to the London papers.)

The *Manchester Guardian* commented on 1st December:

> "Against the reprobation which his [Parnell's] conduct has excited in this country he arrays the anti-English feeling bred among Irishmen by centuries of misgovernment and conflict. The vote to be taken today on the question of his continued leadership he treats as a mere incident in the war now declared, and defeated at Westminster, he will rally his forces for a campaign on Irish soil".

The "vote to be taken today" was never taken. And the *Guardian* commented on 8th December:

> "The forty-five... seceders claim that being an absolute majority in the party they have the right to exercise the power inherent in a majority, and that, acting under a sense of imperative obligation to their country, they have been driven to take the only means left to them of putting an end to a situation which had become impossible, and of finding a practical issue for a debate which promised to be interminable. Mr. Parnell and his friends, on the other hand, wholly deny the legality of this proceeding. They claim that the remnant which remained after the majority had withdrawn were the legal representatives of the party, that, Mr. Parnell was still chairman, and that the proceedings of the dissenting majority were utterly null and void. There will thus be two Irish parties in parliament, ...and the two stand face to face within the House, as they stand face to face in Ireland..."

The Party vs. Parnell

Healy was the most thorough Parliamentarian in the Irish Party. He was a Parliamentarian of an essentially different kind from Redmond, who had been a House of Commons clerk (like Erskine Childers a generation later) and a sort of Party manager for Parnell. He was an agrarian radical as well as a legislative reformer.

The Westminster Parliament was not then the trivial thing that it is now. It was the most powerful political body in the world but, as Macaulay observed a generation earlier, it still retained the atmosphere of a club. Its debates related to the exercise of immense power. Its members, elected on a franchise which was

extensive, though well short of democratic, were unpaid by the state and were therefore representative of substantial outside interests. It governed a society which was in a process of rapid change, and the process of change was both guided and accelerated by the activity of Parliament. Party structures were short-term combinations and party doctrines were tentative. In those circumstances there was considerable openness in debate, and what was said in debate filled many columns of the daily newspapers—while the empty and stilted Parliamentary oratory of the present day is buried in the columns of Hansard, except for the few sentences which make it as a sound-bite in the evening news on television.

Healy flourished in the governing assembly in which perpetual innovation was enacted under a veneer of hidebound traditional routine. He had a considerable appetite and aptitude for legislative activity, and his debating talents were sharpened by that activity. But, despite his interest in constructive legislation, he never ceased to be in the forefront of agrarian radicalism in Ireland.

The combination of agitator and Parliamentarian made him unusual in the Irish Party, though it was not at all unusual in the English politics of the time. And it was that combination that made him such an effective opponent of Parnell.

Healy knew Parnell better than his Parliamentary colleagues because he had played a part in the making of Parnell. Barry O'Brien, who was acquainted with Parnell from an early stage in his political career and was fascinated by him, says somewhere that he was by nature a leader and was incapable of accepting leadership. Healy recognised what was obvious, but what many could not bring themselves to see—that the Party majority carried no moral weight with Parnell, that he would lead whoever was leadable, and that he would destroy the existing party if he could.

Seeing this, Healy did not mope around in anguish. He accepted the terms of conflict set by Parnell.

"*'I will drive Parnell to death or madness'*, said the infamous spokesman of the Bantry Band". That is from the editorial of the Redmondite paper, *United Ireland*, in the issue after the death of Parnell (19th October, 1891). I assume Healy did say that, though I do not know the source. Whether he said it or not, those were the terms of conflict set by Parnell. Healy gave battle on the lines decided by Parnell.

Davitt too, understood Parnell very well, having also taken part in the making of him. And, in the months following the split he put all his energy into campaigning against Parnell at by-elections. But Davitt was himself not a member of the Parliamentary Party.

The first by-election was at Kilkenny, on 22nd December. Parnell's candidate lost heavily. By-elections in North Sligo in April 1891, and Carlow in July, had the same result. But Parnell was no more deterred by electoral majorities against him than by the majority in the Parliamentary Party. The main thing about those by-elections was that they showed that the Party majority had been made functional in the country.

The *Freeman's Journal* supported Parnell during the critical six months after

the Split. And, within days of the Split, Parnell took control of the weekly *United Ireland* by main force. Healy therefore set about organising the production of an anti-Parnell daily, and, with the help of his capitalist cousins from Bantry, the *National Press* made its appearance on 7th March, 1891. Here is an extract from the editorial of the first number:

"At The Outset.

"To-day a new force has been born in Ireland. For years it had been the hope of patriotic Irishmen to see established in our Capital an independent daily national journal. Towards so large an enterprise, however, action was naturally slow, and it needed the shock of a great betrayal to arouse men's minds to the necessity for action... In the agony of a people in travail, the *National Press* today issues upon its career. Events have already established its constituency. Elsewhere the newspaper creates its public. Here the public created its newspaper. The Nationalists of Ireland were being stifled for a breath of fresh air.

"There is no need to speak of the way this journal will wield its power. Friend and foe know it. We shall set up no idols. We shall swing no censor to make a smoke of sweet savour in the nostrils of any chief. We shall be no man's clansmen. We shall sustain the Irish Parliamentary Party in its policy and its endeavours...

"...Serene and confident we shall recommend to the country that policy which for years past was pursued by a united Irish Party. We are satisfied that both at home and in Great Britain the fruits of that policy will end in victory for the Irish Cause. By tender after tender of amity and brotherhood, the English, Scottish and Welsh peoples, at election after election, have declared their undoubted willingness to restore the plundered liberties of Irishmen. The *National Press* will be no party to flaunting insults in their faces..."

"Where The Blame Lies

"...We cannot suppose that any intelligent man is deluded by the intensity of Mr. Parnell's sudden discontent with the details of the Home Rule Bill. The pretence is too shallow to deceive the most credulous. The dates are in themselves conclusive on the subject. The private interview at Hawarden, at which he now declares Mr. Gladstone's perfidy was revealed to him, took place in December, 1889. The following day, at two great meetings at Liverpool, he expressed unbounded confidence in Mr. Gladstone's good intentions, and in his will and power to settle the Home Rule question on a satisfactory basis. Six months later at the banquet at the Westminster Palace Hotel, he warmly and strongly reiterated his reliance on the absolute good faith of the great Liberal Leader. Mr. Parnell alone of the Irish Party has applied the title of 'our leader' to Mr. Gladstone. But when the lamentable divorce disclosures extorted from Mr. Gladstone his letter of friendly warning to the Irish Party, Mr. Parnell's unmeasured praise was at once converted into

malevolent abuse, and 'our great leader' became a 'garrulous old man', and a 'grand old spider'. Moreover, the assurances regarding Irish police and land, which Mr. Parnell now denounces as illusory, are far in advance of the provisions on these subjects which he and the party accepted in 1886 on behalf of the Irish nation as a complete solution of the Irish question. In good truth, Mr. Parnell cares for none of these things. His own interests, not Ireland's, absorb him. For the last five years he entirely neglected the duties of the position of Irish leader, which he now modestly declares it is essential to the salvation of the country that he should retain. To adopt his own notable phrase at the Rotunda meeting, he 'retired into winter quarters' while the battle raged. While coercion and eviction made the land desolate he was absorbed in his own pleasures. He would not stir a finger to help the evicted tenants... He has deliberately sacrificed their prospects to his own ambition. Yet he is not ashamed by the most extravagant professions of sympathy now to bid for their support. His callous apathy while others suffered is changed to frantic activity when his own position is at stake... He has absolutely no policy except his fixed resolve to keep his own name before the public... At Roscommon he talked of yielding his place to Revolutionists who are to conquer Great Britain by force of arms. To Royal Meath he held out hopes of a republic. In Dublin he broadly hinted at striking up an alliance with Mr. Balfour and the coercionists. Under such a leadership Home Rule is impossible of achievement... The Home Rule democracy of Great Britain is against him. The Irish in Great Britain are against him. The bishops and priests of Ireland are against him... The great majority of the Irish Party, the overwhelming majority of the League branches and the constituencies are against him. His power for good has disappeared, his power for evil only remains. He may still—as at Kilkenny—for a brief space gather crowds and promote violence—his influence ends there."

Because the majority walked out of the meeting in Committee Room 15 on 6th December, Parnell's minority claimed to be the Party and used the title, National League. The majority launched a new political body, the National Federation, in early March, 1891. Addressing the inaugural meeting of the Federation, Healy set out the two dominant themes of the anti-Parnellites:

"A Roman collar is no disfranchisement. A man does not cease to be a Nationalist when he enters Maynooth. There is no disability in the sacrament of Holy Orders; at least there is none when a decree of the Divorce Court creates no disability...

"Mr. Parnell claimed to have a commission from the Irish race. If he had he holds it. We sought only to depose him from the sessional chairmanship—but we had no authority to depose him from the leadership of the Irish race. That power is resident in the Irish race, and if there exists, *in nubibus* or anywhere, such a post as leadership of the Irish race, it is in no way infringed, hurt or

touched by the attempts of the Irish Party to come to a decision. Our decision still left the hillside intact" National Press, 11th March, 1891).

Defence of the rights of clergy, as part of the people, to have a say in politics, and ridicule of Parnell's pseudo-Fenian, man-of-destiny posturing: these were the core of Healy's very effective campaign against Parnell.

The Conciliators

William O'Brien wrote by far the best book by any of the participants about the Parnell Split and its consequences over the next generation. It is in fact the only such book, but it is very likely that it would still be the best, even if there were others, because it is a very good book. It is called, *An Olive Branch In Ireland.*

O'Brien was an agitator, an organiser, a journalist, an orator, a political strategist, a novelist, a litterateur, a historian, and an honest man. But he was not much of a party-politician. And, when party-politics took the form of factional antagonism within a party, he was quite hopeless.

He was in America, avoiding imprisonment and collecting funds for the evicted tenants of the Plan of Campaign, when the crisis broke. With him were John Dillon, T.P. O'Connor, T.D. O'Sullivan, and Tim Harrington. When divorce seemed to be the only issue, this American group, with the exception of T.D. O'Sullivan, cabled a message of support for Parnell's continued leadership to the Leinster Hall meeting on 20th November. But, when the issue became the Home Rule alliance with the Liberals, and Parnell issued his Manifesto, they all (with the exception of Harrington) expressed the opinion that he should retire temporarily. But, being thousands of miles away, they were effectively out of the game during the critical weeks.

Here is O'Brien's account:

> "...when the announcement [of the divorce petition] was first made public property, I wrote to him from Glengarriff, where I was then in the thick of the fierce hostilities of the Plan of Campaign struggle, a letter in which, while giving him the assurance of my ardent sympathy, I was still able to write confidently of a triumphant result. The reply was one which, while it spoke with complete tranquillity of the legal victory, gave me the first shuddering apprehension as to the substantial character of the danger. The latter was lost in the confusion of my arrest three or four days after, but one phrase remains engraven on my memory as in letters of fire. It was, almost verbatim, this:
>
> "'You may rest quite sure that, if this proceeding ever comes to trial (which I very much doubt), it is not I who will quit the court with discredit.'
>
> "When the blow fell, Mr. Dillon and myself, who had escaped to France in a fishing boat from a Coercion Court in Tipperary under circumstances of some excitement in order to rouse the United States to our assistance, were prosecuting our appeal to America with a substantial success."

They held meetings in New York and Chicago at which Parnell was acclaimed and money poured in:

> "But in the meantime, the judgment in the Divorce Court, Parnell's re-election by the Irish Party, and Gladstone's answering letter had come, thunder-clap after thunder-clap, and the rending process in Committee Room 15 had begun, and by one of those dramatic transformations which Greek tragedy itself would have hesitated to invent, those thousands of men who had counted upon a night of mad enthusiasm and triumph without allay, sat there facing us, sick with doubt and fear...
>
> "The action of most Irishmen in the Parnell crisis (certainly, it must be frankly stated, my own) was not determined by the verdict in the Divorce Court... For myself, I should no more have voted Parnell's displacement on the Divorce Court proceedings alone than England would have thought of changing the command on the eve of Trafalgar in a holy horror of the frailties of Lady Hamilton and her lover. But English Puritans, for whom Parnell bore no such argosy of their nation's fortunes in his bosom, were wholly within their rights in repelling the co-respondent of the Divorce Court as their ally with the ruthless righteousness of their Ironside fathers; and it was just that inexorable attitude of the Liberal Nonconformists, inspired not by any crooked design against Home Rule, but on the contrary by the persuasion that an act of deference to the national conscience alone could save Home Rule at the polls—this was the *anauke* which, added to the moral argument that would have been fatal in the case of any other man, the argument of national interest as well, and with whatever misgiving and misery of heart for Irishmen, turned the scale against the continuance of Parnell in the Irish leadership. Gladstone or his advisers may have been wrong in their estimate of the strength of the Nonconformist sentiment, but they alone were qualified to make a correct estimate on the subject...
>
> "If, as soon as the result of the Divorce Action was certain, Parnell had taken his own followers and his English co-partners candidly and without *arriere-pensée* into his confidence and said, 'Here's how matters stand: let us put our heads together and see how the danger can be minimised... I am in your hands', had he taken this course... every element of honesty in the party in Ireland would instantly have flown to his side in a passion of indignation...
>
> "Fate willed otherwise. Parnell chose to be guided by the astuteness of the party politician rather than by the magnanimity of the national liberator" (An Olive Branch In Ireland, 1910, pp2-9).

What happened then is described by Sophie Raffalovich, O'Brien's wife, in a Preface to the 1958 reprint of O'Brien's novel, *Grace O'Malley: A Queen Of Men*, which O'Brien began while in Galway Jail in 1891:

> "William O'Brien was in America with John Dillon... appealing for the evicted tenants in the autumn of 1890... Soon after, however, the Parnell split tore the country. The Irish-Americans refused to give any more money until peace was made in Ireland.
>
> "The colleagues of William O'Brien sent him to France to try and put an end to dissension. If he had been free to go to Ireland he would have made peace,

but the sentence passed on him made it impossible. In France the difficulties were increased. ...However he tried hard and threw himself with ardour into what has been called the Boulogne negotiations. He failed, and nothing remained for him and Dillon but to go to jail. As long as the sentence hung on their heads, they could not work for Ireland.

"On February 11th 1891, they started... When we reached England, the two men were arrested" [and were taken to Galway to serve their sentences].

It was implicit in O'Brien's approach that misunderstandings had been a major factor in causing the split, and that the division continued because of personal antagonism which had arisen from misunderstanding.

O'Brien landed in France in late December 1890. He had his first meeting with Parnell in Boulogne on 31st December, and his mediation efforts continued into February 1891.

Healy did not approve of O'Brien's peacemaking efforts. I think he had good reason not to be. It all depends on whether you think the split had its source in misunderstandings or purely personal conflicts. Healy considered that he had acted reasonably throughout; he had given Parnell the benefit of the doubt while there was any doubt; when it became evident that Parnell was absolutely intent on rupturing relations between the Irish Party and the Liberal Party and taking Home Rule off the immediate agenda of British politics, he adopted a stance of intransigent opposition to Parnell; and Parnell's attitude made it impossible that there should be political opposition without personal antagonism. Healy accepted Parnell's terms of dispute. The Split was an accomplished fact. And it was a fact made necessary by Parnell's position. Healy therefore expected the American group, if they rejected the Manifesto, to line up against Parnell. The way to minimise the disruptive effect of Parnell's conduct was to mobilise the strongest possible political array against him at the outset.

Parnell, on the other hand, had nothing to lose by pretending to agree to mediation. The mediators had rejected his Manifesto and all it implied. If he rejected mediation they would have to line up against him. While they were mediating, they would be neutralised and his position would not seem as weak as it actually was. And it might even be that, through personal contact, they might succumb to his charisma. The following exchange at the first meeting indicates that Parnell began by trying to hustle O'Brien out of his negotiating position by personal influence:

"'How am I to abandon the country to such a pack of sheep?'

"'Parnell', I said, 'for God's sake let us not drift into a controversy as to whether the fault was with the sheep or with the shepherd'."

This approach having failed, Parnell strung out the negotiations for six weeks, allowing them at times to seem to be on the brink of success, but always being able to arrange that they should not actually succeed.

At the start of the Boulogne negotiations, the *Daily News* (the main Liberal newspaper) published the following editorial comment:

"We may look on it as certain that in any conversations which Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Parnell have had in Boulogne, or may yet have..., the deposition of MPs is accepted as a fact upon which there is no going back.... 'The wrecks come to the shore—the shore does not go to the wrecks' was the fine saying of the Count de Chambard. It has a more practical application to the condition of the Irish Parliamentary Party. The members of that party could hardly be expected to go far out of their way to meet the wrecks of Mr. Parnell's enterprise. The success of the majority of the Irish party thus far must have astonished even themselves. They have things very much their own way. Their country, and their countrymen in England, are recognising the strength of their position more and more clearly every day. Mr. O'Brien... has no commission from the Irish party to speak on their behalf with their late leader. He never asked for any such authority. He is making a generous and a thoroughly characteristic effort to secure the peaceful withdrawal of Mr. Parnell from a position of antagonism to the majority of the party, which antagonism can bring nothing but confusion, and bitterness, and futile strife, and unnecessary danger. We cannot believe that he has any other danger than that.

"Mr. Parnell can do mischief if he holds to his present policy of unscrupulous and persistent opposition. But such a policy could only do mischief for a time. It must break down before long. The worst he can do in that way would not be half so mischievous to the cause of Home Rule as any manner of compromise which might tend even to allow him the appearance of being once again the dictator of Irish affairs. It is not in the least degree probable that the men who deposed him would now permit him to dictate to them, even through the unselfish and generous mediation of Mr. William O'Brien... They are the men who for ten years have kept the Irish party alive. They are the men who fought its battles, sometimes under Mr. Parnell's leadership—much more often without it. We speak of such men as Mr. O'Brien himself, as Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Healy, Mr. T.P. O'Connor, Mr. Sullivan and others. We have all seen what Mr. Sullivan said the other day in Dublin, and we know that Mr. Sullivan regarded the day of Mr. Parnell's leadership as absolutely done. It does not seem to us that much or anything can be gained by the further conferences between Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Parnell. If Mr. Parnell be a sincere patriot, filled with the Mahomet-like conviction that he, and only he, can save his country, it is not probable that he will give up the struggle because of any appeal which Mr. O'Brien could make to him, or any term of compromise which Mr. O'Brien could offer. If, on the other hand, he is merely an unscrupulous egotist, the pure, unselfish enthusiasm of a man like Mr. O'Brien will not fill him with any sacred fire. It is to be regretted that the conferences or conversations should be continued any further. They can only tend to disquiet the public mind with a sense of uncertainty where no real uncertainty exists. Mr. Parnell has ceased to be the Dictator of Ireland, and

there is an end of the matter. All the King's horses and all the King's men, as Mr. Chamberlain says, could not set him up in dictatorship again. But nothing could be more absurd than the talk of people who try to persuade themselves that because Mr. Parnell as dictator has gone Home Rule has gone with him. Mr. Chamberlain says now... that he had found out Mr. Parnell from the very first. But was it not Mr. Chamberlain who conducted the confidential negotiations negotiations for Mr. Parnell's Kilmainham Treaty? Was not the inspiring principle of that treaty to be the acceptance of Mr. Parnell's word as the security of peace and order in Ireland? However that may be, it is certain that the Home Rule cause has suffered no damage whatever in sound English public opinion from the events that have lately happened. On the contrary, we feel convinced that sound English opinion is more than ever inclined to admit the justice of the Irish National claim. Ireland has passed through a terrible ordeal, and has borne a fearful strain. She has proved that she has the power to think, decide, and act for herself. She has governed herself, and thus in the most emphatic and practical way has testified to her fitness for self-government.

"What was the charge most constantly made against the Irish people by the enemies of the Irish cause? It was that they had no minds of their own—that they could only follow some leader with blind devotion, believe in grievances because he told them they were aggrieved, and put faith in remedies because he assured them the remedies could be had and would bring healing. This used to be said in the days of O'Connell. It used to be said in the days of Parnell. Surely it can hardly be said any longer...

"We do not and cannot believe that Mr. O'Brien has the remotest intention of trying to reinstate Mr. Parnell... But the whole interval or episode is calculated to give encouragement to wrong impressions, and to delay the general settling down to a recognition and acceptance of actual facts and conditions. The interval, however, cannot be much further prolonged. Mr. O'Brien will probably soon find out that there is nothing to be done with Mr. Parnell, and Mr. Parnell will discover that there is not much to be got out of Mr. O'Brien—and there an end, as the old poets would say." (2nd January, 1891.)

But O'Brien was soft on Parnell, and he persisted with the Boulogne negotiations long after a politician with an eye for functional realities would have given them up as worse than useless.

His proposal was that the proceedings in Committee Room 15 should be cancelled; that Justin McCarthy should be unanimously elected Chairman of the Parliamentary Party, with Parnell continuing as Chairman of the Party organisation, the National League; and that the Party should organise a public tribute to Parnell.

Parnell agreed to give up the Parliamentary chairmanship on the condition that he was succeeded, not by McCarthy, but by O'Brien himself. O'Brien replied that that was out of the question, and that Dillon was the man best fitted to take over from Parnell. "A cloud immediately fell upon Parnell's brow. He could not be induced to break silence as to his objection, but he returned again and again to the dogged

formula—'You are the only man among them I could give way to'" (Olive Branch, p28).

Parnell then proposed his condition, which was that guarantees should be got from Gladstone about the next Home Rule Bill, particularly with regard to the police (the Royal Irish Constabulary to be reduced to an unarmed civil police), and the land (which should be settled within three years by the Westminster Parliament or else the responsibility transferred to the Irish Parliament).

On 6th January O'Brien made it a condition of further discussion that Parnell should accept Dillon as his successor, that McCarthy and Sexton of the anti-Parnell majority should be kept informed of the negotiations between O'Brien and Parnell, and that McCarthy should take part with O'Brien and Parnell in judging the adequacy of the Liberal guarantees.

"Once more, he objected flatly to Mr. Dillon's nomination with such persistency that I found it necessary to break off the interview altogether and quit the room; and once more Mr. Redmond, M.P. and Mr. Clancy M.P., took up the advocacy of peace with a zeal so resolute that after an hour or two they had at last (in their own phrase) 'bullied' Parnell into acceptance of Dillon's name" (p34).

Dillon was not at Boulogne at this period, and one feels that the fact that O'Brien had to keep him fully informed at every stage of the proceedings helped O'Brien himself to keep his bearings. Political in-fighting was not O'Brien's strong point and he needed the restraining influence of his absent colleague, who had a much more hard-headed idea of Parnell.

Gladstone agreed to state his intentions about Home Rule in a Memorandum to be shown to the Irish factions. Although Parnell still raised some quibbles, the Liberal Memorandum was on the whole judged to be adequate. (That issue was in any case no more than a red herring brought in by Parnell after the meeting of 26th November. Healy jeered that, if Gladstone brought in a Bill giving Ireland no more than the rights of a Parish Council, Parnell would, if he was the leader of the Party, declare it to be Home Rule. He had, after all, declared his acceptance of the modest 1886 Bill as a final settlement.)

With the Liberal guarantees on the table, O'Brien thought the matter was settled. The last meeting, to make the final arrangements on the basis of what had been agreed, was held at Calais. Dillon attended. Parnell spoke of taking a holiday in America. "He gave Mr. Dillon much detailed advice as to the future management of the party". Then they got down to discussing the administration of the Paris Funds—Land League money lodged in an American bank in Paris in the names of Parnell, McCarthy and Dr. Kenny.

"We suggested that the funds should be transferred to the joint credit of Mr. Dillon, as chairman of the party..., and Mr. McCarthy. Parnell objected that this would amount to throwing over Dr. Kenny. 'Don't you think, Dillon', he said, 'it will answer all purposes if the funds are placed in your name and mine?' 'Yes, indeed, and the first time I am in a fix leave me without a pound

to pay the men'.

"Parnell started and grew pale as if a pistol had been fired into his face... 'Dillon', he said with that power of his to produce the effect of ice and of fire at the same moment; 'Dillon, that is not the kind of expression I had a right to expect from you after the way I have behaved to you.' He said nothing more on the point. We strove desperately to restore the happy current of the conversation by various conciliatory suggestions. He himself quickly recovered his coolness, and resumed a courteous but henceforth carefully reserved part in the conversation during the interminable half-hour before the boat for Dover was to start; reverting now obstinately to points in which he found the Liberal memorandum defective. But we all spoke with the unreality of physicians prescribing for a patient who had already expired under our eyes. I accompanied Parnell to the gangway of the Dover boat... Parnell was perfectly calm, but wore an air which there was no misreading. 'O'Brien', he said, as we shook hands, 'you have all but achieved the impossible. You and I could have done anything, but what are you to do with a man like that?'

"We went on with our efforts to get the necessary emendations made by the Liberal leaders, but it was now with all but a certainty that any difficulties in that direction would only be used as pretexts for a rupture of the peace negotiations. When the reply came from the Liberal leaders that 'they will not alter a comma', we could not quarrel with the decision, however unwisely it was phrased" (p47).

Without doubting the accuracy of this account (because I have found O'Brien to be, with Gavan Duffy, amongst the most scrupulous and reliable of politician-historians), I can only regard it as a fantasy. O'Brien describes what he saw, but I doubt that what he saw was what happened.

He prefaces this account by saying, "There is no longer any reason why what 'went wrong at Calais' should not now be dispassionately narrated" (p45). And, although in 1910 O'Brien and Dillon had become political enemies, I do not doubt that the account he wrote was accurate in its details.

O'Brien also holds the Redmondites responsible for the final rupture of the Party because of their failure to act towards Parnell on his return to London in accordance with an understanding which O'Brien thought they had made with him:

"...if men of the stamp of Messrs. Redmond, Harrington, Clancy, Kenny and Leary—the brains-carriers and debaters of his following—had the moral courage... to press their own convictions upon him stoutly as they had done in the two Boulogne interviews, the result would have been equally satisfactory" (p50).

But, if they had been capable of pressing their own convictions on Parnell, would they have been Parnellites? Even if they had convictions that might be called their own, would they have been Parnellites?

Redmond's "bullying" of Parnell at Boulogne I take to have been of a kind with Brunnhilde's opposition to Wotan. In opposing Wotan, Brunnhilde acted as his

'wish-child', and in the same way Redmond bullied Parnell. Parnell wanted to test O'Brien's obstinacy by pushing it to the point of apparent rupture, and, when O'Brien proved to be obstinate on the point, relations were restored, because Parnell did not wish them to be ruptured just yet. To camouflage what happened, Parnell got himself bullied by Redmond into conceding a point—which, along with restoring the connection with O'Brien, also made Redmond feel good.

The Parnellite residue in the Parliamentary Party consisted of personality cultists. The politics of the Manifesto were altogether impractical in terms of the framework of action which Parnell himself had constructed. The Liberal alliance was the only possible alliance worth contemplating. In 1885 there had been a choice of allies, and Parnell had exhorted the Irish in Britain to vote Tory in order to emphasise and maximise his freedom of action. In 1886 he had made his choice and stuck to it until November 1890. The Manifesto revoked the alliance with the Liberals, but did so on grounds which could only convince a Parnell devotee, and in circumstances in which an alliance with the Tories was not on the cards (because the Tories were being reinvigorated through a developing alliance with the Liberal Unionists). It was, for an Irish *Parliamentary* Party, the Liberal alliance or nothing. That is why the Parnellite Parliamentarians can only be described as personality cultists.

(This reasoning applies only to the Parliamentarians—the Redmondites. The small Fenian element in the Parliamentary Party and the much greater Fenian element in the country had sound reasons for fuelling the Parnell cult, despite its impracticability in constitutional politics—indeed *because of* its constitutional impracticability. The Liberal alliance could only debilitate the pure and simple Fenian spirit.)

While O'Brien was conducting his hopeless negotiations with Parnell at Boulogne, Parnell was in control of O'Brien's weekly newspaper, *United Ireland*. Parnell seized the paper by physical force within days of the Split. An edition of the paper, which had just been produced when Parnell took control, was suppressed by him. But the Acting Editor, Mr. Bodkin, got it printed by the *Irish Catholic*, and it was issued as the *"Suppressed" United Ireland*.

On 6th December, the day of the Split, the editorial of United Ireland said:

"This Week's Work.

"For the nine years that it has been established, under the editorship of William O'Brien, *United Ireland*, in the face of danger, prosecution, suppression, has advocated the cause of Ireland—that, and that only. It will not, while Mr. *William O'Brien* is four thousand miles away, violate this honourable record. While he is editor it will speak out the truth fearlessly, fearing no man, sparing no man. For those nine years Mr. *O'Brien* has taken on his own shoulders the perils of the editor, no light burden in the fighting days of Coercion. When the ban of suppression was upon it, he wrote in is cell in Kilmainham the entire paper that was published in Paris. He answered for *United Ireland* in the libel

actions by which he exposed and crushed the nameless infamies of the Castle. He answered for *United Ireland* when he stood in the dock in Green-street before a carefully-packed jury to be tried on a charge of seditious libel, of which the punishment was penal servitude if convicted...

"During that time no one has shared with him the responsibility or the danger; no one attempted to control his absolute discretion. To the entreaties of his colleagues he denied the right to be responsible to the Coercion Government for their own words, monopolising to himself all peril and suffering, as is his wont. The attempt to set his authority aside has been made at last. On Tuesday evening the following telegram was received by the writer of this paragraph, whom *William O'Brien* had appointed his responsible deputy in his absence, and whose own strong views of the unhappy controversy were strengthened and confirmed by cablegrams from his chief:—

"'Must insist that your leading article next issue of *United Ireland* being submitted to me before printing, otherwise I must make other arrangements.—*Parnell.*'

"To this mandatory telegram no answer was returned. It is to our readers who have heretofore honoured us with our confidence, and whose confidence we still hope to deserve, our answer is made. There will be no Press censorship in *United Ireland* in favour of any man. While *William O'Brien's* representative sits in his editorial chair so long will its voice be bold and free in Ireland's cause, speaking the truth as heretofore regardless of consequences. Whether Mr.. *Parnell* has `seen beforehand" and revised the leading articles that have been elsewhere published in his favour we have no means of knowing. But this we do know, the liberty of the Press will not be violated where it has been so long and so fearlessly maintained until a man of his own sits in *O'Brien's* chair. He must dismiss *William O'Brien* from his post as editor before *William O'Brien's* sentiments are belied in *United* Ireland."

By the following issue (13th December), Parnellites had taken over the paper and Mr. Bodkin had produced the first issue of *"Suppressed" United Ireland.* Parnell's edition commented:

"The Bodkin number of United Ireland was published yesterday at the *Irish Catholic* or *Nation* office. Two van loads of papers were dispatched to Kingsbridge terminus about 5 a.m., but we are informed that only one reached its destination; the parcels which were in the other van are by this time at sea". It explained that the second van was held up and the bundles of the paper were thrown in the Liffey.

"Suppressed" United Ireland (also dated 13th December) explained:

"In our last issue we said that the sentiments of William O'Brien should never be belied in *United Ireland*, until he was dismissed from his post as Editor. This has been attempted to be done by mob violence. A mere creature of Mr. Parnell has been foisted into Mr. O'Brien's chair."

A special edition had been produced at the request of the Party leader, Justin McCarthy, when Parnell, his Secretary, a couple of other MPs, and "some other persons" showed up and told the Acting Editor he was sacked. The Acting Editor denied Parnell's authority and said he would only submit to brute force.

"In a few moments Mr. John Clancy, who has been the most violent partisan of Mr. Parnell, and organised all the rowdyism on his behalf in Dublin, broke into the room at the head of an uproarious mob of about fifty persons, and advanced threateningly to the Acting Editor."

This was conceded to be the authority of brute force, and the office was vacated. The whole edition of the anti-Parnell issue of the paper was burned. It was then reconstructed elsewhere, only to have half of it seized on the quays and thrown into the river.

O'Brien's supporters in Dublin quickly organised the publication of a new paper and issued it as a daily. They called it *The Insuppressible*, and underneath the title it declared itself to be *William O'Brien's Paper.*

Every issue, under the headline, *'William O'Brien Speaks'*, carried a letter from O'Brien to Bodkin, dated New York, 11th December, saying:

"Mournful to think that the paper which for Ten Years has borne all the assaults of Dublin Castle, should receive its worst stab from the Leader I all but worshipped.

"Proud to know that 'United Ireland' continues insuppressible.

"Cannot possibly believe that my true-hearted countrymen will countenance the outrage committed in my absence, and whilst my hands are bound".

The Insuppressible was forthrightly hostile to Parnell. On the ground in Dublin it was necessary to be one thing or the other. The new Parnellism had a strong base there, and forthright hostility to it was the only practical alternative to being swept along by it.

Here are a couple of samples:

5th January 1891: "Does it never strike the Parnellites that they have as little right to dictate to the National Party as the Orangemen of the North have to dictate to the people of Ireland? There are many points of resemblance between them. Both delight to style themselves 'the loyal minority'. Both have about equal right to the name. Whatever cavil there may be to their claim to be considered 'loyal', their right to be called the minority is at least beyond dispute. Both minorities—the Parnellite and the Orange—arrogate to themselves the rights of the 'majority', and both are strongly backed in their preposterous pretensions by the English Coercionists. They are both playing, on different tables, the old game of Ireland's enemies—'Divide and be conquered'."

19th January: "If Mr. Parnell did not mean mischief at Tralee, it is

impossible to say what he did mean. He merely harked back to questions of abstract policy which will arise when the General Election is won, and threw out insinuations against the good faith of the English Home Rulers with whom he has been acting in the utmost harmony till the question of his own leadership became involved... He also... bitterly attacked his own party. Though he did not explain how he only discovered their baseness when they desired to depose him, he was kind enough to admit that they had not all been contaminated by residence in England. We have no desire to say the harsh things which Mr. Parnell's own language necessarily provokes. But we think he would be well advised to leave the question of contamination in England out of his speeches. It is very suggestive of a disagreeable retort. It is very unlucky for Mr. Parnell that in his allusions to previous visits to Ireland he has to go back a very long time. It was twelve years, he reminded them, since ha had been in Tralee; during the long interval he had been residing in the contaminating atmosphere of England. Of the real controversy which he has forced... on a disgusted country, he had not one word to say."

22nd January: [It distinguished between bravery and bravado, and then commented:] "We suppose we will be told forthwith that we are sneering at the gallant hillside men, the pioneers of Irish nationality, because we resent the transparent efforts of knaves or fools to gull them. The spectacle of Mr. Pierce Mahony or Mr. Henry Campbell [the Secretary found for Parnell by Healy in 1881] patronising the old-time Fenians would be ludicrous, if it were not absolutely loathsome... What Mr. Campbell's title to play the patron may be we cannot tell. We have never hesitated to speak our mind plainly of the devoted men who risked life and liberty in desperate, despairing effort for their country's freedom. Some little time ago *United Ireland*, before it passed by the influence of the crowbar into the hands of Mr. Campbell, published a cartoon depicting the tomb of the Manchester Martyrs, on which Ireland laid a wreath of fame, and England of remorse. Since this controversy began, our most earnest and most respectful appeals have been to the old guard of Irish Nationality. It was such an appeal that brought the crowbar brigade to the offices of *United Ireland*. The paper that contained it was vainly attempted to be suppressed by Mr. Parnell, who now bids so wildly for the hillside men's support. The men of the 'sixty-seven are not to be beguiled by the fulsome flattery by which they are assailed. It is quite safe now to express the utmost sympathy with physical force. A man may walk down O'Connell-street at noon and proclaim himself a Fenian to every policeman he meets, and yet provoke only a good-humoured smile. It was not always so. There was a time when that Fenianism meant death, or life-long imprisonment, to the man who professed it. Then Fenians were heroes. Now, too often fools and knaves masquerade in their cast-off clothes. But the Castle regards publicly professed Fenianism with the same complacency and indulgence, not to say encouragement, with which it regards the pretensions of Mr. Parnell—and for the same reason. They are no longer dangerous to the Castle. They are dangerous only to the Home Rule movement, whose success means the death-blow of the Castle and of Coercion. Irish Nationalists are rational beings... The very best and bravest of the hillside men have abandoned their beautiful wild dream of restoring Irish Nationality by force of arms. They have taken to means, less glorious, perhaps, but far more feasible. They have reverently put aside the pike and assumed the weapons of constitutional agitation. If there be a reproach in this Mr. Parnell surely shares it. This is the doctrine he all his life preached... Mr. Parnell never hinted a doubt of the certainty or sufficiency of Home rule until the question of his leadership was touched."

Two days after this issue, *The Insuppressible* appeared without the sub-title, "William O'Brien's Paper". It carried a letter from O'Brien asking that his name should no longer be used in connection with it. And it was announced that, since it was no longer to be William O'Brien's paper, it would no longer be published.

On 22nd January it had commented on the Boulogne negotiations, under the headline, *Speed The Work*:

"The country, at the instance of Dillon and O'Brien, is willing to be generous in the terms she pays for peace. But generosity may be pushed to weakness. The country asks that both sides may be rapid in their decision... If peace be possible, let it come at once. If there must be a fight, the sooner it is fought and over the better."

O'Brien did not want his paper to comment on the Boulogne negotiations. But that was not a possibility of practical politics in Ireland. The Parnellite press was taking maximum advantage of the negotiations to represent O'Brien as being virtually aligned with Parnell.

These are some Parnellite *United Ireland* headlines:

3rd January: The Conference At Boulogne/ Messrs. Parnell And O'Brien Meet/ Friendliness All round/ The Conference To Be Resumed.

10th January: The Conference At Boulogne/ A Basis Of Settlement Come To.

7th February: Splendid Letter From William O'Brien.

On 21st February, *United Ireland* carried the text of a letter from Parnell to O'Brien, dated 11th February:

"...I regret it has not been rendered possible for me to consider the National interests so safeguarded that I could feel there would be no danger to the cause in my now surrendering the responsibility which has been placed upon me, and which I have accepted at the hands of our nation and our race. I had been ready to act up to the letter and spirit of our understanding to the last moment, and I regret there is no course left to me now but to withdraw from the negotiations. The seal of confidence, which covers what passed between us, renders it impossible to invite the public judgment upon them at the present time, but, if ever that seal be removed, I feel confident that I will be held to have done everything in my power consistent with the National interest to promote the

cause of peace and reunion in our country's ranks. I do not at all fear that that cause is lost, and although these negotiations have fallen through they have not been entirely unsuccessful in advancing it... On this, at least, you may congratulate yourself..."

During the seven weeks since the start of the Boulogne negotiations, the Parnellite press had been uninhibited in its denunciation of the "Seceders". Although they had been heavily defeated in the Kilkenny by-election (largely through the efforts of Healy and Davitt), Parnell was able to keep up the morale of his followers by means of the negotiations. He represented O'Brien and Dillon as not forming part of the opposition to him, even though both were formally on record as opposing the Manifesto and his continuing leadership in Parliament. When the Boulogne negotiations were broken off, he could suggest that there were matters which would be to his advantage if made public, but which he had to maintain silence on because he had given his word to O'Brien, And that there remained the prospect of rapprochement with O'Brien when the latter became free to act in Ireland.

By disowning *The Insuppressible*, O'Brien lent credibility to the Parnellite case, and thus made things more difficult for Healy and Davitt.

In mid-February 1891, O'Brien and Dillon gave up the attempt at mediation and retired to Galway Jail where, despite the best efforts of Balfour to have it that everyone in jail was a criminal, they had established a couple of years earlier a right of political status. For them the Jail was, in effect, a study annexed to the Library of Galway University.

On their admission to Jail, *United Ireland*, in the same issue as Parnell's letter to O'Brien, carried an editorial entitled, *Dillon And O'Brien*, saying:

> "If ever there was a period at which Ireland truly needed the services of such men as William O'Brien and John Dillon the present is that time" (21st February).

And the whole time O'Brien and Dillon were pursuing their studies in Galway Jail, Parnell could represent them as his virtual allies.

But a time came when they had to leave the study and walk out into the political fray. O'Brien describes it in the *Olive Branch*:

> "Mr. Dillon made up his mind irrevocably to speak out the next day in unconditional adhesion to the anti-Parnellite cause... The all too patent fact that his decision was based almost wholly upon Parnell's electoral defeats in Sligo and Carlow were to me in the last degree repellent. Nevertheless the close friendship and harmony between Mr. Dillon and myself in all essential points of national policy was the last remnant of stability left in the universal break-up of the country's old anchorages and landmarks... Even if I was not willing to concede that his very decided judgment might be better founded than my own, there was no alternative to bowing to it except the unthinkable one of going my own way the next day... The effect would not only have been to add the last note of discord to an already horrid din, but, infallibly, to give confirmation to the misrepresentations already busily spread by Parnellites that I had abjured our American declaration against Parnell's leadership" (p57).

And so, after months of evading the issue, O'Brien was finally compelled by Dillon to act as if he had made up his mind. And he achieved pride of place in the Parnellite/Redmondite demonology.

Although joining the anti-Parnellites, O'Brien and Dillon affected a certain disdain for the movement developed by Healy. This provoked a *United Ireland* cartoon Supplement on 12th September, entitled *Among The Clouds*. O'Brien and Dillon were pictured walking on stilts among a flock of sheep of the National Federation. The sheep were branded "Featheration". And a Parnellite phalanx was seen in the distance, marching, with banners waving. And on 19th September a cartoon pictured O'Brien and Dillon, dressed as babies, being trundled along in a "Featheration" pram.

In his last public speech, at Creggs in Galway, Parnell ridiculed O'Brien:

> "Mr. O'Brien will resort to extreme measures in case the Liberal party deceives him; but the trouble with Mr. O'Brien's extreme courses is that they always commence or end with his extremities or at the extremities of some other person. In 1883 he was for Ireland, and brought infamous accusations against Lord Spencer. In 1887 and 1890 he is for England, and he is willing to blacken Lord Spencer's boots (laughter). I did not want him either to bring infamous accusations against Lord Spencer in 1883 or to black his boots in 1890..." (United Ireland, 31st October.)

One can only say that, in the context of the politics of the moment-and it is in the nature of politics to be of the moment—O'Brien deserved the ridicule that was heaped on him by Parnell and the Parnellites. He had been duped by Parnell, he had been strung along for about eight months, and when he was no longer usable he was ridiculed. Such is the way of the world. What political leader ever acknowledged an obligation of honour to somebody he had duped?

And if Healy was conducting the opposition to Parnell in a way that O'Brien recoiled from, one can only say with Moliere, *"Vous l'avez voulu, George Dandin"*—You would have it so, William. The staff of the old *United Ireland* were willing and able to bring out a daily paper aligned with the majority of the Party. O'Brien might have laid down parameters for them within which criticism of Parnell should be conducted. Instead of doing so, he disowned the paper for urging a speedy conclusion of the Boulogne negotiations, and the people producing it did not then see their way to continue.

But the majority were not going to be without a paper. Within three weeks of O'Brien's suppression of *The Insuppressible*, Healy launched *The National Press*. And he wanted to involve O'Brien in the enterprise, but O'Brien refused. So the *National Press*, conducted very much as the spirit moved Healy, is what there was. And *vous l'avez voulu, Guillaume.*

Redmondism: The First Phase

Parnell died on 6th October 1891. And Redmond, who organised the funeral ceremonies, conducted himself in a way that puts one in mind of Stalin upon the death of Lenin thirty years later. But, in this historical repetition, the farce came first.

The Redmondite paper, *United Ireland*, carried this fierce denunciation on 10th October, 1891:

> "Slain, sacrificed by Irishmen on the altar of English Liberalism, he, the greatest Chief that this land has known in the struggle of centuries, has been murdered by the men whom he dragged from obscurity and who hated him, even while they fawned upon him, because they could never repay all he had done for them personally. Murdered he has been as certainly as if the gang of conspirators had surrounded him and hacked him to pieces. 'I will drive Parnell to death or madness', said the infamous spokesman of the Bantry Band. And the leprous traitors—the Abrahams and the Barrys who talk of morality with a lie in their hearts—they may rejoice to-day that their purpose has been accomplished. Is Mr. John Dillon satisfied now? Is Mr. William O'Brien—dead Caesar's Brutus? Are they as happy as Mr. Thomas Sexton, who plotted the great Betrayal of November last? Shall Ireland exact no punishment for what has been done? Shall this fatal perfidy, this slow torture unto death of our beloved leader go unavenged?"

William Redmond (who was to be killed 28 years later while assisting in Britain's greatest and most blood-stained imperialist adventure) also contributed to the cry for vengeance in October 1891:

> "The greatest enemy of British tyranny... is killed by the foulest slander, hunted to death, that the virtue of Ireland might be vindicated to the satisfaction of the Pharisees and hypocrites of holy England. The Nonconformist conscience is now at ease; the scandalmongers and canters of Great Britain are satisfied... The virtue of Ireland having been vindicated, the orders of our English masters having been carried out, the noblest, bravest and truest of Irishmen having been driven broken-hearted to the grave, Ireland will now receive at the gracious hands of England some measure of freedom. Perhaps, indeed, we may be ordered to forget the very name of him to whose matchless labours any liberty we receive will be due... Yes, but by the memory of the dead we never, never will forget the price our masters exacted for it. Millions alive, and millions and millions yet unborn, will remember that before England removed one finger of her blood-stained hand from Ireland's throat she ordered us to break the heart of our best and truest chief." (I quote this from the biography of John Redmond by his nephew, L.G. Redmond-Howard.)

On 10th October, United Ireland appeared with black borders on its columns, and confronted a guilty nation with its guilt. The editorial was titled, *Done To Death*:

> "Does Ireland know that the mightiest intellect that has given itself to her cause for two hundred years has ceased to think and plan for her? Ah, fellow-countrymen, you turned upon him in his hour of trial. Do you feel happy this morning as the news flashes over the hills of Ireland that *he is dead*?...
>
> "Men like William O'Brien will pause in the presence of this Death. It strikes them to the heart, asks them questions they cannot answer, bids them, in the name of Ireland, stand and deliver.
>
> "They have killed him—*him*, the greatest son of Banba since the day in 1649 when *Owen Roe O'Neill* breathed his last 'at Clough Oughter upon St. Leonard's Day'.
>
> "...they have driven to his grave a son of Ireland, truer than *Tone*, abler than *Grattan*, greater than *O'Connell*, and full of love for us as *Davis* himself—the only Irish Chief for two hundred years fit to stand on an Irish hill beard to beard, foot to foot, with the Englishman."

On 17th October the editorial was headlined, *"No!"*:

> "No, we cannot make friends with you. We cannot join hands over his grave with the people who killed him. We cannot, even if for Ireland it were good, smile today in the faces of men who turned their back upon him when he stood at bay, a hundred thousand Saxons howling for his life. No, no!... We are a predestined nation. More than once in our brave island story we faltered; more than once the Teuton tripped us up... But God guarded Erin". He guarded us by giving us Sarsfield, Tone, Davis, Mitchel, 'Stephens and his Fenian boys', and now Parnell."

(The reference to "the Teuton" is interesting in the light of the fact that, 23 years later, Redmond committed nationalist Ireland to total war against Teutonic 'savagery'. But, whereas the Saxon was the Teuton in 1891, by 1914, the Teuton had become German and the Saxon was the saviour of civilisation!

Amidst this wild extravagance of language, there is a rather ludicrously factual element—the comparison with Owen Roe O'Neill. Owen roe was on his way to give battle to Cromwell when he died. But for three years before that he had been making war on the Irish Confederation, and during the previous year he had been in a military alliance with the Cromwellians—see *Spotlights On Irish History*, Aubane Historical Society.)

In accordance with its flirtation with Young Ireland and Fenianism, *United Ireland* carried a series of articles on *Edward Walsh: Poet and Shanachie* in July and August. On 3rd October it issued as a Supplement a signed portrait of James Stephens. On 10th October there was an article, *Mr. Parnell As I Knew Him*, by *A Physical force Man*. On 31st October, the front page carried a drawing of *Mr. James Stephens At The Grave Of Mr. Parnell*, and this editorial remark:

> "The West-British party in Ireland have taken advantage of an explosion which occurred in the offices of the *National Press* on Tuesday night to organise a dynamite scare."

On 7th November it carried a jubilant headline: *Healy Horsewhipped!!* By Mr. Parnell's Nephew/ Extraordinary Scene At Four Courts.

Amidst all the Fenian posturing, the future of Redmondism was foreshadowed by *United Ireland* on 14th February, 1891, when it issued as a Supplement a portrait of the great Imperialist, Cecil Rhodes. (Rhodes had made a handsome donation to Parnell's finances.

The *Freeman's Journal*, which supported Parnell for six months after the Split, re-aligned itself with the majority in July 1891. Parnell then set about organising a daily paper of his own. It appeared two months after his death, with the title, *Irish Daily Independent*. Here is a sample of the editorial in the first number:

> "Deprived of a journal now discredited beyond recovery by the meanest act of political and turncoat treachery in newspaper annals, and chafing under the grossest misrepresentation from the pens of the organ of scurrility and deadly treason to the unity of the Irish race and the martyred Irish leader, our countrymen have awaited with eagerness the hour when a National mouthpiece would be at their service... and when they would in capital and country be no longer compelled to sit worse than dumb while their principles were travestied, their motives malignantly aspersed, and the programme and policy carried to the gates of victory by Charles Stewart Parnell distorted and abandoned. The final work upon which Mr. Parnell was engaged was the establishment and issue of this journal, which he named *The Independent.*" (18th December, 1891.)

There might have been some future for the politics of Parnell's Manifesto under the leadership of Parnell. Parnellism without Parnell was never more than a small, but intensely rancorous, faction within the Parliamentary Nationalist movement whose main purpose was to keep up bad feeling in honour of Parnell's memory. It is conceivable that Parnell himself might have broken the bounds of constitutional action and become a Fenian, a Republican, in some mode of his own devising. That would have been fundamentally inconsistent with the whole of his political activity up to mid-November 1890, which Mrs. O'Shea quite fairly describes as, "the betterment of England's government of Ireland". But sheer disgruntlement might well have led him to it. (Erskine Childers, an offspring of the same class as Parnell, and a more overt and active British Imperialist than Parnell had ever been, became a Home Ruler a generation later for the purpose of improving the political structure of the Empire, and then became a Republican when the Home Rule project was messed up by Britain.) But it was never on the cards that Redmond should do more than flirt with Fenianism for the purpose of using Republican sentiment in the country as fuel for a campaign of mere vindictiveness against all who in 1891 had acted out of a calculation of interest, instead of out of a blind reflex of personal loyalty to "the greatest chief this land has known".

O'Brien, though acting with Dillon, was of two minds while Parnell lived. But he had no time for Parnellism as Redmondism:

> "As long as Parnell lived there was always in the background his magic gift of leadership to justify his followers in running even the wildest risks. There was no longer that justification or any justification whatever for giving a new start and fresh venom to a strife amidst which the national cause was perishing visibly and with shame. It was to be no longer a question of Parnell's leadership but of vengeance for his wrongs; no longer a question of reuniting the country but of immolating her to his manes" (p61; *Manes* = spirits of the dead).

When the general appeal to the people was made in the General Election of July 1892, the trend of the by-elections of the preceding eighteen months was confirmed. The Parnellites, who had 30 MPs going into the elections, fielded 45 candidates, but only won 9 seats. The anti-Parnellites won 71 seats.

The Election returned a Home Rule (i.e. Liberal plus Nationalist) majority of 40. The Parnellites

> "devoted themselves in scarcely disguised concert with the Unionist opposition to sowing tares in the seed-ground of the Home Rule Government and discrediting and obstructing the Home Rule Bill... The Home Rule Bill was one which satisfied Parnell's largest stipulations... Nevertheless Mr. Redmond and his friends pursued the Home Rule Bill throughout all the battles and ambuscades of its passage through the House of Commons with that species of fatal friendship which is the deadliest of Parliamentary weapons. He who, in the Boulogne letters, had paid such scant respect to Parnell's ingenious attempts to pick holes in the Liberal Memorandum now himself raised points very much more futile and pressed them home amidst the joyous cheers of the enemies of Home Rule and with their ardent support, in the division lobbies. He who who was constitutionally an Irish Nationalist of the most moderate type threw out hints and vague demands which alarmed a good many honest but uninformed Britons, and gave the Whiggish section of the Liberal Party a plausible pretext for separating themselves from what they nicknamed 'Fenian Home Rule'" (Olive Branch, p69).

On the Third Reading of the Bill (30th August, 1893), Redmond said, "This Bill, as it now stands, cannot under any conceivable circumstances if it passes into law afford a full, a final, or a satisfactory settlement of this question".

The Bill was passed by the Commons and vetoed by the Lords.

Given that the governing party did not have a majority in the Commons, and that the Irish representatives who acted in the name of Parnell declared that the Bill was unsatisfactory, it can hardly be said that the Lords' Veto was exercised unreasonably. It was, of course, unreasonable that an Irish majority should not have the right to determine whether or not Ireland should form part of the United Kingdom state. But the Home Rule movement accepted in principle that the UK Parliament had the right of decision, and that a Home Rule settlement should be within the framework of the British Constitution. It was therefore not unreasonable for the Lords to strike down a Bill which the Parnellites had rejected as a basis of settlement.

The flavour of Redmondism can be gathered from *The Parnellite*, a "Newspaper/ Magazine" published in 1895. It was directed against "McCarthyism" (i.e. Justin McCarthy, Vice-Chairman under Parnell, who led the walk-out from Committee

Room 15), and "West Britonism". It carried photographic portraits on the front page, and they included John O'Leary, the Fenian; John Mitchel, who preached revolution as a member of the Young Ireland group in the 1840s; "the Late Duchess of Leinster"; and Maud Gonne with wolfhound.

A sample of the contents is given below.

"Wanted—Fight!

"Independent Nationalists will rejoice to know that Mr. John Redmond has returned to Ireland greatly restored by his sea voyage...

"The question... arises whether the Nationalist vote should or should not be solidly cast against the various Bills which various coteries in the Liberal Party are endeavouring to promote.

"Now, let us say at the outset that we do not preach... any useless or purely vindictive hostility towards any class or party in Great Britain. We are trying to reason the matter out purely as a matter of business and of principle.

"...Speaking at Listowel on Sunday last, Mr. Thomas Sexton dwelt with glowing verbosity on a long list of Democratic reforms which the present Administration has conferred upon the British people, by the grace and favour of the Party to which he belongs—and so far as the Peers are concerned there is no reason why this process should not be continued. But will its continuance serve the cause of Ireland?

"We say no—a thousand times, no! Ireland has nothing to gain by Welsh Disestablishment, or Local Veto, or Registration Reform, or Extension of the Franchise...

"An English Party believes it will make a heavy party gain given by various alterations in the Franchise and Registration Laws. Skilled Liberal Organisers believe such an alteration would mean a difference of at least 30 or 40 seats to them at any General Election. May we ask what difference would Franchise and Registration Reform make to the cause of Irish Nationality? Would it mean the capture of more than two or three seats from the Irish Unionists? And would such a gain be in the least commensurate with the gains which are expected and which will probably be secured by the English Liberals?

"Oh! but we shall be told that the strengthening of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons will strengthen the fight against the House of Lords, and that British Democracy, brimming over with gratitude to its Irish benefactors, will hurl itself with frenzied enthusiasm into the struggle for a Parliament in College Green.

"We loathe the humbug about the gratitude of British Democracy. There is no gratitude in Politics. There is certainly no gratitude in British Politics. The British Electors are in the main business-like fellows who sell their political favours as they sell their cotton or their iron. We don't blame them for it. We don't rant about people being selfish because they don't agitate themselves about grievances which they have never felt. We don't believe that Irishmen would go into hysterics about the hardships of the Scotch Crofters or the

London Poor. But we do ask our fellow-countrymen not to be such ninnies as to fancy that when Ireland ceases to block the way, Ireland can possibly expect a redressal of her grievances by a British majority in a British Parliament... [Not even an amnesty was given by the Liberals in return for all the Irish Party has done for them.]

"Let us get back to the bulldog policy of Biggar and Parnell, or let us own ourselves beaten, get about our business, and let other men and other methods have their chance" (19th January 1895).

"Gloves Off!

[Begins by listing reform measures to come before Parliament. Welsh Disestablishment, Factory Acts, etc:]

"A vital question now arises. When these Bill... are submitted to the House of Commons, ought they or ought they not to receive the Irish Nationalists vote?

"We say, no. We are sick of timidity and finesse, and compromise. We are still more sick with the attempt to cheat and bamboozle our fellow-countrymen in the name of the British Democracy. That British Democracy may still have grievances—that sections of it may still be poor, or neglected, or downtrodden—we do not wish to deny. But it cannot be disputed by any other than an extremely ignorant person that the average British Democrat is the fattest, best clothed, best housed, and best paid Democrat in the wide world... In the teeth of this, Irish Nationalist Members of Parliament, are invited, with cool affrontery, to come to the aid of the poor, downtrodden British Democracy, while their own fellow-countrymen are more or less courteously invited to take a back seat." (9th February, 1895.)

Among the issues agitated by *The Parnellite* was the hanging of John Twiss of Glenlara, a townland west of Newmarket in North Cork, where I once cut turf. I cannot recall the exact details of the Twiss case. The late Pat Lynch published a book about it, but it is not available to me at the moment. The gist of it is that the crime for which he was executed was a trumped-up charge, and that he was really killed for being a physical force man. In the course of a meeting in Newmarket 95 years later, I made reference to Twiss to illustrate some point I was making about the mixed origins of the people in that strongly traditional area. I took it that the general view of Twiss was that he was a Fenian murdered by the Crown on a trumped up charge, and I was greatly surprised to find that it was still a contentious issue in the Newmarket region. *The Parnellite* saw the execution as "shocking proof of the tenacity with which the mire of Dublin Castle clings to the skirts of the present Government":

"The Hanging Of Twiss

"John Twiss was hanged on Saturday, calmly and firmly protesting his innocence to the last. The agitation for his reprieve was without parallel in Ireland for its earnestness, its spontaneousness, and for the fact that it was an

agitation in which thousands of men of every creed and class and party were joined together. Never was there an appeal for a reprieve to which Ministers might have acceded with greater justness and dignity. And never, perhaps, was a more perfect contempt for Irish opinion displayed than when this appeal for John Twiss was rudely brushed aside.

"...he was adjudged guilty of the capital offence on the evidence of a dirty informer and a child of seven years old" (16th February, 1895).

The editorial of the following week referred to "the judicial murder of John Twiss", and commented:

"We are in a position to state that Ireland was never more completely under police rule than she is at the present day... If no prominent victims have yet been secured, if no extensive... imprisonments have yet taken place, it is because a majority of Irish Nationalists are quiescent under the spell of West Britonism, and because Mr. Morley desires 'a peaceful Ireland' for show purposes on Liberal platforms. If the Irish people were to awaken from their trance to-morrow morning, and to insist on a stop being put to the indefinite postponement of Home Rule for the benefit of the British Democracy, they would find the Morley *regime* to be as bitter and unscrupulous as any they have experienced within living memory" (23rd February, 1895).

West Britonism is a recurring theme in *The Parnellite*. On 30th March it referred to its nationalist opponents as "candidates of the comfortable West British Order". And on 4th May: "The West British Party has little to be proud of. It has retained a seat in East Wicklow by a majority reduced from 238 to 62."

The latter comment is made in an editorial entitled, *More Catholic Than The Church*, which says further:

"It is the Brass Band Policy, root and branch, and line by line—with the same truckling to 'a friendly government', the same drivel about the wicked Tories, the same childish jargon about the gratitude of the British Democracy, and, especially, with the same episcopal patronage and clerical influence at its back."

Another Brass Band? was the title of an editorial 5th January. Commenting on a speech by Tim Healy at Crossmaglen, it suggested that the Bishops might now like to see an end of the Nationalist Party altogether. Healy had served their purpose and O'Brien and Dillon were not being sufficiently obedient to episcopal instructions.

"In fact, Ireland is threatened with another Brass Band... History repeats itself, particularly in Ireland; and if the Keogh-Sadleir tragedy of '52 is not to be re-enacted in or about the year '95, the Independent Nationalists of Ireland must be up and doing."

The Pope's Brass Band was the name given to the Sadleir and Keogh tendency in 1852. In the aftermath of the Famine, Gavan Duffy, founder of *The Nation* along with Thomas Davis, and its editor, got together an Independent Irish Party which did very well in the election of 1852. Its basic programme was to gain the enactment of a law of tenant-right and it was therefore functional in the Protestant parts of

Ulster, as O'Connell's party had never been. Its candidates were pledged to act as a party at Westminster and not to accept any Government offers as individuals. Michael Sadleir and John Keogh broke their pledges and accepted minor positions from the Whig/Liberal Government. They were given the "Pope's Brass Band" label because of their vociferous opposition to an anti-Catholic law enacted in 1851, the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

But Sharman Crawford, an Ulster Protestant Liberal or Radical, also defected from the Party when the Government offered a minor concession. Gavan Duffy emigrated to Australia in disgust, and for the next twenty years there was no semblance of an Irish party.

The situation after 1890 certainly bore some resemblance to the situation after 1852. But Healy and Dillon were no Sadleir and Keogh, and it was O'Brien who resembled Gavan Duffy with his multiple abilities as strategist, agitator, organiser, journalist and historian. It is hard to see where Redmond fits in.

Clericalism

O'Brien writes somewhere of an "unchaining of minds" being one of the consequences of the Split, and he thought this happened because others acted hastily. He did not see that, by committing his own influence to the futile activity of attempting to reconcile positions and factions which were in principle and practice irreconcilable, he himself contributed to the unchaining process. If, on his return from America, he had supported Parnell, he might have halted the Parnellite development of a spurious, radical-chic, Fenian posturing, and given a more useful tactical implementation to the strategy implicit in the Manifesto. Or, if he had joined Healy, he might have retarded the tendency towards Clericalism on the anti-Parnell side—by virtue of the weight he added to it, rather than because he was personally more anti-clerical than Healy. But he wasted his influence in 1891 by deploying it in pursuit of an unachievable object.

He was understandably reluctant to let go of the combination built up in the 1880s in conjunction with Parnell, and he would not see that it had already gone because Parnell had set himself against it. By refusing to let go of what had already gone, and by withholding his support from the Party majority, even though he agreed with it that the Liberal alliance must be maintained and Parnell must retire, he acted as an irritant. It would not be too much to say that he acted as a solvent and helped to bring about the very thing he wished to avert—the "unchaining" of the complex combination, breaking it down into its component elements.

There was undoubtedly a great increase in Catholic Clericalism after the Parnell Split. But that happened because of the Split. It was not the case that the Catholic clergy, who were an element in the political combination of the 1880s, had grown discontented with the restrictions imposed on them by that combination, and seized the opportunity of the O'Shea divorce action to free themselves from it by bringing down Parnell. The Hierarchy did not issue a statement against Parnell continuing in the Parliamentary leadership until 3rd December—after the Gladstone letter,

after Parnell's Manifesto, and after it became evident that Parnell was forming a faction to act against the Party majority.

It was not in December 1890 that the priests entered the life of the Irish Party. And it was not because of the priests that a majority of the Party rejected Parnell's leadership. The priests had been brought into politics by Parnell as part of his great national combination. It was his doing that parish clergy were *ex officio* members of election committees in the National League.

Parnell harnessed clerical influence to the Party in the days when he appeared to be its absolute master. By 1890, the priests were not much less Parnellite than the people. Two of the Archbishops were strongly Parnellite: Croke in Cashel and Walsh in Dublin, and the appointment of the latter was seen as a victory for Parnellite influence over British influence in the Vatican.

Frank Hugh O'Donnell, a member of the original Irish Party under Isaac Butt, rejected Parnellism early on and thereby made himself a marginal figure in Irish politics. When Mrs. O'Shea's memoirs were published in 1914, O'Donnell published, anonymously, an Address to Archbishop Walsh, in which he suggested that Mrs. O'Shea was a punishment of the Hierarchy for its betrayal of Butt. The Address is entitled, *The Lost Hat*—meaning that the Dublin Archdiocese lost a Cardinal's hat because of Walsh's enthusiasm for Parnell.

(The opening paragraph is worth retrieving from obscurity:

> "Most Reverend Lord Archbishop: In the most conspicuous street in your Archdiocese the semi-Pagan inspiration of a great American sculptor has erected a Phallic Pillar as the completion and culmination of a congenial statue to the late Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell. It may not be complimentary to the Cathedral City, but it was painfully adequate to the subject commemorated."

O'Donnell explains that he is addressing the Archbishop on the subject,

> "because you are the leading survivor of the distinguished churchmen who supported Parnell's destruction of Mr. Butt's Home Rule party, and who collected from Irish congregations the golden coin which supported the expenses of Parnell's hidden life in London" [i.e., the £40,000 raised for Parnell when he was thought to be close to bankruptcy].

And, "the Dublin Archdiocese lost the Red Hat" because of it.)

The initiating cause in the dethroning of Parnell was religious in character, but it did not come from the priestcraft of Rome. It came from the anti-priestcraft of England. It came from the Nonconformist preachers who were a power in the Liberal Party and who made a great virtue of not being priests. The anti-priests of the Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists etc. had unbridled consciences. When denunciation welled up in them there was no curbing it.

Their only real point of unity amongst themselves was anti-Catholicism. Their inherited view of Catholicism was that it fostered idolatry, superstition, spiritual slavery to Mammon, and loose living. The atrocities connected with English rule

in Ireland, from the Rule of the Saints under Cromwell (who broke their power in England but gave them Ireland as compensation), to the Famine, and the post-Famine evictions, were justified by the Divine obligation imposed on England to Christianise the world. Catholic Emancipation, enacted by the pre-Reform Tories in defiance of the Nonconformist Conscience, sparked off the great Protestant Crusade in Ireland. The safety of the English Constitution, whose linch-pin was Protestant Ascendancy, could only be ensured following the admission of Catholics to Parliament by the conversion of Ireland. The Famine was seen as a helping hand to the conversion process by the Almighty. Lurid exposés were published of the sinful practices preserved by Papist religion—practices which survived in Slieve Luacra long enough for me to grow up amongst them, e.g., Stations and Well Days.

Cardinal Cullen's reconstruction of the Catholic Church after 1850 was conducted in rivalry with the Protestant Crusade and took on some of the Puritan features of the Crusade. Cullen suppressed Stations and Well Days wherever he could, and the Protestant Crusade petered out. But, as long as English Protestantism remained true to its origins—which is to say, as long as it remained as an actual theological medium of thought—it could not fail to see Papist Ireland as being prone to moral laxity. And the initial response of Papist Ireland to the O'Shea divorce case confirmed that view.

Parnell was toppled by the anti-Priests of Nonconformist Christianity—by the berserkers of what Walter Cox in the early 19th century had appropriately named "English religion". English religion did not, at least in this instance, make up special rules for Irish politicians. As Bishop O'Donnell of Raphoe said:

> "...with his eyes open he pursued a career that he knew was calculated to bring ruin on himself and on his country. He had before him during the years of his iniquity the case of Sir Charles Dilke who was ignominiously driven from public life in England owing to a charge of gross immorality unsuccessfully repelled in the Courts. And if a man who was spoken of as a future Prime Minister received such treatment from his own countrymen, what was to be expected by a leader... in a strange land, who was bound by every patriotic duty to make Home Rule reputable and attractive in England? I say that he knowingly and deliberately did what he knew to be fraught with fatal consequences to the interests of Ireland." (Quoted by Maev Sullivan, p41.)

It was, of course, contrary to natural justice to apply the rules of English religion to Irish affairs, and it was particularly unfair to let the Nonconformist Conscience loose on Ireland. But the Home Rule movement, by seeking to achieve its object through a reform of the British Constitution enacted by Westminster, submitted itself to the conglomeration of powers and passions which make up that Constitution.

The Nonconformist Conscience was one of the sacred cows of the English Constitution. That was part of the bargain of the long Glorious Revolution of 1688-1714. The gentry were to have a monopoly of state power through the mechanism of the conscienceless Established Church, but the Nonconformist Conscience was to be free in the sphere of civil society. The repeal of the Test Act, the 1832 Reform,

and the development consequent on the Reform, made the term Nonconformist increasingly meaningless. But the less the term had meaning as a dissent from established political structures, the more sacred it became.

Nonconformism had no general existence. It was the name for a number of highly particular theological sects, each of which was rigorously conformist in its own affairs. It was not the case that Nonconformist sects asserted the right of each individual to act according to impulses. There was much greater freedom for individual impulse in either the Catholic Church or the Anglican Church. What Nonconformism refused to conform to was the lax practices and self-contradictory theology of the Established Church. Each Nonconformist Church was in its own affairs the essence of conformism.

The 18th century was, in English life, the great century of nonconformism in the literal meaning of the word, because the Nonconformists were excluded from political power. With the admission of the Nonconformists to political power in 1832, the great era of English conformism begins. And it was a point of general agreement among Nonconformists that the wayward sexual impulse in humans could be, and must be, made to conform to a strict standard.

How far the post-Famine development of Catholicism in Ireland on Puritan lines—the unique Catholicism *"du type Irlandais"*, as J.J. O'Riordan of Kiskeam has put it—how far it was due to the pressure of English Puritanism on a society demoralised by Famine, and how far it resulted simply from a naive acceptance of the Catechism as a rule of life in a society whose traditional culture had finally been broken down after seven centuries of destructive English pressure, is something I have never seen discussed. But it is an obvious fact that, in the second half of the 19th century, Catholicism in Ireland was ceasing to be one thread in the variegated fabric of a traditional culture, and had begun to weave itself into a comprehensive culture. And the successful assault of the anti-Priests of English Liberalism on Parnell had the inevitable consequence of intensifying that development.

It did this in two ways.

Britain was the most powerful state in the world, and it was asserting universal standards of morality for the world. In its attempt to achieve by agreement a measure of national autonomy from this state, Ireland had to adapt itself in a considerable degree to English morality. And the destruction of Parnell by the Puritan conscience of England cannot have failed to accelerate the Puritan tendency that was already developing in Irish Catholicism.

Secondly, the Puritan assault on Parnell, and Parnell's response to it, had the effect of breaking up the political combination of the 1880s, in which the Church was content to have a place alongside other elements. If that political combination had continued, I doubt if certain events of the following generation, such as the promulgation of the *Ne Temere* decree, would have happened. The Church does not act without regard for the political forces with which it is allied, and a Parnellite Party would hardly have encouraged the Ne Temere decree. As it was, the Church found itself effectively in a political vacuum after 1891.

The order of responsibility for the destruction of the Irish Party I see as being in the first place, the Liberal Party with its imperative of the Nonconformist Conscience; then Parnell himself for his refusal to enact a short-term compromise; and then O'Brien and Dillon for their long delay in taking sides.

Healy's only responsibility is for doing what it was necessary to do if the majority was to prevail.

I once (I cannot remember where) used the phrase, *"an oblique dictatorship"*, to describe the Parnell regime of the 1880s. The obliqueness was made possible by Parnell's alien qualities, and it was a condition of that strange dictatorship which operated through democratic forms.

It is possible for different elements to function together in a dictatorship which, if brought into a direct democratic relationship with each other would be antagonistic. And that fact—rather than the conventional *"lust for power"* explanation—is very often why dictatorships are formed.

Parnellite Ireland had the best of both worlds.

But Parnellite Ireland ceased to be in December 1890, when Parnell, having asserted a right superior to the will of the majority of the Party on the grounds that he represented the will of the people, then proceeded to disregard the will of the people, as manifested in the Kilkenny by-election. He continued to disregard it, although it was confirmed by further by-elections. And, when the obliqueness went, so did the possibility of dictatorship.

Healy did what was necessary to make the will of the majority effective. And, since he had to do so without the support of the two big guns of the Party, he had to rely more on support by the clergy. He had not previously shown himself to be a Clericalist. And, in 1891, it was as a democrat that he elicited the support of the clergy—because the Priests were of the people in Ireland no less than the Methodist anti-Priests were in Wales.

Appendix On Kitty O'Shea

Kitty O'Shea was, of course, the cause of it all—or the *sine qua non* of it all. If there had not been about her something which made the alien, Parnell, yearn for domesticity, everything would have been different.

Kitty O'Shea must be the most misleading name anybody has ever had. Here is her background:

> "The Woods, from which I am descended, were for hundreds of years owners of Hareston Manor, Brixton, a small village near Plymouth... The Hareston Woods died out, but a younger branch settled at Tiverton, the head of which manufactured lace and serge, and to him was born and duly apprenticed as a lad, Matthew. He soon started a business on his own account, and eventually became a successful hop merchant, being chosen Lord Mayor of London in 1815 and 1816. He represented the City in nine successive Parliaments, and was as fearless in defending the cause of Queen Caroline... as he was in all matters aldermanic and magisterial. When Lord Mayor he

faced, practically alone, a riotous mob, whose leader was exhorting his followers to storm the Bank of England. Mr. Wood, running out into the crowd, pulled the ring-leader off his horse, and dragged him inside the Bank railings, a prisoner.

"In 1829 the Alderman was sitting in his counting-house when an agent of the Duke of Kent, calling late on Saturday afternoon, asked Matthew Wood for the loan of £10,000. The agent explained it was important for reasons of State that the expected baby (later Queen Victoria) of the Duchess of Kent, who was in Ostend, should be born in England, and that his Royal Highness the Duke could not cross over unless he received that sum of money to satisfy his more pressing creditors. Mr. Wood promised to reply on the Monday, after consulting his patrons; the agent urged, however, that the state of the Duchess's health admitted of no delay and that she ought to cross immediately, so my grandfather gave him the cheque.

"My mother... came of a race of Cornish squires...

"I was born at the Vicarage, Cressing, a village near Braintree, Essex... My father, educated at Winchester and Cambridge, visited as a lad the Field of Waterloo a few days after the 18th of June, 1818... My father took a degree early in 1820, and was immediately appointed Chaplain and Private Secretary to Queen Caroline."

That account of the family was written by Kitty O'Shea's brother, Field Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, in his memoirs, *From Midshipman To Field Marshal* (1910). Sir Evelyn's military career began in the Crimean War, and after that it progressed through a succession of conflicts which in the high noon of Imperial Britain were frankly called Small Wars—wars against inferior peoples. He took part in the indiscriminate slaughter by which the Indian Mutiny was suppressed, and then in the Ashanti War, the Kaffir Campaign, the Zulu Campaign, the Egyptian Expedition, and the Sudan Expedition.

So Catherine Wood came from the top drawer of Imperial Britain. And, when introducing herself to Gladstone in 1882, to act as intermediary between him and Parnell, she had only to say that Lord Hatherly was her uncle. Hatherly had been Gladstone's Lord Chancellor.

She married O'Shea, a dashing young Hussar officer, in 1867, and had children by him, before taking up with Parnell in 1880. O'Shea was a Home Ruler of sorts, and was elected as such for Clare in 1880, but he soon made connections with English governing circles which were more to his taste. (Though imposed on Galway by Parnell in January 1886, he did not vote for the Home Rule Bill a few months later.)

Whatever the domestic relationship was between Mr. and Mrs. O'Shea after she became Parnell's mistress, they both acted as intermediaries between him and the Government during his stay in Kilmainham Jail in 1881-2; Mrs. O'Shea with Gladstone, and Mr. O'Shea with Joseph Chamberlain, who led the other wing of the Liberal Party. What is known as the Kilmainham Treaty was finalised on the basis

of a letter from Parnell to O'Shea.

Parnell was imprisoned on the orders of the Government in 1881 in an attempt to curb the agrarian agitation in which "boycotting" was invented. But the country proved to be even less amenable to the rule of law with Parnell in prison than it had been when he was outside stirring it up.

It seems that Parnell himself had not expected this turn of events. In his letter of 13th October to Mrs. O'Shea, telling her that he had been arrested, he remarked: "Politically it is a fortunate thing for me that I have been arrested, as the movement is breaking fast, and all will be quiet in a few months, when I shall be released".

The Government response to the No Rent Manifesto was to make the Land League an illegal organisation. But the banning of the League only led to an increase in lawlessness. Gladstone's Irish Secretary (Forster), given the task of engendering respect for law by use of force, found that the quantity and quality of force at his disposal only provoked a popular determination to over-ride the law, and he asked for a substantial increase in the apparatus of coercion. Gladstone was ideologically unhappy about this, although there seemed to be no practical alternative to it from the viewpoint of British interest. That was when Parnell came to his rescue with an offer to call off the agrarian agitation and in future conduct Irish politics within parameters acceptable to Britain, in exchange for the release of himself and the other prisoners and a Bill to ease the position of tenants with rent arrears.

That was the Kilmainham Treaty. And Parnell abided by it for as long as it was within his power to break it. He refused to associate himself with the Plan of Campaign, launched by Harrington, O'Brien and Dillon in 1886, because it went beyond the parameters of his 1882 understanding with Gladstone. In December 1890 he broke the Kilmainham Treaty in an attempt to regain the power which he had lost, but the damage he did in breaking it was not to the British interest.

He made the Kilmainham Treaty in April 1882 for private reasons, without consulting his colleagues. And he broke it in December 1890, again without consulting his colleagues.

His reasons for signing it were private: an urge to be with Mrs. O'Shea, and concern about the lawlessness of the country. The latter is properly described as private because it did not arise from a position which he had ever put to his Party.

Davitt, who knew what real imprisonment was, commented as follows on Parnell's imprisonment:

> "He was virtually under no prison rules except a bar against his walking out of Kilmainham. No indignity beyond detention was offered to him, and he wanted for no luxury which funds or friends could supply. He had also the association of intimates and colleagues, and could not, in addition, deny himself the keen satisfaction derived from seeing the complete failure of his jailers to rule the country and subdue the people after locking him up. But nature and temperament did not intend Mr. Parnell ever to be a prisoner. Restraint to him was a torture and an insult. His disposition rebelled against

it, and his inordinate pride caused him to feel heavily the outrage he was subjected to by a man whom he considered both an unscrupulous assailant and a social inferior. But it is now manifest that there were two other influences of even a more stimulating character at work to induce him to seek a release from prison. One of these influences can be inferred from the discovery made in Paris in February, 1881, by his colleagues on opening his letter [i.e. Mrs. O'Shea]. The other was probably the determining factor in causing him to open up negotiations with Mr. Gladstone. It was this: Extreme men, not necessarily belonging to the Fenian body, had become, in a sense, masters of the situation outside by the imprisonment of all the moral force local leaders. They struck at the law which had a doubly obnoxious character to them in being alien and coercive... The general state of the country under these circumstances seems to have greatly alarmed him...

"It was a dramatic coincidence that both the prisoner and his jailer were alike alarmed at a state of things which ought to have appealed to Parnell to concern himself only with scientific studies in the tranquil repose of Kilmainham, and to allow Ireland's enemies to reap the full reward of the brutal coercive and eviction policy they had so long pursued.

"It was a vital turning-point in Mr. Parnell's career, and he unfortunately turned in the wrong direction. He had hitherto been in everything but name a revolutionary reformer and had won many triumphs at the head of the most powerful organisation any Irish leader had at his back for a century. He now resolved to surrender the Land League, and to enter the new stage of his political fortunes as an opportunist statesman" (*The Fall Of Feudalism*, p348).

Davitt's view of the Kilmainham agreement is confirmed by Mrs. O'Shea in her book, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, published in 1914. I quote from the one-volume edition published in London in 1921:

"I had reason to know, from various sources of information kept open by me on Parnell's behalf during his imprisonment, that the Government would liberate him with considerable relief given any surety of conciliatory policy on his part. Parnell at liberty was a disturbing force, and the culminating embarrassment of English government in Ireland, but Parnell in prison had become a concentrated embarrassment in that there was no governmental possibility of dealing with the reactionary spirit he had let loose in Ireland—a spirit that was at least better controllable as a weapon in Parnell's hand than as the scattered and absolutely irresponsible fulminations, unreasoning and motiveless, of lawless desperadoes...

"I had never before ventured to influence Parnell in any way politically; but now I greatly dreaded for him this latter policy of the extremists and the perpetual strain of watchfulness and control it engendered—with the Coercion Laws such a policy must, in the long run, inevitably produce, unless, indeed, England was prepared to yield to force; an unthinkable proposition.

"So now I threw the whole of my influence on the side of the treaty of

conciliation and urged upon him the greater good for Ireland likely to accrue in the making with him of immediate peace. I was very anxious that he should 'reign' by constitutional means, and had every hope of establishing such amicable communications between him and Government as would lead to that end. But he had this great force now to reckon with—the force of centuries of cruelty, wrong and oppression that had bred an irresponsibility and callous disregard of suffering, nay, rather a vindicative madness and lust of destruction in Ireland. In seeking for a weapon to use for the betterment of England's government of Ireland Parnell had discovered this underlying force of hate, and, using the influence of his personality, he strove to direct it into the service of the Ireland that he loved. But he afterwards stood appalled at the intensity of the passion of hate he had loosed, and no one but he—and I with him—knew the awful strength of that force of destruction that was only held in subservience by the sheer dominance of his will. He replied to my pleadings—'Yes, I hold them now with my back to the wall, but if I turn to the Government I turn my back to them—and then—?

"But my fear for him won his decision for peace, and he wrote and signed the 'letter' that Willie wanted to take to the Government."

And so Parnell made his Treaty with Gladstone. The Land League was replaced by the National League (an organisation of the Party). The land question was put on the back burner. And the political manoeuvring began which led to the introduction of the First Home Rule Bill by Gladstone in 1886.

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The following passage on the Kilmainham Treaty is from J.L. Hammond's *Gladstone And The Irish Nation* (1938):

"Gladstone always denounced the use of the word 'Treaty' as applied to the arrangements under which Parnell left Kilmainham jail. His critics regarded his fierce protestations as merely another instance of his enjoyment of confusing and darkening dialectic; his dislike of calling anything by its naked name; his incorrigible casuistry. Yet his case for his own view of the transaction, put more concisely than was his habit, in the *Nineteenth Century* a few years later, was unanswerable. He pointed out that the Act under which Parnell was in prison enabled the Government to lock up a man 'on reasonable suspicion' of inciting to violence and disturbing the maintenance of law and order.

"'What the Executive Government had to do was simply to ascertain, or rather to receive through the unsolicited office of a friend, what was the state of Mr. Parnell's mind on the subject which had led to his imprisonment. A physician does not negotiate with his patient but examines him. The simple fact of scrutiny into the present did not of itself, according to the view of the Ministry, determine the future.'

"But there is good reason for Gladstone's vehemence in resisting the use of the term 'Treaty'. He was one of the two men in the Cabinet who expected a

good deal from Parnell's co-operation in Ireland and he knew that once Parnell could be represented as a renegade his power to co-operate would be gone" (p269).

During the debate in Committee Room 15, it was decided to consult Gladstone on the points raised by Parnell regarding his intentions for Home Rule. "'Gentlemen', said Parnell, 'it is for you to act on this matter. You are dealing with a man who is an unrivalled sophist. You are dealing with a man to whom it is impossible to give a direct answer to a plain and simple question." (B. O'Brien, Ch. XXIII.)

But what is a sophist? And what, in the highly volatile condition of England in the 1890s, is a plain and simple question? I made the acquaintance of the Sophists when I read Plato's dialogues in Gneeves in the mid-fifties. I have never since read those dialogues, and my reading of them forty years ago has left me with a strong dislike of Socrates, and therefore without any feeling of hostility towards the Sophists. About thirty years ago I came across a statement by Gladstone, that "England has her constancy no less than Rome". (It was actually said in Latin, but that is how somebody translated it for me.) I was quite impressed by that for a while—and I suppose it made Gladstone a modern Socrates-cum-Aristotle. But then I figured out that it was not true. The only English constancy is the constancy of state power maintained over three centuries, in shifting circumstances, without inner consistency, and at great cost to the rest of the world, excepting the United States and a couple of white colonies. So if England is not Socratic, I suppose it must be Sophistical.

(The lack of constancy in Gladstone's own political career is total. He began as a theocrat and a Tory, and held senior positions in Tory Governments. He shifted by degrees to the extreme opposite position. And in 1890 he refused to admit that Parnell's Divorce Court episode had any necessary political implication, although in 1857 he had been absolutely opposed to the establishment of the Divorce Court.)

Anybody attempting to achieve anything by constitutional means within the sphere of British state power must in some degree play the political game by English rules, but if the game is not to be lost, it must never be forgotten that, in the final analysis, England doesn't recognise any rules, only power. And, when one sees how Redmondism lost itself because of its inadequate understanding of the British Constitution, one can only admire the sheer virtuosity with which Provisional Sinn Fein is playing the game by the rules of the real English Constitution. Constitutionalist England is intensely irritated by having its sophistry played back at it so skillfully by a force which estimates the game at its real value.

The pity of it is that Parnell did not have it in him to play the game by the rules of sophistry for a while after the divorce trial.

Appendix On Honour

Forty years later Henry Harrison published a book called, *Parnell Vindicated: The Lifting Of The Veil.* Harrison was in 1890 a young gentleman fresh down (or is it up?) from Oxford. He had been offered a Liberal candidacy for the coming General Election, but preferred to stand as a Nationalist in a Tipperary by-election in 1890, and he left Balliol College without taking his degree in order to do so. He says that he first set eyes on Parnell when they were re-electing him as Chairman a couple of days after the divorce action. He was an ardent Parnellite for ever after.

The book has an epigraph:

"I would rather appear to be dishonourable than be dishonourable". Parnell in Committee Room No. 15.

He sets out to demonstrate that Parnell acted entirely honourably in his personal relations with Captain and Mrs. O'Shea. And he accepts Parnell's view that there was a Chinese Wall between public and private life:

"The dividing line between public career and private life was strictly drawn by Parnell himself. In this he was well within his rights, and the general usage of his day completely justified him. But history requires broader effects and the breaking down of minor obstacles to a comprehensive vision" (p15).

It may well be that Parnell's domestic conduct was entirely honourable, even though he allowed it to appear entirely dishonourable. (The truth of domestic situations can never be known to anybody who is not a participant, and it often appears not to be knowable by the participants.) But, if one holds that there is a Chinese Wall between private and public, and yet engages in an extensive public discussion of a private situation, that is inconsistent. The infinite subtleties of private relationships are squashed into a form suitable for the application of public standards to them, and what is then judged is not what existed, but what is presented. It is not merely the case that what was private ceases to be private when made the subject of a public presentation, but that it becomes something else in the transference from the sphere of private existence to the sphere of public appearance: it is made crude so that the crudity of public judgment according to a general standard can be applied to it.

Furthermore, the very idea of private honour is problematical. Honour belongs essentially to the realm of appearances. Everybody must know this from personal experience or observation. An honourable person is a person who was not caught out—that is not the whole of it, but it is a very great part of it. Somebody—it might be Goethe—said that only gods and beasts have a sense of integrity that is beyond the reach of appearances. Appearance is essential to social existence, and honour is a form of social appearance. Its meaning is diluted in private application. It is only slightly diluted when somebody is held to be honourable although made to seem dishonourable by knavery. Numerous stories have been written about honour besmirched by the knavery of a third party, but regained by valiant effort or a mere stroke of good fortune. But, when the person who is being dishonoured facilitates the knave who is dishonouring him and is content to be presented in a false public appearance, then dilution is carried to the point of washout.

Davitt quite rightly takes "the facts disclosed in evidence" to be the facts which related to public affairs. What in law is a fact may in private life be a lie. (Some years ago, I had to make my own defence in the High Court in Belfast against a libel

action brought against me by Mary McAleese, who is contending for the Irish Presidency as I write, and the insight it gave me into the British legal process more than confirmed my opinion of these things.)

But, when facts are established in Court by being asserted without dispute, those are the facts which concern public affairs. It might never have happened that Parnell escaped out of the bedroom window as Captain O'Shea was entering the front door. It might be that the Captain was never deceived; that he had come to a parting of the ways with his wife and knew all along that she was sleeping with Parnell. It might not be that he had fathered two children with her during the Parnell years, and that those children were Parnell's. And it might be that all three conspired to keep up appearances which misrepresented reality. But none of that matters because Captain O'Shea told the court a story of deceptive adultery by his wife with Parnell during the years when he himself had relations with her that might have led to the fathering of two children with her, and neither his wife nor Parnell contradicted that story.

Even if the Judge and jury had all known that what was said in the witness box was a tissue of lies, those lies would have had to be taken by them for the fabric of truth, because the English common law is the ultimate development of Jesuitry. The only reality it knows is the established appearance, and it does not matter a straw that this appearance may be a pretence.

An English Court is not concerned with what may be behind the presented appearance. The presented appearance is its truth, and on the whole English society has lived by that rule. That is why there was a stink of treason when British Government Ministers, including Prime Minister Major, said that Gerry Adams is a member of the Army Council of the IRA. Adams was subjected to a trial at law for membership of the IRA and was found Not Guilty. Maintenance of the rule of law requires that affairs of state be conducted on the basis of that legal fact. The Prime Minister debased the rule of law when he made public statements that went behind the legal fact to what he took to be the private truth of the matter. Sauce for the goose must also be sauce for the gander. If it was right and necessary to act publicly on the legal facts established about Parnell in the O'Shea divorce action, even though most of those concerned thought they knew that the private truth was very different, then it is right and necessary to act in the same manner with regard to everybody else.

Part Two

The Land Act

The United Irish League

In 1895 ten years of Unionist government began. Home Rule was off the agenda. The Irish Party existed in three distinct factions: the majority, led by John Dillon, were called the *National Federation*; the Parnell cultists, led by John Redmond, were called *National League*; and Tim Healy's *People's Rights' Association.*

It was out of the question that the Unionist Government, with a secure majority, should have anything to do with Home Rule. And, on Gladstone's retirement, the Liberal Party began to undergo a sea change. His successor, Lord Roseberry, was not a Home Ruler. And Roseberry set in motion the process of change within Liberalism that led to the rise to dominance of Liberal Imperialism during the next generation.

In these circumstances a party whose only policy was Home Rule, and which was committed to constitutional action, could do nothing but wait.

Another event that happened in 1895 was that William O'Brien retired from politics and went to live in a cottage in Co. Mayo, where he completed the novel that he began in Galway Jail in 1891.

O'Brien had continued to support Dillon as the best leader of the Party after Parnell, but he had little taste for the factional conflicts between the fragments of Parnell's Party, and it was not in his nature to wait passively on events. (Dillon replaced McCarthy as leader in 1896.)

The occasion of his retirement from Parliament was a bill for legal costs incurred during the Plan of Campaign:

> "An enormous claim was brought against me personally for law costs, which were only incurred as part of the national resistance against the Coercionist régime, and the payment of which it was always the honourable understanding on all sides was a first charge on the Paris Funds—a charge in due time recognised and satisfied" (Olive branch, 076).

But "due time" lay in the future. There was little space for honour in the factional atmosphere of 1895. O'Brien was held to owe £8,000. The object was to disqualify him for Parliament by bankrupting him. So he gave up his seat in Parliament and retired with his wife—the "Russian Jewess" of a Redmondite slogan of later times—to a cottage near Croagh Patrick, where they settled down to a period of domesticity, and she had her first experience of housekeeping.

Sophie O'Brien made a discovery which to a Continental was astonishing:

> "It is a characteristic of the Irish race to look on food as a very second-rate

matter. A man is away for the day, on his return you ask him if he has lunched or dined, and he will require a moment's thought before he remembers that really he has eaten nothing for the day, and is feeling hungry. If you did not question him he might forget all about it... When I hear people denounce the drunkenness of Irishmen, I think within myself that their vice is not so much that they drink too much, but that they do not think enough about food. It will take time and patience to teach Irish people the necessity of eating regularly" (*Under Croagh Patrick*, p17).

O'Brien himself also made a discovery under Croagh Patrick:

"The peculiar conditions of the western problem were then as little known over three-fourths of Ireland, or even by five-sixths of the Irish Party, as the geography of mid-Africa... The peculiar western meaning of the shibboleth 'The Land for the People' had for a moment blazed forth at the outset of the Land League movement; but, after the brief career of that organisation, the county of Mayo had subsided for many years into a condition of listlessness for which the political struggle for a Parliament in Dublin had a distant and somewhat ghastly interest" (Olive Branch, p86).

The Land League had originated in Mayo, had spread rapidly around the country, had been suppressed in 1881, and, following the Kilmainham Treaty, had been replaced by the National League, which was a Home Rule organisation.

There were three broad divisions in Irish agrarian life: the Congested Districts area in the West; the Ranching area in the Midlands; and the tenant-farming area proper.

O'Brien immersed himself in the problems of the Congested Districts area, and became involved in the activities of the Congested Districts Board, which had been set up by a Tory Government in 1891—the same Tory Government of Bloody Balfour which imprisoned O'Brien under a Coercion Act in 1891.

Out of O'Brien's activities in Mayo there arose the organisation called the *United Irish League*. It spread rapidly through Connacht and into Munster and the grazing areas of the Midlands, devising different agitational techniques for the differing forms of land system.

Many of the political leaders disapproved of the UIL because it was primarily an agrarian movement. But, since there was nothing happening on the Home Rule front, their disapproval was ineffectual.

The UIL was formally launched at Westport in January 1898. It contested elections under the new Local Government system, and it was sharply opposed to Redmond's policy of returning landlords in the interest of developing national unity. O'Brien's view was that the time for being generous towards the landlords was when landlordism was being abolished.

Davitt supported the new movement, but Dillon, who was distrustful of social reform in this period because he thought it would tend to undermine the national movement, kept as much distance from O'Brien's new agrarian agitation as was compatible with their political alliance. And he wanted a united Party to be re-

established through political negotiation between the factions, while O'Brien thought it would only come about as a result of external pressure.

"For the new League there would be no room for balancings or for doubt. It was a question whether the new system of local government was to be made a powerful engine both for Home Rule and the abolition of landlordism, or a fatal barrier to the accomplishment of either the one or the other. Wherever the organisation of the United Irish League was spread, we chose our own candidates from the sound, rough-hewn, local democratic quarries and made open war upon every attempt to open the citadels of local government to impenitent anti-Nationalists or landlords who would be landlords still. Mr. Davitt and myself carried the fiery cross wherever the coalition for a denationalization of County and District Councils showed its head, from Leitrim in the west to Cork in the south...

"The candidates of the United Irish League headed the polls in twenty-six out of the twenty-eight divisions of Mayo, and in all the vast extent of the county of Cork not a single County Councillor who was not a nationalist was returned" (Olive Branch, p110-11).

Most of the MPs, said O'Brien, were "good, easy men, who only wanted their minds made up for them... The country made up their minds for them with a vengeance" (p121).

And so the Party was reunified in June 1900, when Redmond found he could no longer hold out against the external pressure of the League. And Dillon, after initial opposition, agreed to O'Brien's idea of electing Redmond, as a Parnellite, to the Chair—"that is to say, one of the minority of 9, who for ten years had resisted every overture to common action" (O'Brien, p122).

And then: "The three sectional organisations—the National Federation, the National League, and the People's Rights' Association never so much as met to pronounce their formal dissolution. They literally 'died and made no sign'" (p125). And the UIL became the Party organisation.

O'Brien was capable of intense originating activity over long periods, which gave way to prolonged nervous exhaustion when the constructive work was accomplished. And he had a constitutional indisposition for routine leadership. He forced the Party to re-unite. He gave the leadership to the chief of the Parnellite faction, who had achieved nothing in the ten years since the Split, for no better reason that I can see than the sentimental one that he was a Parnellite. And he left his own creation, the UIL, to be the Party organisation under the guidance of Redmond and Dillon.

Having re-united the Party, O'Brien then got on with the project of abolishing landlordism so as to open the way for an all-embracing national development. But when, within a couple of years, the opportunity to abolish landlordism was achieved, he found that the Party was the main obstacle to it.

George Wyndham, the Irish Secretary, brought in an Irish Land Bill in 1902. O'Brien decided that the Bill was inadequate to the situation and the opportunity,

and that its implementation should be prevented in the certainty that a more radical Bill would then be produced. But the minds of the Party leaders were on higher things and they did not focus very well on the details of "sordid agrarianism":

> "The Irish Party, in all the freshness of its unity, weighed as little in determining the fate of the Purchase Bill of 1902 as it had done in the case of the Land Bill of 1896, while their inward wars were raging. Mr. Redmond, fettered by his own declaration of five years before that 'there was no longer an Irish Land Question', contented himself with majestic but inconclusive generalities. Mr. Dillon, when we met, quite agreed that the Bill was a negation of our entire programme..., but he pleaded that he was in a position of greater freedom and less responsibility, and like Cicero on an historic occasion, 'spoke Greek'. Mr. Davitt, who was in the heat of subsequent controversy betrayed into saying that 'the milk was spilt when the Bill of 1902 was rejected', confessed to me, with a *naivete* that disarms reproof, that he had never even read the Bill of 1902 until he was in search of arguments against the Bill of 1903. The *Freeman* was so little alive to the fact that all the country's hopes for many years to come were in danger of being sold for a mess of pottage of the most beggarly ingredients that its protest was confined to two half-hearted deprecations of the Bill as a 'Landlord's Relief Bill', which were in the language of lawyers, 'common form'...
>
> "The situation was saved in 1902, as in 1896, by calling the robust sense of the country into council."

O'Brien, the creator of the UIL, still had sufficient influence with the League (which had not yet been reduced to a mere apparatus of the Parliamentary Party), to be able to go behind the backs of the leaders and, against their opposition, launch the last great land agitation. And when law enforcement failed to curb the agitation, the situation was ripe for the Land Bill of 1903, which provided for the abolition of landlordism.

The opposition of the Party leaders to the 1903 Land Act was much more thorough than their support for the 1902 Land Bill, and their stubborn obstruction of the process of land purchase under the Act is at the root of the profound rupture in the re-united Party which gave rise to the *Cork Free Press* and the *All-For-Ireland League* a few years later.

Until the arrival of the Unionist Government—one might even say the Unionist regime—of 1895, social reform was on the whole unproblematical for Irish nationalists—because until then there had never been a consistently reforming Irish administration.

Unionism: 1895-1905

But the Unionist regime was both utterly opposed to Home Rule and seriously committed to reform and it made no secret of its hope that Ireland would be integrated with Britain through social and political reform enacted by a British Government to which the Home Rule Party was hostile. That was the strategy of "Killing Home Rule with kindness", and there were many in the Home Rule Party who thought that substantial reform actually would undermine Nationalism.

The Unionist Party that took office in 1895 had very little to do with Ulster Unionism. It was formed through an alliance between the Tory Party and the social reform wing of the Liberal Party, led by *Joseph Chamberlain*, which had split from the Liberal Party in 1886. The formal occasion of that split was Gladstone's introduction of the Home Rule Bill. But the Chamberlain wing of Liberalism was already in serious dispute with the main body of the Liberal Party before 1886 on grounds which had nothing to do with Home Rule.

Classical Liberalism—the Liberalism of Cobden and Bright, to which Gladstone was a convert—was addicted to *laissez faire* capitalism—Capitalism of unrestricted market forces. Bright and Gladstone were ideologues and politicians of Capitalism, but Chamberlain was an actual manufacturing capitalist, who had built up a successful enterprise in the manufacturing capitalist heartland of Birmingham. And Chamberlain was of the opinion that unrestricted free enterprise capitalism was socially self-destructive, because in its development it turned the majority of the population into an entirely propertyless proletariat. This proletariat, with no economic security, no stake in the country, had no good reason for tolerating, as a democracy, a system of economy which did this to them. He proposed therefore that capitalism, for its own survival, should embed itself in what would nowadays be called a welfare state.

The Liberal leadership rejected this proposal as heresy. But Chamberlain put many of his ideas into effect when he gained control of the local government of Birmingham. He developed Municipal Socialism as a means of making Capitalism tolerable to the people, and he did not flinch from the word "Socialism". And, on the strength of what he achieved at Birmingham, he built up a substantial body of support in the Liberal Party nationally. The point of rupture between the Chamberlain and Gladstone positions was almost reached in 1885. It was warded off only by the device of allowing the Chamberlain group to contest the 1885 election with their own programme, the "unauthorised programme", as it was called.

The rupture happened in 1886. The formal issue was the Home Rule Bill. But it was not a case of mere hostility to Home Rule. (Chamberlain had been the senior British politician closest to Parnell.) It was a case of Gladstone being seen as taking up Irish Home Rule in order to ward off social reform.

The Chamberlain group voted with the Tories against the Home Rule Bill, which was defeated in the Commons. For the next six years the Tory Party governed with the support of the Chamberlain group, who were known as Liberal Unionists. Then in 1894 the Tories and Liberal Unionists combined to form the Unionist Party on the basis of Tory agreement with Chamberlain's social reform programme. (I have gone into this development in greater detail in a pamphlet entitled, *Facsimile Politics*, which is a refutation of Professor Brendan O'Leary's facile and superficial notion of British party politics.)

Chamberlain may be seen as the villain of the piece in the story of the fall of Parnell, since Captain O'Shea was his agent. But the extensive reform enacted in the fifteen years after Parnell was made possible by Chamberlain's alliance with the Salisbury/Balfour Tories. His "unauthorised programme" of 1885 was the first projection of the welfare state in mainstream British politics. It included Old Age Pensions, Industrial Injury compensation, and Labour Exchanges. And it also included an idea which found little application in Britain ("three acres and a cow"), but was realised in Ireland in the form of D.D. Sheehan's labourers' cottages with an acre of land attached, which, at a pinch, enabled the worker to raise a family in self-sufficiency.

During the ten years of purposeful, reforming Unionist government of Ireland, the Irish Party, whether disunited or re-united, was on the sidelines. William O'Brien did not exaggerate when he wrote:

> "In the social and legislative revolutions which have changed the face of Ireland in our time, as profoundly as the French Revolution transformed the *ancien regime*, 'The Party' did not figure at all. These revolutions were in the main the work of unrecorded village heroes in Ireland, their lessons being driven home in the House of Commons by a few individuals of Parliamentary genius, who succeeded precisely by reason of their revolt against 'The Party'. (*"The Party": Who they Are And What They Have Done,* 1917.)

The revolutions were the establishment of a system of representative local government on a broad franchise in 1898, and the transformation of landownership in 1903. The former destroyed the political power of the landlords, and the latter put paid to the landlords themselves.

It is now necessary to pay some detailed attention to the "sordid agrarianism", despised by Barry O'Brien and the pure and simple Fenians. Barry O'Brien quoted the puzzlement of a Fenian pure and simple, who could not figure out the English mentality which was shocked by adultery, but could take the mayhem of agrarian agitation in its stride. But that is how it was. The English mentality was a combination of theology and political economy.

Political economy gave the English state the moral force to preside with a good conscience over the starving to death of a couple of million Irish in the Famine, and the shipping out like cattle of another million. The Famine was an event in political economy rather than an event in natural history.

But then, after the Famine, the logic of political economy gave the survivors an argument against landlordism in its Irish forms, which operated powerfully on English opinion.

Gavan Duffy had set out immediately after the Famine to launch a movement on that logic, with his League Of North And South—a tenant-right movement in which Ulster Protestants collaborated with Catholics. Almost half a century later, William O'Brien brought about a more powerful reproduction of the League of North and South.

The Land And The Law

Agrarian Ireland in 1900 consisted of about half a million tenant farm holdings which were owned by landlords, but over which the landlords had lost most of their governing control, and about 70,000 owned by farmers who had bought their farms under the *Land Purchase Acts*.

Land purchase was notionally provided for by the *"Bright Clauses"*, which were added to Gladstone's *Landlord and Tenant Act* of 1870. Two-thirds of the purchase-price might be advanced by the Board of Works, at 5% interest, to be repaid on a 35 year annuity basis, with the sale being conducted through the Landed Estates Court. Very little land purchase was done on these terms.

The 1870 Act was accurately titled a Landlord And Tenant Act. Gladstone's *Land Act* of 1881 was similar in kind, though it improved the status of tenants very greatly. It legislated for the *"three Fs"* (fair rent, free sale, and fixity of tenure), and set up the Land Commission to administer them.

A Land Bill which accompanied Gladstone's 1886 *Home Rule Bill* included compulsory purchase provisions of an unusual kind. Tenants were not to be given the right to buy under it, but any landlords who wanted to pack up and leave the country were to be given the right to sell and to compel their tenants to buy. (A class of English landlords had been put in place in Ireland after the Williamite conquest 200 years earlier, with the task of holding it for England. It was not thought reasonable at Westminster that this class—which retained corporate continuity throughout the generations—should be expected to live under an administration conducted by natives, even though that administration would not hold sovereign power. The tenants were therefore to be compelled to give their landlords a going-away present.)

Land purchase was launched in earnest by the Tory Government of 1885. All the great Land Purchase Acts were introduced by Tory Governments, and all, except the 1903 Act, were opposed by the Liberals and the Irish Party.

The main Land Purchase Acts were the *Ashbourne Act* of 1885, the *Balfour Acts* of 1891 and 1896 and the *Wyndham Act* of 1903.

Under the Ashbourne Act, the Land Commission was authorised to finance businesslike deals made by landlords and tenants. The tenants repaid the money advanced at the rate of 4% over 49 years. Parliament voted £5 million for the scheme in the first instance. When this was used up, it voted another £5 million in 1887. A further £30 million was voted in 1891, but the legislation was altered.

> "The Act of 1891 was, in effect, if not in intention, a discouragement of land purchase in Ireland. The Ashbourne Act had begun to take root in the country—landlords and tenants were gradually becoming familiar with it. No money had been lost to the State, and the tenant purchasers had, with marvellous punctuality, paid their annual instalments. Why, then, was the policy of 1885 reversed in 1891? The current rumour at the time was that some large landowners in Ireland had persuaded themselves that if land purchase on the lines of the Ashbourne Act were allowed to continue there would soon be

a rush of tenants anxious to purchase their holdings, and that this rush might cause trouble and even danger to those landlords who did not wish to sell" (*The Irish Land Act Of 1903 Explained*, by J.G. Fottrell and F. Fottrell, Solicitors, Dublin 1903, p4).

The 4% annuity repayment on the money advanced was usually substantially lower than the rent. Hence the anticipated rush to purchase:

"Anyway, it was decreed that land purchase should be made less attractive. The simple system of repayment provided by the Ashbourne Act was repealed, and there was substituted for it by the Act of 1891 a system of almost fantastic complexity. When in treaty for the purchase of his holding, the first question which a tenant always asked was how much he should have to pay each year to the Land Commission on the 'completion of purchase'. This was the question which the Act of 1891 made it impossible to answer. All you could tell the tenant was that if he would first sign an agreement to purchase, and if then the agreement were submitted to the Land Commission, and if then a Land Commissioner could make up his mind so as to decide how for certain mysterious terms, such as 'purchaser's insurance money', 'county percentage', 'annual value' etc. contained in the Act affected the particular purchase in question, then the tenant should be told how much he should annually pay, unless in the meantime the decision of the Commissioner had been appealed against. The outlook was not very attractive. The tenants held aloof... The applications under the Act of 1891 were at the rate of a little over half a million sterling per annum. Those under the Ashbourne Act had not been much under two and a half million sterling per annum" (ibid, p5-6).

Another change was that the landlord was paid in cash under the Ashbourne Act, but was paid in Government Stock under the 1891 Act. This practice was continued by the 1896 Act, and the landlord's willingness to sell fluctuated with the price of the Stock on the market.

The 1896 Act restored the simplicity of the Ashbourne Act for the tenant. He could do his deal with the landlord and be sure of the maximum annuity it would entail. Applications to purchase instantly increased from half a million pounds in 1895-6 to one and three-quarter millions in 1896-7, and almost two million in 1897-8. Then they began to decrease, and were down to one million in 1901-2.

The reason for the decrease was a fall in the price of Government Stock. This stood at 91 in 1891. It had risen to 110 in 1896, which was 10% above its face value. (The landlord who got £10,000 in Stock for farm sales could sell it for £11,000.)

The Stock began to fall in 1899, and was down to 91 in 1901. This meant that a landlord who got £10,000 in Stock was only getting £9,100 in real money. hence the decrease in applications to purchase in 1900-1902. (Applications could only be made after a deal had been done between landlord and tenant.)

A landlord might decline to sell because he was doing well enough as a landlord, or because he was doing so badly that he could not afford to sell. Most

estates were *"encumbered"*, or mortgaged, and in many instances most of the purchase money did not go to the landlord.

Wyndham referred to an extreme case when introducing the 1903 Bill:

"Between the person whom we call the landlord and the occupier of the soil you have one or two intervening. We want to get at the occupier of the soil to enable him to purchase an economic holding... Well, it is difficult in the worst parts of Ireland. Perhaps I ought not to dwell on the worst parts of Ireland; but in the worst parts of Ireland there is a state of affairs which no hon. Member who has not been there could conceive for a moment to be possible. Last autumn I was in the uttermost parts of the West. The whole countryside had been granted by a charter of King Charles I to some great family which had died out, and it had passed, I suppose, during the prosperous years of the last century to some shopkeeper who had made money. But the present landlord is in the workhouse, maintained there for eleven months of the year by the rates paid by his tenants. He was a bankrupt, and the tenants were living in conditions which you would not find amongst the Kaffirs of South Africa... That estate has been in the Bankruptcy Court for thirty years; we hold that it ought to come out of the Bankruptcy. We ought to begin to build up the agrarian situation in Ireland from the bottom. Some system of village communities seems in the West of Ireland to have decayed, and at some stage in this decay to have become fossilized. So if it were not a contradiction in terms, you might say it was at once rotten and rigid. And these are the two classes whom we have doomed to perpetual litigation" (*Hansard*, March 25th, 1903).

The 1896 Act provided for a variation on the annuity repayments which needs to be explained since it was demagogically invoked by Nationalist leaders in their efforts to prevent large-scale land purchase from actually occurring under the 1903 Act. The tenant might pay his 4% per annum for a maximum of 49 years, as under the Ashbourne Act. Or he could have "decennial reductions". Fottrell & Fottrell explained the decennial reductions in straightforward financial terms:

"Of this £4 per cent., part—i.e. £2 15s per cent.—represents interest, and the balance £1 5s per cent., represents the sinking fund. At the end of the first decade these instalments will be reduced by reason of a portion of the principal—i.e., the purchase money—having been paid off by the sinking fund, and for the next ten years the instalments of £4 per cent. will be calculated only on the balance of the principal remaining unpaid at the end of the first decade. Similarly, at the end of the second and third decades the instalments will be still further reduced... From the end of the third decade the instalments will remain unchanged until all the principal shall have been repaid. How long a term this repayment will occupy depends on the rate at which the Treasury may from time to time be able to re-invest the sinking fund, but it seems probable that the term will not be less than seventy years. If instead of availing himself of the scheme of decennial reduction..., the 'tenant purchaser' prefers

to continue paying uniform instalments of £4 per cent.—the Act of 1896 enables him to do so—and in this case his instalments would probably cease in even a shorter period than the forty-nine years fixed by the Ashbourne Act" (p8).

The 1903 Act did not include this provision for decennial reduction, and John Dillon worked hard to convince the tenants that they were therefore being cheated out of a ten yearly gift from the Gods which was their due. He had some success with the more backward tenantry, who probably thought that the decennial reductions in the repayment of the purchase money (which were a strictly economic arrangement) were of a kind with the fifteen-yearly reductions of judicial rents, which were not economic.

The earlier Purchase Acts were intended to operate gradually over a long period, and they envisaged no general abolition of landlordism. The 1903 Act was intended to achieve a rapid and general abolition of landlordism. It went for simplicity, and therefore did not include complicated variants like the decennial reductions.

Dual Ownership

The *Landlord & Tenant Act, 1870*, legalised Ulster tenant right, or Ulster Custom. The *Land Act of 1881* gave the tenant permanent security of tenure, gave him the right to sell his interest in his holding, and entitled him to appeal for a judicial reduction of his rent every fifteen years.

Under the 1881 Act, the landlords remained the owners of landed property, but lost control of it. The tenants were made permanent occupiers provided that they paid rents which became increasingly modest. The rent ceased to be an economic bargain between the tenant farmer and his landlord. It was set by a Land Court acting under political pressure from the tenantry.

In 1900 there were three descriptions of rents: First Term rents, Second Term rents, and Non-judicial rents. First Term rents were rents set in the first term of the functioning of the Land Court, which began in 1881. Second Term rents were rents which had been fixed for a second time (after the expiry of fifteen years) by the Land Court. The Second Term began in 1896.

The judicial fixing of rent meant, in practice, a reduction in rent. Rents were reduced on average by about 20% in the first term and by a further 20% in the second term.

All rents were not judicially fixed by a general decree. Each case had to be appealed separately to the Court, and the process of rent-fixing was very spread out. By 1903 only a minority of judicial rents were in the second term. The 1903 Act, therefore, when setting guidelines, specified different numbers of years' purchase for First and Second Term rents, the latter naturally being higher. And this was seized upon for purposes of mystification by the Nationalist opponents of Land Purchase. They took the maximum number of years' purchase under the Second Term rents mentioned in the Act, and tried to make the tenant farmers believe that every purchaser would have to pay that number of years' purchase.

The 1881 Act did not establish a functional agrarian system.

The Liberal Anglo-Irish historian, W.H. Lecky, complained in 1899 that

> "the landlord has ceased to be an owner. He has become merely a rent-charger... the landlord is nothing more than an partner, or, as it is now the fashion to say, 'a sleeping partner', in a joint possession, whose interests in every question of dispute should be systematically subordinated to those of the other partner... The Legislature has deprived the landlord of the plainest and most inseparable rights of ownership..., the power of making contracts; offering his farms at the market price; selecting his tenants; prescribing the period and the time for which he will let his land. A court is established with an absolute power of deciding the amount of rent which the tenant is to pay, and the landlord has no option of refusing, or seeking another tenant... The Act of 1881 appears to me one of the most... extreme violations of the rights of property in the whole history of English legislation... It has been described by one of the best continental writers upon government (Lavelaye) as an attack upon the principle of property more radical than any measure of the French Revolution, or even the Reign of Terror" (W.H. Lecky, *Democracy And Liberty*, 1899, pp187-192).

That is true, except the last bit. The Act of 1881 was disintegrative of established agrarian property relations. But the abolition of property relations is not a social possibility. Property relations can be changed, but they cannot be abolished. Gladstone's Act precipitated agrarian chaos. The Tories took the agrarian revolution to a constructive conclusion, abolishing one form of property and establishing another.

Balfour

Arthur James Balfour, who was Prime Minister in 1903, probably had greater practical knowledge of Ireland than anybody else in the two islands: though he was *prima facie* one of the politicians who might be thought least likely to have such knowledge.

Balfour was a very limp and very aesthetic English aristocrat with Scottish Presbyterian connections. He avoided the rough games of the ruling class in his youth, and he avoided strong beliefs when he became a politician. One of his clever friends described him thus:

> "Pretty little Arthur, he
> Plays with things so prettily".

He became the centrepiece of a very exclusive group of cultured aristocrats called *"the Souls"*. The Souls disdained the uncouth ways of their own class, were vaguely benevolent towards mankind in general, and were chiefly concerned to live lives of aesthetic permissiveness. The group included George Wyndham (of the Land Act) and Margot Asquith (wife of the future Liberal Prime Minister), and Oscar Wilde was on its vulgar fringe. The Souls were not exhibitionists. What was the point of impressing one's inferiors? They lived their cultivated lives purely for

each other's benefit.

"Pretty little Arthur" was the nephew of Lord Salisbury, the Tory Prime Minister. In 1887, though he had no political achievements to his name, Salisbury made him Chief Secretary of Ireland, giving him the most demanding job in the Government.

"Every statesman who had held the office since the rise of Parnell had failed. Most of them had retired broken in health and bankrupt in public reputation... The new Secretary was, on the face of things, more likely than any of his predecessors to succumb to the terrible physical wear and tear. Years before, with his consumptive tendencies, he had been faced with the prospect of regular winter exile...

"The appointment caused general surprise. In Ireland it was received with derision: in England... with misgiving or anticipatory satisfaction, according to the point of view. 'An Irish Secretary', said the Pall Mall Gazette, 'should be as tough as catgut and as hard as nails... Lord Salisbury may be anxious to avoid the charge of nepotism; but this is nepotism the other way about—nepotism not of the patronising but of the murderous order. To offer Mr. Balfour the Irish Office is like the presentation of a silken bowstring to the doomed victim of the Caliph'. The Daily News described the new Irish Secretary as "perhaps the best specimen of the pure cynic in modern politics'. The Irish papers at first exhausted their ingenuity to find adequate images of contempt. Mr. Balfour was 'a Daddy long-legs', 'a butterfly to be broken on the wheel', 'a lily', ...an 'Epicurean aristocrat' ...A few weeks later he was described... with simple and emphatic hatred—the favourite adjective was 'bloody...

"Mr. Balfour's policy in Ireland involved many complicated measures, but the essence of it may be quite shortly stated. His first aim was to put down disorder...; in his hatred of lawlessness he sometimes verged on illegality. His second aim was to improve Irish economic conditions... He has himself summarised his policy as well as it can be expressed in brief. 'Cromwell failed', he said, 'because he relied solely on repressive measures... I shall be as relentless as Cromwell in enforcing obedience to the law, but at the same time I shall be as radical as any reformer in redressing grievances and especially in removing every cause of complaint in regard to the land. Hitherto English Governments have stood first upon one leg and then upon the other. They have been either all for repression or all for reform. I am for both; repression as stern as Cromwell, reform as thorough as Mr. Parnell or any one else can desire'." (*Mr. Balfour*, by E.T. Raymond, 1920, p39-40).

Balfour lived up to this declaration. He was Chief Secretary from 1887 to 1892, and was the only politician who ever achieved a major political reputation through conducting the Irish Department.

Balfour's aesthetic aloofness from public opinion, with its resultant self-sufficiency, undoubtedly helped to make him an effective Irish Secretary. (There

was no precedent for the effective government of Ireland, so there was no useful advice to be given. The job therefore required somebody who did not need advice.)

He had a strong will, but a weak constitution obliged him to exert it sparingly. A rapid and discriminating understanding was therefore required so that his brief exertions of will could be well directed. And Balfour had a superabundant ability to make "concrete analyses of concrete situations" (to use Lenin's words).

He was a philosopher as well as an aesthete. His first philosophical work, published in 1878, was entitled *A Defence Of Philosophic Doubt*. His doubt did not apply to religion but to science. He was sceptical of the ability of science to explain everything. He refused to dismiss religion as it was being dismissed by the scientific rationalists of the time. While he does not appear to have been religious in any overt way, he held that religion was a necessary part of human existence, though he did not hold that it was true in any definite sense.

He treated religion and science as necessary though incompatible aspects of human existence:

"The natural world and the spiritual world... lie side by side, contiguous but not connected, like empires of different race and language, which own no common jurisdiction nor hold any intercourse with each other, except along a disputed and wavering frontier where no superior power exists to settle quarrels or determine their respective frontiers" (*The Foundations Of Belief*, 1895, pp186-7).

It is rarely that one comes across a politician/philosopher whose philosophical activity is an aid to his political activity. It is usually a hindrance. In Balfour's time, the predominant philosophy in politics was a doctrinaire rationalism. Doctrines of any kind have very limited applicability in the conduct of politics. The best doctrines easily get in the way of politics. And the doctrines which were reasonably functional in England were blindfolds in Ireland.

Balfour's penetrating critique of rationalism, which did not involve any retreat into mysticism, had the effect of fine tuning his mind as a politician. His idea of causation was especially apt:

"It may be admitted at once that, in a world which we assume to be governed by law, the invariable sequence of B on A is a proof that there is probably some causal link, direct or indirect, between them... But it gives no probability at all in favour of A being the *whole* cause of B. Every cause that we are acquainted with is complex. But there is no process whatever by which it can be shown how complex it is" (*A Defence Of Philosophic Doubt*, 1879, p37).

Balfour's philosophic activity was a training in the perception of particular complex situations. He did not peer out at concrete reality through cumbersome ideological structures. All that he brought with him, apart from his aesthetic disdain for the bourgeoisie and much of the aristocracy, was a conviction that the law should be obeyed if civilised life was to exist. (I do not know if there is anything of his in print now, other than *A Fragment On Progress*, which I edited for *Problems Of Capitalism And Socialism*, No. 50.)

He applied the law without distinction of persons.

"Mr. William O'Brien, M.P. was treated as an ordinary pickpocket; so was Mr. Wilfrid Scowen Blunt, an English literary gentleman who resisted the police in dispersing a Home Rule meeting" (Raymond, p48; in fact, O'Brien in prison successfully refused to be treated as a pickpocket).

The law had to be obeyed. But the law had to be such that it was reasonable to expect it to be obeyed. And Balfour had no hesitation in becoming a revolutionary if he thought that a revolution was needed to make the law enforceable.

He went out amongst the people in 1890 to see for himself what things were like. With almost all politicians this sort of thing would be a publicity stunt, or a sentimental journey, in which no real perception occurred. With Balfour it was different. His aesthetic disdain for what thought of itself as the best society made him immune to fashionable opinion of all sorts, and it enabled him to communicate as effectively with a Western peasant as with a capitalist or landlord. He made no populist pretence of admiring the peasantry (any more than he pretended to admire their betters), but he found that they could talk to him rationally about their interests, and he concluded that they would make a perfectly functional class of landowners.

(An account of his investigative tour of Donegal and Connemara was published by a Unionist reporter who accompanied him: *Balfour's Tour In Ireland*, By A Special Correspondent, Dublin 1890.

About 25 years ago I heard a Donegal instalment of a Radio Eireann programme which visited localities and got people talking about what interested them. One old man said he remembered from his youth a man called Arthur Balfour, who had visited the area, and who was one of the greatest men there had been in Ireland in his lifetime. He might as well have said he once met a Martian who dropped in from a flying saucer, for all it seemed to mean to the interviewer. The Land Act is an empty space in the written history of Ireland, although it is a massive event in actual social history.)

Balfour held the Nationalist politicians in contempt. But he took the trouble to make his own estimate of the capacity of the people, and what he saw confirmed him in the opinion that an agrarian revolution accomplished within the law was both possible and desirable.

Somebody remarked around the time of the 1903 Act that demands, which the British had refused when they were presented in the name of justice, were cheerfully conceded when they were presented in the guise of political economy. For better or worse, that is how it was. And, since Britain had the power, the game had to be played its way.

Here are remarks made by Balfour on the Second Reading of the 1903 Land Bill.

"In 1881 Mr. Gladstone carried out to its extreme issue the policy inaugurated in 1870 with regard to Irish land. The principle of free contract as between landlord and tenant, which was altered by the Act of 1870, was in 1881 wholly destroyed. I am not going to criticise the Act of 1881. Even its bitterest enemies—and I am afraid I must count myself one of them—must in historical fairness admit that the Government of that day had to deal with a crisis of extreme and pressing difficulty. It is easy to say that the Bill was founded on utterly unsound principles—principles which were seen to be unsound at the time, and which experience has shown year by year to be even more unsound than was anticipated. It is very much easier, however, to say that than to say what I should have done, or anybody else should have done, had they been suddenly made responsible for the government of Ireland in 1881, in the middle of the great land revolution. Therefore, I do not approach the subject in any polemical spirit, or with any desire to rake up old Parliamentary controversies. But the Act of 1881 was passed against the strong feeling and vehement criticism of the Party to which I belong; and we, or some of us, saw that the only possible way of bringing these evils to an end was by promoting land purchase, and that the only way to promote land purchase effectually was to employ the credit of the State to carry out that great national object... While the Party to which I belong were in opposition we advocated the principle. We came to power in 1885, for the first time after the system of Court-regulated rents was carried into action by the Act of 1881, and in 1885 we passed the first practical measure of land purchase with the use of State credit which is on the statute-book" (Hansard, May 4th, 1903).

(The main constructive Acts in the period of Balfour's Chief Secretaryship were the *Drainage Acts*, a *Light Railway Act* for the north-west, and the *Congested Districts Act*.)

The Ulster Land Movement

The 1903 Land Act resulted from the conjuncture of a powerful agitation in Ireland with a Westminster Government which was predisposed to grant what the agitation demanded. Both were necessary to bring it about. That Irish agitation was unique in that it was an all-Ireland agitation. The Protestant tenant-farmers in Ulster demanded land purchase and this negated any obstructive influence that Ulster Unionism might otherwise have had on the British Unionist Party.

The leader of the Ulster agitation was in many respects a classical liberal. It is not without relevance to Irish affairs to see how he reasoned his way to compulsory land purchase.

Thomas Wallace Russell was born near Fife, in Scotland, and was the grandson of an evicted crofter. According to his obituary in the *Northern Whig*, Russell "came to Belfast as a youth, and subsequently entered the employment of... Mr. James Brown, of Donoughmore, Co. Tyrone", who was a draper.

"That gentleman became his patron in connection with temperance work, in which he was greatly interested, and for which Russell evinced considerable aptitude. Eventually the deceased devoted his time exclusively to temperance advocacy, and was employed as organiser and lecturer in connection with several organisations, including the Irish Temperance League. He continued

this occupation for twenty years, during which time he was frequently in London and the large provincial towns of England and Scotland, while his duties frequently brought him to the House of Commons and into contact with prominent politicians. Meanwhile he made a reputation as a vigorous speaker, and it was no surprise when he became a candidate for Parliamentary honours, contesting Preston unsuccessfully in the Liberal interest in 1885.

"At the general election which followed the defeat of Mr. Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill in 1886 Mr. Russell was put forward by the Unionist party for South Tyrone..., and represented the constituency for twenty-four years" (Northern Whig, May 3rd, 1920).

Although Russell was politically active for a generation in the Ulster Unionist movement, he had the character of a Unionist in Ulster, rather than an Ulster Unionist. That is not a distinction that has had any practical meaning for the past three-quarters of a century. Unionism, in the sense of a British political party, ceased to exist during the First World War. But in the quarter of a century from 1886 to the War it was a very meaningful distinction.

William O'Brien has the following note on Russell:

"Mr. T.W. Russell, whose title to speak for the Protestant and Presbyterian farmers of Ulster nobody on any side would dream of contesting, was a match for the shrewdest of these hard-headed people in clear-cut business ability, and in the most active of his Unionist days had never wavered in his adhesion to the most radical doctrines of Irish Land Reform...

"The only defeat I ever suffered at the polls was at the hands of Mr. T.W. Russell. I had carried South Tyrone in 1885 against the Orange landlord nominee, the hon. Somerset Maxwell (afterwards Lord Farnham). One of the electors... spoiled his ballot paper by writing opposite the name of Mr. Somerset Maxwell, 'No landlord!' and opposite my own, 'No Pope!' It was a perfect picture of the mentality of the Ulster Presbyterian farmer. In the high-tide of anti-Home Rule reaction of 1886, Mr. Russell came along, free from all taint either of the Rent Office or the Vatican, and by a narrow majority of 99 succeeded where the Hon. Somerset Maxwell had failed" (Olive Branch, p169).

The history of the Land Purchase movement in Ulster, like almost everything of social consequence in this highly consequential period between the First and Third Home Rule Bills, is unwritten.

There was a movement among the Ulster tenant farmers which demanded a right of compulsory purchase of land from the landlords. Russell opposed compulsory purchase until 1900, and he explained his reasons in speeches delivered throughout the province. Here is an extract from a speech delivered at Fintona (Co. Tyrone) in November 1889:

"Since the year 1885 twelve thousand occupiers of land in Ireland have been transformed into owners. The state has advanced the whole of the purchase money, and, instead of an annual rent, these people are subject to a terminable annuity...

"But a new movement has sprung up which I desire to treat with all respect. Those who lead it are not satisfied with the Ashbourne Act. They think it works too slowly. They think it works unfairly, inasmuch—they affirm this—that it gives advantages to the rebel tenantry of the South which are denied to the loyal tenants of the North, and they call for a universal compulsory purchase measure applicable to the whole of Ireland. In plain language, they ask to be put in possession of that which is not theirs, and that the credit of the state should be used for this purchase, and used in such a way that the transaction shall be for their benefit. Gentlemen, I am aware that this feeling has some foothold in this constituency. It had absolutely none when I was elected. On the contrary, I was elected with a distinct pronouncement on my part in favour of the gradual and voluntary system of purchase. I think it necessary, therefore, to speak clearly and plainly... I have differed more than once from sections of this constituency. This is not to be wondered at. I am a Liberal, sitting for a constituency mainly Conservative... We have never differed on the question of the Union, and we are not likely to do so. Let us then reason out this question of compulsory and universal sale of land...

"There is an idea current that the Bill which Mr. Gladstone introduced in 1886 was compulsory. It was nothing of the kind. It was only compulsory on the tenants on the option of the landlord. It was only if he chose to sell, the tenants were compelled to buy...

"With two solitary exceptions, the entire Gladstonian party voted against the application of Imperial money for the purchase of their holdings by Irish tenants. The Parnellites also went solid against the extension of Lord Ashbourne's Act. [This refers to the voting of the second £5 million in 1887.] And I betray no secret when I say that a considerable section of English Conservatives had grave scruples in voting for the last five millions...

"Then, is it true that the advantages of the Ashbourne Act have been mainly in favour of the disloyal tenants of the South? Nothing can well be further from the truth...

"The sales in the four provinces down to 31st December, 1888, stand thus:

	Holdings	*Area (Acres*	*Purchase Money*
Ulster	5,141	129,923	£1,584,274
Leinster	1,226	63,045	881,613
Munster	1,587	101,670	1,081,101
Connaught	887	25,588	245,044

"Let not our friends knock their heads against a stone wall. This contention cannot be maintained in parliament... The very opposite contention was put forward and I think established, in Parliament—that Ulster had got the lion's share of the money, and that the poorer tenants in the South and West had failed to get their fair share of the grant. This, no doubt, was due to the policy of their

leaders. But it is the truth all the same...

"Lastly..., there is the price to be paid for land compulsorily acquired... There is no rule in law or in practice clearer than this, that if you take from a man that which he is unwilling to part with, that unwilling seller has a right to a higher price than if he sold willingly... Compulsory purchase, then, ...must always be purchased at a higher price, and in connection with this it must never be forgotten that the State—which means the general community—is under no obligation to act in this matter at all.

"The State was bound in honesty to protect the tenant's property in the land. The State is not bound to advance money to him to purchase his landlord's interest. The State is not bound to make farming pay. That is a matter for farmers, not for the community. There are people who look with grave suspicion upon all State action of this kind. I do not. But, at the same time, the State is no more bound to come to the relief of the Irish tenant with money than it is to come to the relief of the ordinary householder who may desire to buy his house.

"In this matter up to the present the State has been guided by expediency. It has been guided by national and, I think, imperious necessities. But there are no grounds for any demand as of right, and the farmers of Ulster will do well to recognise this. The money they buy their holdings with now is largely the money of English workingmen. It is the money of the Imperial taxpayer and no claim as of right... can be made. The tenants, then, if they buy under compulsion, must buy at a higher price. Are they prepared to do so? They may depend upon it, Parliament will never put into any Act of Parliament the price of Irish Land. They may leave much to the Land Commissioners, but they will not fix the price by statute..." (Speech reported in the Northern Whig, November 11th 1889, reprinted in *Compulsory Purchase In Ireland: Five Speeches*, London and Dublin 1901).

Russell reasoned out other aspects of the matter in a speech at Fivemiletown (Co. Tyrone) in December 1889. He asked whose credit was to finance compulsory purchase:

"If they mean it is to be done on Irish credit, then my answer is plain: I cannot consent to it. I cannot be a party to transferring the property of Irish landowners to Irish tenants on mere Irish credit. Let me make myself clear. Were it simply a matter of Ulster, I should say at once the security was ample, and that there was no necessity for calling in the aid of the Imperial taxpayer. But it is not a matter of Ulster alone. Ulster is not Ireland. And in view of the proceedings in the South and West during the last ten years... I absolutely decline to accept the credit of the South and West of Ireland as security for their property. I am one of those who believe in doing in politics as I would be done by, and although the Irish land system of the past was, in my opinion, a vile system,... the law has dealt with that system; it has been put almost entirely out of the power of the landowners to oppress their tenants; and I cannot consent to any proposal which would simply hand their property over to the plunderers of the Plan of Campaign...."

(The Plan of Campaign was a movement led by William O'Brien and John Dillon, though not supported by Parnell, which had the aim of compelling landlords to reduce rents following a decrease in dairy prices. The tactic was to withhold rents from the landlord until he negotiated a reduction. The withheld rents were held by trustees on behalf of the Plan and were used to help tenants evicted for non-payment. The Plan was launched in the Autumn of 1886, a few months after the defeat of the First Home Rule Bill, and ran out of steam in the demoralisation following the Parnell divorce case in 1891. It was through his rigorous prosecution of the Plan that Arthur Balfour earned from William O'Brien, the title of *Bloody Balfour*. Britain persuaded the Vatican to condemn the Plan in a *Papal Rescript* in April 1888, but O'Brien's friend, Archbishop Croke, gave a clear indication that no heed was to be taken of the Pope in this matter.)

Russell continues:

"If Parliament decided to-morrow upon the expropriation of every landlord in Ireland, the work would be begun and carried first at the point where the national shoe pinched. The congested districts would come first in order. And from the British standpoint why should it not do so? If the British taxpayer is to advance the money for the regeneration of Ireland, why should he not begin where the greatest misery prevails, where the national trouble arises? If the loyal farmer in Ulster complains of this, and declares that such a course puts a premium on disorder, the answer is ready. The British farmer may fairly say—'I, too, am a good citizen. I am a loyal man. I do not advance my claim, although I, too, should wish to own my own land. If I, advancing the money, am ready to wait for this great national benefit, surely you, too, ought to take your turn'."

Russell then dealt with the Prussian land reform at the beginning of the 19th century, which was being cited as a precedent for the abolition of landlordism in Ireland:

"Gentlemen, I am afraid that what took place in Prussia is but imperfectly understood in this country. The legislation of Stein and Hardenberg did not abolish landlordism in Prussia. Those who think it did this labour under a pure delusion: It first of all established free trade in land, and made it interchangeable without regard to the different classes; and it abolished the feudal dues of service which the peasant owed the noble... It was small compared with what is being proposed in Ireland..."

"Because I decline to 'bay the moon' in politics, I am told that I am 'the landlord's friend'. Gentlemen, I care little what I am called" (Daily Express report, 1st January, 1890, included in Compulsory Purchase In Ireland).

A few days later in a speech at Moy (Co. Tyrone) Russell gave the figures for the numbers of landlords who had sold out under the Ashbourne Act in 1886-1889:

Munster 176 Leinster 158 Ulster 140 Connacht 56

(Daily Express, 9th January, 1890, as above).

On 29th March, 1892 Russell spoke in Parliament against a Nationalist motion, *"That... it is desirable that tenants in Ireland should be enabled to compel their landlords to sell them their holdings under the Land Purchase Acts at a fair price."* He described the Nationalist voting record of opposition to the serious Land Purchase Bills, and dismissed this motion as a gimmick for catching the attention of the compulsory purchase movement in Ulster:

> "They know perfectly well that the flag of Home Rule carried through the Province of Ulster is not likely to win for them, and still less likely is the tattered flag of Irish Clericalism to do them service. They have, therefore, made up their minds, with a good deal of wisdom, to appeal to the Ulster tenants upon a question that touches their vital interests."

Russell took office with the Unionist Government which was formed after the defeat of the 1893 Home Rule Bill. He was Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board from 1895 to 1900 in the Unionist Government formed after the defeat of the Second Home Rule Bill. In September 1900, shortly before a general election was called, he made a major speech at Clogher (Co. Tyrone), in which he announced that, on the land question, he had changed to a policy of compulsory purchase. "I take this step unwillingly", he said. "It might have been avoided if the leaders of the landlord party had been wise." He would have preferred that land purchase should proceed gradually alongside the judicial fixing of fair rents. But land purchase had slowed down, and the tenant-farmers were being greatly irritated by the behaviour of the Land Commission.

The final straw for him, he said, was a reply by Col. Saunderson (who spoke for the landlord interest within Ulster Unionism) to a demand by Tim Healy to say what the tenants should do. Saunderson said they should try the Fry Commission.. The Land Commission was required, in fixing fair rents, to take accounts of conditions on the particular farm and in the locality. The Fry Commission had proposed that it should also take account of the circumstances of the tenant. Russell considered this to be an intolerable intrusion into private affairs. (And it certainly was a strange proposal to apply in business—a means test which, though it might benefit some, was irreconcilable in principle with the conduct of farming in a market economy.)

Russell then described some of the irritants of the judicial system:

> "I find that no tenant in Ulster crosses the portals of the Chief Commission Court without feeling that he is going before a hostile tribunal...
>
> "I do not challenge the rents fixed. I challenge and protest against the whole system. Let me take another illustration—the practice of sending Munster and Leinster men to fix rents in Ulster. This constituency of South Tyrone has suffered severely from this practice... The farming of Antrim, Down, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Armagh, differs enormously from that of Limerick, Wexford, or Tipperary. Men who are good judges of the value of land in Ulster, are absolute ignoramuses in the Southern counties, and vice versa. And, in addition, when a man values land for the purpose of fixing a fair rent in Ulster he is brought into contact with the Ulster custom. What does a Tipperary valuer known of the custom, which is one of the most precious possessions of Ulster? ...But this is the regular method of procedure. Men of great experience in Ulster spend their lives in Wexford, Clare, or Limerick, and others who are entirely ignorant of Ulster farming are employed in Antrim, Down, and other Ulster counties. The Land Commission has been frequently remonstrated with on this point...
>
> "Not very long ago I received a letter from a constituent of mine telling me of the procedure on the farm of a friend and neighbour of his. A gentleman from a Southern county, to whom the Ulster dialect was no doubt a barbarity, appeared one morning on the holding. The agent of the property accompanied him. What was the first question asked? Not as to the soil or crops, or anything of the kind... The first question was, 'Well, my man, why haven't you settled like the rest of the tenants?' His business was to fix a fair rent, not to ask impertinent questions... This was in South Tyrone, and if this is possible in the green tree, what may not be done in the dry?"

Interference with Ulster Custom was another complaint. The Act of 1870 legalised the Custom without attempting to define it. Whatever the Custom was, it was made legal: and it was recognised that it was different things in different places. Russell explained its origin and rationale:

> "If you carry out a great plantation scheme for national purposes, if you invite men to come across the sea to possess and civilise a country... you must pay the price. Men will not undertake dangerous and difficult work from mere patriotism or to serve you. They will do it on sufficient inducement being offered... Now, when the settlers originally came from Scotland and England they came on conditions and with rights and privileges. If the ancestors of Lord Dufferin... and other great Ulster landlords had had to build houses for the settlers and drain and fence their lands, there would have been no Ulster settlers at all. No set of landlords could have done it. The settlers did this for themselves. And they did it on the express condition that it was to be their own property, and that what was their own they could sell or otherwise dispose of. Thus the custom was created and grew up. It took many forms. Previous to any remedial land legislation the Ulster tenant had always the right to sell his tenancy more or less free. On some estates he enjoyed the right of absolute free and unfettered sale... and unless the landlord could show cause as to character or solvency the purchaser became the registered tenant. On the other estates the office rule or usage... was that the tenant could only sell at a fixed price—say, ten, twelve, or fifteen years' purchase of the rent."

Ulster tenant right, which originated in the way described by Russell, was defended by the tenants, without the benefit of law, for over two centuries. Whenever the landlords attempted to erode it, they were beaten back by direct action. The Custom was legalised in 1870. The law gave nothing to the tenants which they did not already hold in fact. Then the Land Commission was established

in 1881, and the period of extensive judicial involvement in farming matters began. The Ulster farmers could not remain apart from the judicial system, and since the law recognised the usages of Ulster Custom there did not appear to be any reason to.

But the Land Court did not confine itself to the terms of the 1870 Act, and in the matter of Ulster Custom simply establish what the usage was in a particular locality and uphold it.

Russell describes the case of *Lindsay versus Corry*. Lindsay bought a tenant right. After the transaction between the tenants was completed, the landlord's agent refused to accept him as a tenant because the landlord had not been notified of the impending transaction. Lindsay applied to the Land Court to have a fair rent fixed. The case was heard by a Sub-Commission, which established that it was not the usage of the district that the landlord had a say in the matter, and it declared Lindsay a tenant under the Act. The landlord appealed. Justice Meredith reversed the decision of the Sub-Commission. And Lindsay was left without either a tenancy or the money he had paid for the tenant-right.

"And yet the Ulster tenants are not content! They have had so much done for them by Parliament! They are, in fact, the spoiled children of the nation!", Russell concluded, sarcastically.

He explained that his five years in government had greatly enlarged his ideas of what it was possible to do. He reckoned that compulsory purchase might cost about £120 million.

> "Time was when I stood aghast at the bare idea of such a transaction. But we live and learn. And my experience at the Local Government Board has taught me much. The plain truth is that within the past thirty years in England and Wales the State has lent to various municipalities for public purposes three times this amount. There is no difficulty about it...
>
> "The question I ask in face of all this is—has the English Government, has the English people, no duty in regard to his [i.e. the landlord's] case? I think they have. They placed the Irish landlord here. They ought to help him to face the music now. Of course the British Radical will squirm. But, so far from thinking the scheme impossible, I would not be the least afraid to lay it before any English audience—and I have more experience of such audiences than most men—and abide by the verdict...
>
> "...in asking that the fee simple of the Irish soil should be compulsorily taken and given to another—you are asking for a thing so great, so tremendous, that history can provide but few precedents. It has been done, of course, in France, by a revolution."

But it could be done by statesmanship in Ireland "if the tenants are moderate and the landlords are wise. Self-interest ought to teach both classes the right way" (Clogher speech, reported in N. Whig, 20th September, 1900. Included in *Compulsory Purchase*).

Since Russell had not cleared his Clogher speech with his Government colleagues, and it was a drastic departure from Government policy, Lord Salisbury did not include him in the administration formed after the election of 1900. Having been made a free agent, Russell spent the next two years building the compulsory purchase movement into a powerful force within Unionist Ulster. St. John Ervine, in his biography of Craigavon, gives an account of the movement, based on information supplied by Sir Samuel Keightley. (Keightley stood as a Russellite candidate in South Antrim in 1903):

> "Looking around for an organisation, he found in Belfast a small, uninfluential and leaderless group, called 'The Ulster Farmers' Union' which met once a fortnight to transact its business. They held no public meetings but did a considerable amount of spade work, keeping themselves in continual contact with small nuclei in the nine countries. They were not professed politicians in the party sense, and could, therefore, accept allegiance from men of all sorts. Their single object was the expropriation of landlords by the compulsory sale of their land...
>
> "The members of this organisation were earnest men of high character whose political activities were wholly without personal interest. They received no profit but much abuse. Their secretary was a very able minister of lofty character, the Rev. Richard Lyttle...
>
> "Sir Samuel Keightley had become a member of the Union a short time before it was discovered by Russell, and he has an intimate knowledge of its history and of Russell's association with it. The members, whose fear was that their activities might become academic or cease altogether, were delighted when Russell approached them... His energy, which was great, and his organising ability, which was greater, might make the Ulster Farmers' Union immensely influential. A public meeting attended by Land Reformers from every part of Ulster, was held in Belfast, and several hundred pounds were contributed to a fund to press their purpose upon the Government and the people.
>
> "One of the contributers was Joseph Fisher, then editor of the *Northern Whig*. The reformers found themselves, therefore, not only possessed of a leader, but also of a powerful newspaper. They changed the name of their society to The Ulster Farmers' and Labourers' Union. Russell was appointed chairman, and Lyttle and Keightley, then a young barrister, joint secretaries. A programme and confession of faith was drawn up. It was purely economic, demanding compulsory sale of land, cottages for labourers, and old age pensions. The members, with one or two exceptions, were Unionists" (St. John Ervine: *Craigavon*, 1949, pp101-2).

This movement, which was known as *"the Russellites"* was pressing hard on the official Ulster Unionist Party by 1902. At the peak of its influence it held three Parliamentary seats—South Tyrone, East Down and North Fermanagh—and was narrowly defeated in South Antrim. (But the reader will search the books of the present generation of Irish historians in vain for an account of it.)

In 1901 Russell published a book, *Ireland And The Empire*, in which he reviewed "the revolutionary period of Unionist policy". He dates this from the 1895 Election, after which Gerald Balfour (Arthur's brother) became Chief Secretary. Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister. Arthur Balfour was second in command. And Joseph Chamberlain, the radical Liberal who split with Gladstone over the 1886 Home Rule Bill and subsequently led the Liberal Unionists into a merger with the Tories, was a major force in the party.

(Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister until 1902. He was not the driving force behind the Irish administration. His own interest was in foreign policy. But he was a permissive Prime Minister, and he let his relations get on with doing things in Ireland which he might not have done himself. He was one of those distinctively English politicians of times past, urbane aristocrats, who would always prefer a reactionary sentiment to a progressive one, but who in particular situations were capable of permitting—or, if it was not possible just to permit, of undertaking—drastic reforms, and of accomplishing them with a simplicity and directness which would have been impossible for the ideological progressives.)

The first fruit of the new Unionist administration was the Land Act of 1895. According to Russell:

> "The Irish landlords were simply furious... They had subscribed huge sums of money to the Irish Unionist Alliance; the Alliance had, in turn, sent over crowds of Unionist orators and workers to the English elections; these gentlemen quietly assumed that they had won the General Election—and here was another and a drastic Land Bill as their reward! The Irish landlord does not count for much in the House of Commons where a Land Bill is concerned. In that Assembly the Ulster tenants have something to say...
>
> "In 1898 a still greater fight was waged with the landlords. In 1886... Lord Randolph Churchill had pledged the then Government to Irish Local Government. The measure would be similar to and simultaneous with that for England. During the fight against Home Rule every responsible speaker on the Unionist side had endorsed this policy... All this did not signify much to the Irish landlords; their friends were now in office. Promises were like pie-crusts, made to be broken; and it never entered into the minds of these gentlemen that the Unionist party would redeem the promises solemnly made. Great was their wrath, therefore, when in 1898 the Local Government Bill was introduced.
>
> "It was a real, not a sham measure; it was thoroughgoing in every clause; it disestablished the Grand Jury as the county authority, and set up the County Council in its stead. It provided for District, Urban, and Rural Councils, and, generally speaking, followed the English and Scottish lines. It was a veritable revolution; it handed over the local government of the country to the people; in 27 counties it ensured the supremacy of the Irish Nationalists. This was indeed backing of their friends! But when the landlords found that they had to make a virtue of what was a necessity, that upon this question Mr. Chamberlain was supreme, and that Lord Salisbury could not be relied upon to oppose what he once declared to be a greater evil than an Irish parliament—when all this was discovered, the Irish landlords determined to die hard. They set up a cry that under the new order of things they might be robbed. The Government listened, and the landlords' share of the poor rate was made a charge on Imperial resources. This amounted to an annual grant of £350,000 per annum... But most people thought the Act was well worth the price paid in hard cash.
>
> "There followed next the Act which established and set up the Department of Agriculture and Industries—the Act which brought Mr. Horace Plunkett into official life..." (T.W. Russell: *Ireland And The Empire*, pp126-8).

The land agitation intensified in 1902, and now it had only one object: the abolition of landlordism. George Wyndham (who became Chief Secretary in 1900), introduced a Land Bill in 1902. The leaders of the Irish Party were prepared to accept this Bill. They were not interested in the land question as a distinct social issue. But the Bill was rejected as inadequate by William O'Brien who embarked on an agitation to cause mayhem in the South in support of a demand for a final solution to the land question. Russell too found the 1902 Bill inadequate, and pressed the same demand in the North, without the mayhem, but with undoubted effect. In a speech delivered at Saintfield (Co. Down), he said that the demand for the abolition of landlordism had been won in principle, and had become a question of ways and means:

> "What are the main essentials of any scheme for the settlement of the Irish Land question? To my thinking they appear to be:- a) That it should provide fair terms of purchase for the tenant, who in purchasing must take, in the future, the whole of the risks of Irish agriculture... b) That it should secure, so far as it is possible to do so, an equivalent to the landlord of the Second Term rents now being declared as fair rents by the Land Commission. c) That it should not unduly tax the Imperial Exchequer. d) That it should be a complete and final settlement of the question..."
>
> The purchase price ought to be a matter of reasonable compromise; "...the tenant, in my judgement, might, looking at what he has been in the habit of paying for the freehold under the Purchase Acts, and the satisfaction felt by all the purchasers, be called upon to pay at the rate of 23 year's purchase of the rents... fixed for the Second Term."
>
> "This is a time when all friction should be studiously avoided. So far as the Irish Land system is concerned, I withdraw nothing that I have said in the past. It has been a cruel and unjust system—the great disturber of the peace of the country—the cause of nearly all its woes. But, taking everything into account, I say deliberately that any settlement which aims at being at once equitable and final ought to secure to the landlord, as far as it is possible to do so, an equivalent income to that which, under the Second Term rents, he will be entitled by law for at least the next 15 years. This done, the cry of confiscation

would have no meaning, and would cease. The landlords, as a class, have suffered severely since 1880; and, looking at the position of things in Ireland, it ought to be our aim to retain them as a class in the country where, with this question finally settled, they ought to live in peace and amity and render great service to the people of the country."

Russell then made the tenant farmers assembled at Saintfield think about the effect of 23 years' purchase on the landlord's income:

"Let me take, by way of illustration, a typical estate. The gross rental is £2,000 per annum. Purchase of this rental at 23 years produced £46,000. The landlord will insist that this money... be invested at 3%, and at this rate of investment an annual income of £2,000 shrinks at once to £1380... No scheme of settlement which involves a loss approaching to this to the owner of the soil will ever pass the House of Commons, not to speak of the Lords. And no sane man would spend his time in attempting a settlement on such lines. The clear necessity of this situation, therefore, is to bridge by some means or other the chasm between £1380 and £2000...

"I think a state bonus ought to be paid. I think, in the first place, that there is what might be called the historical obligation resting on the predominant partner in this matter. It must always be borne in mind... that the Irish Land system, and most of the Irish landlords, were planted in this country by England for her own purposes.

"The Irish landlords today... are suffering from mistakes not their own making. And... they are practically in the position today of being ostracised from the public life and the public affairs of their own country.... Their political power is a thing of the past. Their incomes have been greatly reduced, and what of margin is left is seriously endangered by the approach of the Third Statutory Period, and by constant and ceaseless agitation throughout the country... And I maintain, and am prepared to maintain in face of the British public, that England, with unlimited credit and fabulous wealth, is entitled—nay, more, is morally bound—to bear a fair and reasonable share in bringing to an end a ruinous system, which she for her own purposes brought into existence—a system which breeds ill-will between classes, produces disorder and crime, poisons the whole national life...

"...here tonight, in this District which has a history on the Land question, I venture to make a most earnest appeal to the farmers of Ulster, and, indeed, to the whole people of the province...

"Gentlemen, all this work has cost me something. I relinquished what was to me a great position to undertake it. I have broken party ties and severed old friendships to press it. I have had to fight attempts to boycott the business by which I live; and the anti-boycotters are no mean adepts in the art... But none of these trials have caused me to waver for one moment. They have rather acted as a stimulant and a tonic...

"To the farmers and labourers of Ulster, then, without regard to creed or party, I make my appeal to-night. Look back upon the two years that have come and gone since this Ulster Land movement was inaugurated at Clogher. What do you see? Why, the whole country is aroused and awake... The Land question now holds the field... No pottering with it can now be tolerated. The great majority of the Irish landlords at last recognise the truth, and are prepared to face the facts... You owe nothing of all this change in public sentiment to the Unionist Press of Ulster. These 'organs of public opinion' have opposed, have thwarted, have belittled the great work of reform to the very best of their ability. They have been engaged at the congenial task of stoning the prophets. We owe nothing of this progress to the plutocracy of Ulster—they have stood coldly aside. There is no money in this business. It had not the support of a stupid aristocracy, at the feet of which they love to grovel. No. This movement in Unionist Ulster has had to rely upon the support of the common people and the hearty goodwill and the best wishes of the great majority of the Presbyterian ministers of the province. Now today I ask you to *stand by your own cause*" (Saintfield Speech, 11th October, 1902. Included in *England's Opportunity In Ireland*, Dublin 1902).

Justice—Or Political Economy?

The combined agitation of Nationalist and Unionist tenant farmers in 1902 led to the moral collapse of the landlord position, and the calling of a Land Conference representing the tenant-farmers and a section of the landlords in December 1902 and January 1903. The Conference agreed to recommend the subsidised scheme of land purchase which O'Brien and Russell had been advocating, knowing that the Government was in sympathy with it. George Wyndham brought in a Bill based on the Conference report, and it was enacted.

The Act did not provide for compulsory purchase. It was an enabling Act. The procedure was that the tenant-farmers on an estate should combine to purchase the estate from the landlord, and engage in a process of bargaining with him. It was not expected that they would arrive at an agreed price which the tenants would undertake to pay. The state undertook, within limits, to pay the difference between the maximum offer of the tenants and the minimum the landlord would accept. And, when the bargain was made, the purchase money was to be loaned to the tenants and paid back in annual instalments.

In other circumstances, such an arrangement might not lead to a rapid buying-out of the landlords. But, as has been described, the Irish landlords had by this time very little control over the lands they owned. The principle of free trade had been thrown out of the window when judicial rent-fixing was established. The long-term prospect for them was shrinking rents. They had therefore a strong incentive to seize the opportunity to sell out on terms which would leave them with money in their pockets.

Nationalist opponents of the Act described it as a Landlord Relief Act, and there was some plausibility in the description. But it missed the essential point that the

landlords, in the course of receiving financial relief, would cease to be landlords.

By obliging the tenant-farmers to buy out the landlords, but obliging them to engage in a process of bargaining in order to do so, the Act provided for a non-antagonistic phasing out of landlordism as a system. And it was hoped in this way to retain many of the ex-landlords in the country as Protestant country gentlemen, or gentlemen farmers.

What happened next is intelligible only on the basis of two radically different estimates of what the national movement was.

The Unionist Government took it that Irish Nationalism was essentially a protest against political and economic grievances connected with the traditional model of British rule in Ireland, and that, if these grievances were remedied by the British Government, the nationalist movement would wither. The "constructive Unionism" of the Balfour/Chamberlain combination conducted the largest systematic reform in the whole of Irish history. The reform began under Balfour's Coercion regime during the Government of 1886-92. Its first major innovation was the establishment of the Congested Districts Board in 1891. And then, under the two successive Unionist Governments of 1895-1905, there was the establishment of representative local government, the Act providing for the abolition of the landlord system, the setting-up of the Department of Agriculture, and the encourage of Horace Plunkett's Co-operative movement.

O'Brien had no problem with "constructive Unionism". It wanted comprehensive reform of the economic and political structure of Ireland, and so did he. He took no heed of the ulterior motive of constructive Unionism. He took maximum advantage of the possibilities of reform which it provided, and was not worried in the least that Home Rule would be killed by kindness. He assumed that Irish nationality, while it protested vehemently against grievances, was not merely the froth generated by protest against grievances, and that it would grow stronger through the removal of landlordism and the establishment of representative institutions.

The class of landlords put in place after the Williamite conquest was comprehensively alien to the bulk of the people—the natives, or peasants, or tenants, call them what you will. Two hundred years later they were still alien.

The President of the Aubane Historical Society, replying to some Irish Times nonsense about Bowen's Court, a disappeared Cromwellian mansion in North Cork, described the landlords and the Ascendancy bubble around them, as "an English projection into Ireland". A pretentious writer for an ephemeral publication, called the *Sunday Business Post*, professed to be unable to find meaning in this description. Perhaps the fact of it was too obvious to be seen, in which case there is little use in pointing it out.

Gladstone saw in 1886 that the landlords in Ireland were still English, and took it that they would wish to withdraw to England in the event of even a subordinate administration representative of Irish society being established in Ireland. If his

Bill had become an Act, the tenants would have been compelled to buy out the landlords so that they would be able to go and live as gentlemen at home. And there was no strong protest against that provision by the Nationalist element that was utterly opposed to land purchase under the 1903 Act.

Why the difference? Because the 1886 compulsory arrangement would have operated antagonistically, and would have resulted in a withdrawal of the English projection, whereas the 1903 arrangement was voluntary, was designed to operate through a bargaining process, and it was hoped by both the Government and the leaders of the agrarian agitation that the landlords would remain in Ireland as Protestant country gentlemen. And the Nationalist tendency of which John Dillon was the effective leader shared the Unionist view that the national movement was little more than a protest against grievances, and that, if the grievances were removed prior to the establishment of Home Rule government, the national movement would tend to wither. And they saw it as particularly dangerous that landlordism should be phased out under a Unionist Government through a voluntary bargaining process, and with the prospect of the English projection staying on as country gentlemen.

And so, though the Irish Party nominally supported the Land Act, it did its utmost to prevent it from operating. And, since it was an enabling Act, which of itself changed nothing, it would have been possible through political influence to prevent anything much from happening under it.

Dillon raised what was called *"the Swinford revolt"* against the Act in a speech in his Mayo constituency in August 1903. The *Freeman's Journal* took its line from him. And a great campaign was launched to convince the tenant-farmers that the Act was designed to get them into debt and swindle them, and that they would be much better off remaining tenants and looking forward to their Third Term judicial rents than risk everything by trying to become capitalist landowners in their own right.

In this project Dillon and his colleagues were able to tap into a feeling that historic justice was not being done. The landlords had the land because of a great historic act of injustice. They were the beneficiaries of naked military conquest. They had behaved as powerful savages for two hundred years. A situation had come about in recent decades which made their position unsustainable in the long run. And now they were being enabled to liquidate their assets profitably under the ideology of political economy, just as if they had been legitimate all along, and as if they had done some service to the country. And they were even being encouraged to stay on as gentlemen to add social tone!

I will not say that there was nothing valid in this feeling.

The best thing that could have happened to Ireland after 1691 was a successful landing of the French invasion in force in 1776, and a radical restructuring of Ireland on the lines of what had happened in France. The landlords would then have got their just deserts, and Ireland would have got a viable social and economic

structure capable of evolving, instead of getting the Famine. But the French invasion didn't happen; and England finally won its long war against France in 1815; and we got English political economy and the Famine; and the landlords never got their just deserts.

There is nothing very unusual in the oppressors of a people failing to get their just deserts. It is a thing that only happens when a state is destroyed and those who operated its regime are punished by those who destroyed it and declared to be fit objects for popular vengeance.

That happened in France in the early 1790s and in Russia in 1917. British historians deplore both of these events, and draw the lesson from subsequent developments in those countries that historic acts of justice or vengeance are always deplorable, and never lead to good results. Their reasoning implies that great historic acts of injustice become just by virtue of having become accomplished facts of the established order of things.

But the two cases are not similar. For all Conor Cruise O'Brien's rigged argument to the contrary, it is patently obvious that the French Revolution succeeded. Modern France forged itself in a great act of historic vengeance against an aristocracy which was not even of alien nationality, and present-day France is in no way embarrassed by Danton, or Marat, or Robespierre, or even Pere Dechesne. And I think it would have been of great moral and cultural benefit to Ireland if it had been able to deal with its alien aristocracy as France dealt with its native one.

The British moralisers in any case apply this principle too selectively for it to carry any inherent moral force. Britain itself declared war on Germany twice this century and defeated it—or at least was amongst its conquerors—twice. And, although Germany could not by any stretch of the imagination be conjured into an oppressor of Britain or of Britons, Britain on both occasions used its vast propaganda apparatus to incite hatred of the German state and its regime and to call for a vengeful justice. This was entirely unwarranted in the case of the first war, and it led to a profound destabilisation of the post-war structure of Europe. After the second war, it was discovered that part of the Nazi state apparatus had done things which perhaps warranted it. But almost sixty years later, this propaganda of vengeance is still functioning in Britain, and is looking for subjects to act against. And in recent years it has been intensified.

Now, at the time of the Land Act, the Famine was a bare fifty years in the past. And the post-Famine conduct of the landlords had been far from humane. So I can sympathise with Dillon's feeling when he saw that the landlords were not only going to get away Scot-free, but were to be rewarded, as if they had conferred some benefit on their victims. But what was to be done about it?

If the Kaiser's Germany had been a state of the British kind, and had made war on Britain while Britain was engaged in its treacherous war against the Boer Republics, and had defeated Britain, and puts its personnel of state on trial for war-crimes and crimes against humanity (it invented Concentration Camps as a military

tactic and 25,000 women and children died in them), then Ireland might at the eleventh hour have had the satisfaction of a historic act of justice. But the Kaiser's Germany did not do that. And therefore all that was available was a land settlement on the basis of political economy.

I write this because I feel I was in the past too dismissive of Dillon's attitude in 1903. And also to dissociate myself from the "revisionist" practice of falsifying the history of the British regime in Ireland for present-day political purposes.

The Swinford Revolt

Here is a sample of Dillon's speech at Swinford in Late august 1903 (where he was supported by Fr. Denis O'Hara, Parish Priest of Kiltimagh):

"I hear a great deal about conciliation. To the amazement of some of us old campaigners, we hear *Irish landlords talking of conciliation*, and of the intention to go into conferences with the leaders of the Irish Party. That is the new feature, and some men are asked to believe it is due to what the Methodists describe as a new birth of faith or infusion of grace into the landlord party (laughter). I don't believe a word of it. I believe the origin and source of it was the fact that the landlords of Ireland were behind the scenes, and they knew that the Government was on its last legs, and that the whole policy of Coercion was going to topple down about their ears. That was what made them think of conciliation, and that another great slice would be cut off their rents. And while, for my part, I am entirely in favour of giving the new Land Act a fair trial and seeing what can be got out of it, I am so far sceptical that I have no faith in the doctrine of conciliation. I am willing to accept conciliation when the Irish landlords cease to be landlords... When the landlords talk of conciliation what do they want? They want 25 years' purchase for their land...

"We have a power in Ireland now infinitely greater than and more complete than in the days of the Land League to carry the will of the people to a successful issue in this matter. Let me say a few words more upon the question of price... I feel under a great obligation to the *Freeman's Journal* for the great amount of information it gave to the people of Ireland on this question of price... Now one of the weaknesses of all people is that they are very much tempted to grab at immediate advantage without thinking of the future. No more fatal policy could be adopted than that as regards all the interests concerned, but infinitely more so as regards the country. We ought to remember that there are men who went before us who made sacrifices for Ireland..., and but for whose sacrifices we to-day would still be under the heel of landlordism. They thought of the future of Ireland and not of their own immediate advantage, and we should not be false to those traditions.

"*We ought not in a moment of weakness to mortgage the future of Ireland* to an intolerable extent...

"...I say this is a dangerous Bill, and, *unless the people are fairly warned, an enormous burden will be placed upon Ireland*, which those who come after

us will have to bear...

"*I am prepared to give the Bill a fair trial*, but if it does not produce substantial results in a year or two in the way of re-settlement of the West of Ireland, then I say the Bill is a failure, and we must raise the banner again in the West...

"If I were given to-morrow the choice to give up all the legislation we have won, and indeed everything we have achieved, in exchange for our own government, and the right to rule our own affairs, I should not hesitate for one moment in the choice (cheers)." (Freeman's Journal, 23.8.1903.)

Two months later, addressing the East Mayo Convention of the United Irish League, Dillon said:

"...*the Land Question is not the whole of Irish politics*, for in dealing with the Land Question we must never forget the general interests of the nation (hear, hear), nor leave out of our consideration the effect on the prospects of the course of Irish freedom of any particular policy which may be adopted in reference to the land (applause). I, as you well know, am one of those who, ever since the foundation of the Land League, have taken an active part in the movement for the abolition of landlordism... I have frequently in the course of my life argued this question with friends of my own, who belong to what is known as the extreme party in Ireland and in America, and who held aloof from the Land Question because they thought it was not calculated to advance the cause of Irish freedom. I have many friends, I rejoice to say, in that Party..., and I have always respected their conviction, and if these men had ever succeeded in converting me to the view which they hold, that by seeking to achieve the economic emancipation of the farmers of Ireland we were only working for the construction of a nation or a people whose political or National aspirations would be limited to *the fattening of pigs and the building of Creameries*. I for one, I confess, would never have devoted all the years of my life that I have given up to the cause of the Irish farmers (applause), because I have always held that the Irish farmer is an Irishman before he is a farmer (applause). And unless he were prepared to take his stand and make sacrifices, for the common good of his country, and for the salvation of his race, and the vindication of those national ideals which are dearer to him and every true Irishman than even that prosperity which they all desire to build up in Ireland (applause)—unless, I say, the farmers were of that mould, I would let them fight their own battles (hear, hear)...

"In dealing with the Land act we are dealing with a question of enormous complexity and difficulty, and it is absolutely impossible that differences of opinion on details should not arise. No nation of men, since men lived together in civilised communities for the first time could all agree on the various interpretations, the various shades of policy to be adopted towards the present Land Act, and I, for my part, cannot for the life of me see that Nationalists should get angry and quarrel with each other over such a question of detail...

"It may be true that a skilled arithmetician, given the amount of the reduction in annual payments, might calculate with more or less ease the number of years' purchase, but the Irish farmers are not skilled arithmeticians (hear, hear), and it is very easy to bother and puzzle the Irish farmer, and it is the great object of the landlord and agent, if he can at all, to puzzle him... This Land Act opens up an immense number of very subtle and complicated questions, not at all so simple and so easy that the plainest man in the country can make up his mind at the first blush and come to a decision."

He warned that "Universal National bankruptcy would result if the transaction is carried out on unsound financial lines".

Then he directed attention on Talbot Crosbie, "one of the Champions of the Conciliation Tory policy in the landlord camp, who helped to negotiate the Land Conference". Crosbie, he said, was of the opinion that "second term rent having been adopted as the statutory basis of sale practically fixes it in perpetuity". If the Act became operative, it would be impractical to have a Third Term fixing of judicial rent at the end of the fifteen-year Second Term in 1911. Talbot Crosbie "says now that... he will go on having second term rents for ever unless the tenants buy at 26 years' purchase. That is a very nice alternative for a conciliator to offer the Irish people".

Dillon then took issue with the view that agricultural prices were likely to rise: "I say that, in my opinion, the prospects for agriculture never were darker". Some people thought that Chamberlain's tariff policy would raise prices, but "all the Chamberlains that were ever born won't make the working people of England submit to having the price of their food raised by taxation, and if they don't, where does the profit come to you?" (*Freeman's Journal*, 21.10.1903.)

(The last point refers to the Unionist proposal, made after the Boer War, to consolidate the British Empire economically and politically by means of an Imperial Tariff and an Imperial Confederation. As well as consolidating the Empire, this would also have delimited it as a definite and distinct sphere in the world, and thereby made possible a kind of world order. It was vehemently opposed by the Liberals, who were rapidly becoming Liberal Imperialists, and it was on this issue that Winston Churchill defected from the Unionist Party to the Liberal Party. The unlimited free trade policy of the Liberals, under which the world at large was to provide cheap food for England, had the foreign policy implication of an ongoing extension of British power in the world. And, for all Redmond's abuse of the Liberals in the 1890s, the reunited Irish Party under his leadership was now in a tight alliance with post-Gladstone Liberalism and Liberal Imperialism.)

On 16th April, the *Freeman's Journal* carried a long report of a speech by Davitt against the Act, while it was still a Bill. He urged the tenants to stick with the 15-year judicial rent-fixing under the 1881 Act. He pointed out that there had been an average of 20 per cent reduction of rents in both the First and Second Terms and that a similar reduction was to be expected in the Third Term:

"In other words, 60 per cent of the former rents would vanish in legally

ordained abatements. Now all the landlord property in Ireland is heavily mortgaged. It is not, therefore, too much to say that by the year 1910 fully 90% of the Irish landlords would be compelled by these reductions, caused by the play of economic competition in the production of food on rentless land abroad for home markets, to relinquish their hold on the soil of Ireland, and compound with their creditors as any other class or business do in the world of commerce or trade when conditions are dead against the further making of incomes or profits in an exploded occupation (cheers).

"The Government's Land Bill finds the Irish landlords in this position. At the present time their property is worth about 18 years' purchase in the open market..., and for this property, which in ten years would not be worth ten years' purchase, Mr. Wyndham asks Irish tenants and Irish taxpayers to pay an average of 28 years' purchase."

There would certainly have been more justice, even in terms of the rationale of the political economy of the conquest, in seeing the landlords individually bankrupted by judicial rents kept up to the mark by tenant agitation, than in the retrospective legitimation of the conquest by the Land Act. Landlordism in Ireland had been more a form of plunder than a form of property, and rent had not performed the economic function claimed for it by the classical political economists. And yet the landlords were to be treated under the Act, not only as if they had performed that economic function, but were to be given a bonus, as if they had conferred some social benefit above and beyond the call of economic function.

It was all grossly unfair. And the only excuses for the voluntary Irish participation in working it, advocated by William O'Brien, are that Britain would not have it otherwise, and the power of the British state was at its height just then; and that there was a rift within Irish society, quite apart from landlordism, which this approach might have bridged over.

(There are other factors which would have to be dealt with, if this purported to be a history of the Act. But I only deal with it in its bearing on the split in the national movement which it led to.

And there was an extra dimension to Davitt's opposition to the Act which was entirely reasonable. He was against absolute ownership of land by individuals, whether landlords or farmers. The value of land was determined by the social structure in which it existed, and the ownership of land therefore carried social obligations. A simple transfer of the land from the landlord to the farmers made no provision for the enforcement of this obligation.)

The *Freeman's Journal* was systematically disparaging of the Bill in its editorials as well as giving maximum publicity to criticism of it by others. For example:

"The Bill showers gifts on the landlords. On the other hand the tenant's freedom of action is destroyed; the price of land is compulsorily inflated; the relief obtained by purchase hitherto is cut down; the period of repayment is drawn out by a quarter of a century; no decadal reductions are provided; and the ownership of the holding is for ever denied to the so-called purchaser,

though far more than the value of the holding has been paid by him." (6th June.)

The last clause in this editorial criticism related to the provision in the Bill for a nominal "rent charge" to be paid annually to the state. The purpose of this was to give the state a stake in the land which it might use as leverage to prevent a new landlord system from arising by purchase and sale amongst the new owners. And it was a feature of the Bill of which Davitt thoroughly approved:

"One of the objects of this provision is to give the state the right to prevent the re-growth of landlordism and to regulate to some extent the ownership which the measure confers on the farming class. It is a valuable provision—one of the best in the whole Bill... Some critics oppose this provision in the Bill as infringing on the rights of ownership of the tenants. These critics seem to forget that Ireland, as a nation, has rights too... The State will have duties and obligations to the land of Ireland even when the landlords are bought out... A supervisory stewardship is required over all the great sources of employment, or muddle and mismanagement will result. Take, for instance, the arterial drainage of Ireland. No country in Europe is so subject to the injuries of flooded rivers. The landlords did not remedy the evil. The peasant proprietors will not subscribe a cent for that national work unless compelled to do it by special taxation...

"It is claimed that the peasant must have the feeling that he is the absolute owner of the land he occupies or some wrong will be done him. But there is no such thing in the world, nor is it possible in human society, as the absolute ownership of land... No peasant proprietary in Europe hold the land as absolute property. In France, Belgium, Denmark, and other Continental countries where this system largely prevails, the State exercises the right of superior proprietorship to the extent of one-fourth of the national revenue in direct land taxation... I care little for the amount of tax or rent-charge levied on the land... But a matter of National against class rights is another thing. No class can be trusted to act justly or fairly if it has absolute ownership of the land, and our Celtic forefathers never allowed any such class privilege." (This is from the speech quoted earlier.)

So far as I know, the *Freeman's Journal* did not engage in a dispute with Davitt on this point. It was enough that he opposed the Bill.

The point about "decadal reductions" was explained in the section on Land Law. Those reductions related to a system of financing that would now, I think be called an Endowment Mortgage, and which entails a degree of risk. The 1903 Act provided for simple hire purchase with fixed annual payments. As for "far more than the value of the holding" being paid, that is of the essence of purchase by mortgage.

It is quite true that the price of land was increased by the Act. Without this Act such estates as were sold would have got a lower price, but much fewer would have been sold, and landlordism would have continued to be a major feature of Irish life for a generation longer.

William O'Brien's Policy

William O'Brien tried to arrange for nationally organised land purchase under the guidance of the United Irish League. "In Ireland the administration of an Act has ever been of greater import than its text. This is in a special manner true of the Land Purchase Act of 1903" (Olive Branch, p251). The UIL had been developed by him only five years earlier around the slogan, *"The Land For The People"*, and he was confident that it had the ability to guide the purchase of the land in a way that would maximise the advantage to the tenants.

> "The National Directory [of the UIL] resolved to summon Conventions in every county forthwith... In every parish in the country a special meeting was to be convened, at which the circumstances of the different estates in the parish were to be confidentially discussed. Some one or two estates were to be singled out where either the friendly disposition of the landlord or his necessities gave most promise of an immediate sale upon favourable conditions. The selected landlords were to be immediately approached... Pending the result of these test applications, the tenantry of the other estates in the parish were to be exhorted to make no venture to their own landlords and to submit to the parochial committee the terms of any approaches made to them before committing themselves to reply. By this method a moderate standard of price would be established from the outset, and the danger would be avoided, which we foresaw with an apprehension lamentably justified by events, of bodies of tenants on the richest estates rushing in to make their own selfish bargains on the most reckless terms to the prejudice of their poorer brethren. Here was in brief to be the working machinery of what I called the policy of Conciliation *plus* Business" (Olive Branch, p261).

O'Brien reckoned that, if this approach had been generally applied, £20 million would have been saved to the tenants.

But Dillon's "Swinford revolt" was successful. The UIL did not dedicate itself to the organising of land purchase. The *Freeman's Journal* kept up a propaganda barrage which generated confusion and apprehension.

> "The panic-mongers were aided by the selfishness of the wealthy tenantry of the Duke of Leinster, who had all always held aloof from the national organisation and were the first to rush into a precipitate bargain on extravagant terms and thus absorb nearly £1,000,000 straightaway on a single estate that perhaps least of all in the country needed State money. The *Freeman* gleefully despatched a special correspondent to the spot, reported the people crying out: 'Only for the *Freeman* the tenants of Ireland were ruined', and by every ingenious device sought to propagate the panic-fear that the farmers had been left defenceless" (Olive Branch, p274).

And, in the middle of it all, it was announced that John Redmond, the Catholic landlord, had made an agreement with his tenants to sell his estate at a price that exceeded the price recommended by the UIL by two years' First Term rents or four and a half years' Second Term rents, thus enabling other landlords to say they were entirely willing to sell for the price got by the political leader of the tenants.

O'Brien resigned from the Party in November 1903 in protest against its sabotage of land purchase. And, being overcome by one of his periodic bouts of nervous exhaustion, he retired from the fray, to a cottage in Connaght.

With land purchase in the doldrums, Canon Sheehan, Parish Priest of Doneraile and a famous novelist, decided to find out for himself whether or not the Act was a swindle. Having assured himself it was not, he set about explaining it to tenants in his parish. D.D. Sheehan, leader of a North Cork *"Land and Labour"* organisation, also took a hand. Land purchase took off in County Cork against the grain of the political activity of "the Party". And that was the beginning of the great rift of national politics in Cork.

In the *Olive Branch* O'Brien gives the figures for sales and prices in Cork and Mayo (where Dillon's influence was paramount) up to 1909.

There were 16,159 sales in Cork and 774 in Mayo.

And, in the Congested Districts area of each county (where the transaction was more problematical), there were 1,785 sales in Cork and 497 in Mayo.

Average prices were 21.3 years' purchase in Cork and 22.6 years' purchase in Mayo. And, in the Congested Districts, 20.7 years in Cork and 21.1 in Mayo.

The annual mortgage repayment was in Cork a 30.7 per cent reduction on what the rent had been, and in Mayo 26.8 per cent; and, in the Congested Districts, 33.7 per cent in Cork and 31.4 per cent in Mayo.

Because of the refusal of the Party to guide the land purchase as a matter of national concern, substantial remnants of landlordism still survived in 1910, but it had ceased to be a general institution in the life of the country.

It survived most where circumstances made its abolition most problematical, and where, therefore, it was most in need of guidance by the national party: the Congested Districts and the grazing lands in the Midlands.

Laurence Ginnell

Laurence Ginnell, MP for Westmeath, published in 1908 a book called *Land And Liberty*, which included a fierce attack on the 1903 Land Act, which he described as "the greatest Landlord Relief act ever passed". He argued that:

> "Had the agitation of 1902 been allowed to pursue its normal course, landlordism, on its own confession, was in no condition to hold out, and the fruit of the agitation would doubtless have been an Act for compulsory sale at inspection prices the following year. For the absence of compulsion, the excessive prices, and all that is bad and dangerous in the Act of 1903, the Land Conference is responsible" (p96).

It is a curious fact that the two MPs who supported the Sinn Fein movement (or the Republican movement, which somehow was given the name, Sinn Fein), after the Easter Rising were the architect of the Land Conference, William O'Brien, and its fiercest critic, Laurence Ginnell. This suggests that Ginnell's opposition to the Land Act was different in kind to Dillon's.

The difference lay in the fact that operations under the Act were economically

and socially problematical in the grazing areas.

Land purchase was a simple operation where the landlord's estate consisted of clear-cut, viable farms, where the tenants had, under the 1881 Act, established a degree of tenant right which made the transfer of ownership a mere financial transaction. That was predominantly the case in Munster, where the landlord class had remained socially alien, and certain of its economic impulses had been held in check by persistent agrarian terrorism. A stretch of territory from South Tipperary, along the Cork/Limerick borderlands, into North Kerry had, in a sense, never been subdued, and the economic consequence of its persistent rebelliousness was highly beneficial to the whole region.

But, in the Midlands, the social situation was more complicated, with the result that the economic structure was less suitable for the establishment of what is called peasant proprietorship. What was required was economic reconstruction, rather than a simple transfer of ownership. And the class of owners included a fair proportion of people whose social origins made them Nationalists.

When I first strayed into politics, in the early sixties, I met a man, Tom Skelly, who described to me a kind of peasants' revolt in Longford, in which he had played an active part in the late forties. On the basis of the bit of Ireland that I knew well—the Slieve Luacra region, where what the land likes to do is grow rushes—I found the idea of a land agitation in mid-20th century Ireland unimaginable. I have never seen an account of the differing social histories of Munster and the Midlands, with their differing economic effects, or of the development of the grazing system in the Midlands and how it complicated land purchase, and I have not had the time to go into it for myself, but it seems evident that the difference made land purchase problematical in the Midlands in a way that was not the case in Munster. And it is also evident that the problem did not arise from the quality of the land. There is land of every quality in Cork, and land purchase proceeded rapidly in all regions. And the Conciliation movement was not particularly related to the regions of good land.

Dillon's case against the Land Act was essentially ideological. Ginnell's was not. Ginnell therefore must have his say too:

> "So far as an Irish Parliamentary Party has been connected with success, it has been by the traditional policy of strong popular agitation in Ireland and independent opposition in Parliament when the agitation began to bear legislative fruit. The only way in which it has ever been found possible in Ireland to extract a good Act from the British Parliament is by substantially enacting it on the ground in Ireland, and afterwards subjecting the Bill produced in Parliament to the closest examination and severest criticism within the bounds of truth and justice. It is as true today as it has always been that the value of English legislation for Ireland and the power of the Irish Party in Parliament are in exact proportion to the energy of organised action in Ireland... We have on record Mr. Gladstone's confession that the Land Act of 1881, the best Act ever passed by the British Parliament for Ireland, would never have been introduced and could never have been passed but for the Land League agitation—and that was anything but conciliatory" (p162).

> "Spending August, 1906, in Westmeath, and seeing there after three years of the 'greatest Land Act ever passed', ranchers' cattle still grazing over evicted lands, and young people still emigrating from neighbouring uneconomic bog holdings for want of land to live upon, while the parts of the Act purporting to have provided for them remained a dead letter, I thought this fact disgraceful to public men, and that something ought to be done. It needed no subtlety to conceive that if ranching could be stopped on a huge tract in the centre of that county, and the land in consequence distributed, a great amount of permanent good would be done and the example would be irresistible" (p202).
>
> "To those who, like my present jailor, say 'surely you won't attempt to advocate or defend cattle-driving', I answer, Not I. With the people of Ireland it needs no defence, it is more than justified... It is the ranching system that stands in need of defence...
>
> "The idea of scattering things, like that of boycotting, is not original. It is copied from the practice of the evictors. They, with the help of soldiers and police and all the atrocious machinery of class legislation placed in their hands, and with fire and sword, scattered people in all directions without caring whether they went or what became of them. They are the real authors of cattle-scattering. Humanitarians, distressed at the imaginary sufferings of cattle, are conveniently blind, deaf and dumb to the real sufferings of men, women and children. It is hard for us to understand why, when the landlords were thus scattering the people, the latter did not seem to perceive that scattering was a game at which both sides could play.
>
> "I use the word 'scattering' because it was the first epithet applied; and it correctly conveys the first idea, as it also does the present practice. To drive cattle to their owner's home was an amiable concession to the scruples of people with tender consciences; but as might have been expected, it soon became utterly impracticable. As the term 'drive' implies order and destination, it is no longer applicable. The general practice is the original Downs policy [i.e. the policy agreed by a meeting at Downs on 9th September, 1906] of putting the cattle off a ranch and scattering them as far and in as many directions as possible, not cruelly, as the evictors scattered the people off the same lands, but without any violence to man or beast.
>
> "Yet whoever questions the morality of the second scattering entitles himself to an answer by showing how the morality of the first can be defended. It may be pleaded that two wrongs do not make a right. There are no two wrongs that can be mentioned in the same breath as such. The wanton evictions carried out by the Irish landlords are the blackest crimes in history." (p212-3.)

Thus, five years after the Land Act, when landed property in Munster was well on the way to being settled into its present structure, and the 'peasants' were attempting to draw their former landlords into national life by "Conciliation", property relations in the Midlands were in turmoil.

Part Three

All-For-Ireland

Political Possibilities

William O'Brien described the Land Conference thus: "For the first time since the Volunteer Convention of 1782 Ireland had met and settled her affairs as a united nation" (Olive Branch, p184).

There is a saying that comparisons are odious, and it is not altogether untrue. At the same time, the making of comparisons is an indispensable component of thought. And the comparison of the Land Conference with the Volunteer Convention is not a bad one, as comparisons go. At any rather, there was no other all-Ireland assembly that I can think of in the 120 years between the two—and there has been none since.

The 1782 Convention had an all-Ireland character by virtue of being aristocratic. The Williamite aristocracy, supported by the professions which were dependent on it, developed the Volunteers for the purpose of ending the power of veto which the English Parliament exercised over the legislation of the Irish Parliament, while leaving the Irish government in the hands of Britain. This aristocracy and its dependants asserted itself as the nation, and the demand was conceded. But it was not in fact the aristocracy of the nation. It was an Ascendancy. It remained an English projection, with some provincial peculiarities, drawing the means of its luxurious life from the people, but living in an alienated social stratum above them.

Where there was an authentic middle class, which was chiefly in Ulster, it supported the Volunteer Convention, and attempted to give its national pretensions some depth and reality in the life of the people. This led to a profound rupture ten years later, and in place of the Volunteers there arose the United Irishmen on the one hand, and the Orangemen/Militia/Yeomen under aristocratic leadership on the other.

The unity of the Land Conference was different in kind. It expressed a unity of economic interest of the tenant-farmer class throughout the island, regardless of religion, party-political orientation, or sense of nationality. It was a unity in the depths—or in what, from the vantage point of aristocracy, appeared to be the depths. And it presented a possibility of development that was not less than the possibility of Volunteer convention. William O'Brien attempted to realise that possibility.

There has in recent times been a craze for the notion that economic structures determine all cultural, social and political developments. That idea was at one time taken to be identical with Marxism, though it did not originate with Marxism, and it has not gone out of fashion with Marxism.

Thirty years ago I tried to describe the world in Marxist terms. I found that Marxism got in the way of understanding more often than not, and that the idea of economic determination of the whole social structure was particularly obstructive of understanding. I had discarded Marxism as a system-no doubt having absorbed something from it that the recesses of the mind had found useful—long before the collapse of the Soviet sphere put it out of fashion. And, during the past ten years, I have been noticing how tenaciously the idea of economic determination of the whole social structure has survived the collapse of Marxism as an ideology.

The Land Conference represented the tenant farmers and a section of the landlords—the socially more vulnerable section. The participating landlords were the Ascendancy landlords of the South, who saw that the end was nigh and that they had better do a deal before their position got even worse. The landlords not represented were the landlords of the Plantation, whose social position appeared to be much stronger than that of the Southern landlords, because they did not live on terms of national alienation from the tenants.

The Ulster landlords with Protestant tenants were not Ascendancy landlords properly so-called. They formed part of a common society with their tenants and with the middle class. They belonged to the same Churches, the same political party (leaving aside the Russellite hiccup), and very often they were members of the same Orange lodge. There was between them a conflict of economic interest, but there were ways of mediating that conflict, so as to keep the landlord-tenant relationship economically functional.

I imagine that the landlord system would still be alive and well in Protestant Ulster if Protestant Ulster had not then been part of the political system of Ireland, and had not been affected by the rupture of landlord-tenant relations in the rest of the country, where the landlords were an alien caste. As it was, the Ulster tenant-farmers, while thoroughly disapproving of the way the rest of the country was behaving, decided that, if the Catholic rebels were going to have the land, they were going to have it too. And, when the Ulster landlords called on them, through the Orange Order, not to shame themselves by emulating the conduct of disloyal men, they became suddenly deaf to the catch-cries which had stirred them ever since 1795.

The *Belfast Newsletter* commented on the *Report* of the Land Conference on 5th January, 1903:

> "We have read and re-read the whole eighteen clauses..., and the conclusion of the whole matter is that this precious Conference has agreed on a beautiful scheme of settling the Irish land question by plundering the State. Of course it is impossible, absolutely impossible, for any Government to give it the slightest countenance. Is it all, then, so much waste paper? By no means. As a lantern whereby all honest men may see laid bare the immorality attached to Irish land agitation this report is invaluable...
>
> "No man has a right to claim that the State shall put him in possession of property, and make other people pay part of the fair purchase price of it, and

no honest man with a proper sense of independence would ask it... It is a whining beggarly claim at best, and its acceptance among men otherwise independent and proud of their self-reliance can only be explained by the malign influence which Irish land agitation has had upon our agricultural population. It has sapped their proper sense of self-reliance and independence, and led them to look to the State for doles and bribes, till they have actually come to hold that they have no right to be called upon to pay a fair price for the land."

But the other Ulster Unionist daily, the *Northern Whig*, was strongly in favour of the Report, and "regretted that the Landowners' Convention as a body did not see its way to join in the Conference" (5th January).

The Earl of Erne chaired a meeting of Fermanagh landowners on 6th January, and addressed it as follows:

"I am, as you are aware, Grand Master of the Orangemen of Ireland... Since this matter has been mooted I have received resolutions from various bodies of the Orangemen of Ireland...—bodies comprised in far the largest part of tenant-farmers—protesting in the strongest manner against any traffic with treason and repudiating the notion that Messrs. Redmond, O'Brien, & Co. were to be taken as representing the loyal farmers of Ulster...

"Now, I am not going to say anything against the five gentlemen who are acting in the Conference on behalf of the landlords—three out of the five are personal friends of my own—but I do not think that even they themselves will contend that they are to be compared in their knowledge of this most intricate question to some of the working members of the Committee of the Landlords' Convention" (N. Whig, 7th January).

On 8th January:

"Judge O'Connor Morris, at Roscommon Quarter Sessions... referred to the land purchase proposals... It was stated that the report of the Land Conference would soon become law, but he would like to see the Minister who would stand up in the House of Commons and support such a gigantic scheme. The Conference held out a bribe to both landlords and tenants at the expense of the general taxpayer... He had no hesitation in saying that if Parliament proposed to pass such a measure, the general taxpayer would rise in arms against it. The tenants were not to imagine that the Government was ready to pour manna into the mouths of the Irish tenants at the expense of the taxpayers. In his opinion such a measure would never pass through the House of Commons" (N. Whig, 9th January).

But the Protestant tenant-farmers in their Orange Lodges made clear their support for the Land Conference Report. For example, at a meeting of Killead District No. 17, which was attended by Charles Craig, an Ulster Unionist leader, the Chairman, Mr. H.B. Murry, said:

"Mr. Russell had told them that he would bring about a termination of the landlords... He could only say this, as an Orangeman, that the land question was a very important and serious one. A change must be brought about, and the dual ownership done away with, whereby the tenant farmer will be the owner of his land" (N. Whig, 19th January).

The tenant-farmers, who were the backbone of the Orange Order, wanted the land. The Unionist Government indicated that it would bring in a Bill to enable them to have it. The Earl of Erne suddenly counted for nothing in Fermanagh. Ulster Unionism saw that it would be prudent to bring itself into line with Unionism, and Charles Craig declared himself, as a landlord, to be a supporter of land purchase, saying that his only difference with T.W. Russell had been over the issue of compulsion.

William O'Brien's land movement brought the economic interest of the tenant-farmer class to the fore within Orange Ulster. The Lodge members treated their august Loyal Masters as men with a hostile economic interest. There was turmoil within Ulster Unionist politics because the Unionist Party in office was intent on pulling down the economic hierarchy of the country. Good Protestants had joined with Catholics to defeat Ulster Unionists and send Russellites to Parliament. And an Independent Orange Order had emerged from this turmoil, and had shown itself willing to engage in a new departure.

The tenant-farmer interest, handled in a particular way, had brought about this state of affairs. And O'Brien's willingness to deal with the land issue as a problem in political economy, leaving aside the matter of justice and historic retribution, put him on the same wavelength as them.

Protestant Ulster is profoundly un-British in many ways, as I discovered through a long involvement with it. (But the ways in which it is un-British are not ways that attune it to the rest of Ireland.) It is however thoroughly British in one respect—that there is no barbarity which it does not see as just if it is in accordance with the laws, or ideology, of political economy. And nationalist Ireland became intelligible to it by handling the land issue as a problem in political economy.

It might be said that the tenant farmers of Ireland came together on the basis of economic interest and acted as an economic class in 1902-3. And that happened in a way that opened up the possibility of further action in common. But, while an economic interest may be a factor in opening up possibilities in other spheres, it is of itself no more than economic interest. The realisation of the possibilities opened up depends on the art of politics. And the politics of Redmondism ensured that the possibilities opened up by the Land Act were scotched very quickly. Instead of doing its utmost to build on the dissensions that had arisen in Unionist Ulster over the land question, Redmondism shepherded the Ulster Protestant tenant farmers back into the Unionist fold as quickly as possible. The economic conflict which had opened up the possibility of an all-Ireland rapprochement then ceased to operate, because the Protestant tenant-farmers had got the land—taking it, as far as I know, with none of the bother created by 'the Party' in the rest of the country.

William O'Brien quotes in the *Olive Branch* a speech which he delivered at Watergrasshill (Co. Cork) on 30th July, 1905:

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It might be said that the tenant farmers of Ireland came together on the basis of economic interest and acted as an economic class in 1902-3. And that happened in a way that opened up the possibility of further action in common. But, while an economic interest may be a factor in opening up possibilities in other spheres, it is of itself no more than economic interest. The realisation of the possibilities opened up depends on the art of politics. And the politics of Redmondism ensured that the possibilities opened up by the Land Act were scotched very quickly. Instead of doing its utmost to build on the dissensions that had arisen in Unionist Ulster over the land question, Redmondism shepherded the Ulster Protestant tenant farmers back into the Unionist fold as quickly as possible. The economic conflict which had opened up the possibility of an all-Ireland rapprochement then ceased to operate, because the Protestant tenant-farmers had got the land—taking it, as far as I know, with none of the bother created by 'the Party' in the rest of the country.

William O'Brien quotes in the *Olive Branch* a speech which he delivered at Watergrasshill (Co. Cork) on 30th July, 1905:

"There is no reason why Mr. Sloan and the Orange democracy of the north [i.e. the Independent Orange Order], who have recently declared themselves to be Irishmen first of all..., should not be cordially welcomed by their fellow-countrymen. There is no reason why we should not have Lord Dunraven and his Reform Association... There is no reason why we should not have Mr. T.W. Russell and his Presbyterian farmers... Three such bodies of men, representing every class and creed of the so-called loyal minority, would speak for that minority with an authority in the eyes of England that would reduce to insignificance the protests of the... Ulster dead-heads" (p352).

Then he quotes from a speech delivered by Dillon at Castlecomer on 9th November, 1905:

"Never allow yourselves to be wheedled, hoaxed into unnatural alliances until the freedom of Ireland is firmly established... The alternative policy is that advocated by Mr. William O'Brien... What is that policy? Having condemned the Irish Party and the Directory..., it proposes to set aside the leadership of Mr. Redmond, the Party, and the Directory, and commit the future guidance of Irish politics to a conference of the friends of Timothy Healy, Lord Dunraven, Thomas Sloane, T.W. Russell, John Dillon and John Redmond. On the face of it, this proposal is a proposal for the destruction of the National Party" (p364).

O'Brien's approach certainly implied something like what Dillon alleges. But Dillon's approach of rejecting "unnatural alliances until the freedom of Ireland is firmly established"—the approach actually adopted—leaves us still waiting for the freedom of Ireland.

O'Brien's approach is the approach that was not tried, and on that ground alone there is something to be said for it. But which of our professional (i.e. academic) historians says anything for it? They either ignore it, or mention it dismissively, explaining it by reference to his well-known eccentricity.

I used to think that omniscience was an attribute of Marxism. I mean the certain knowledge that a course of action that was not attempted would have failed, and that what exists is all that could possibly have existed. I now realise that this kind of omniscience is not particularly connected with Marxism, and that every order of things produced by a particular course of action wishes to be thought inevitable.

Even allowing for this, the confident dismissal of O'Brien strikes me as being very weak-minded. Because, while the Party rejected his approach, it was not merely a bright idea that was never tried. It was put into effect in a small part of the country, and through that it entered the order of causation in the country as a whole. Because the part of the country in which it was put into effect was disproportionately influential in national life.

O'Brien himself did not despair when he found himself bottled up in Cork. Because:

"if the anti-Conciliationists could succeed in wiping Cork off the map of Nationalist Ireland, it would be indeed a drab and forlorn tract of country that would be left" (Olive Branch, p311).

Devolution

George Wyndham, the Irish Chief Secretary, thought of building a non-legislative structure of political devolution on the foundation of the Land Act. His idea had the support of the group of Southern landlords—who were becoming ex-landlords—called the Irish Reform Association, and of whatever William O'Brien can be said to have represented at that juncture.

In the *Olive Branch*, O'Brien says of the Irish Reform Association that it was "a movement that would have thrown Wolfe Tone or Thomas Davis into a transport of joy" (p327). And it was undoubtedly the kind of development amongst the Protestant gentry that Davis had tried hard to bring about.

O'Brien quotes from a speech on these matters made in Kilkenny in September 1905 by Joseph Devlin (the only newcomer to the top leadership of the Irish Party since the Parnell Split). Devlin said he would "never consent to a whittling down of the national demand... nor seek the co-operation of a few aristocratic nobodies".

On which O'Brien commented: "Surely a gem of manly spirit not to be exceeded by an upper servants' hall in their moments of private relaxation" (p329). Which is a very supercilious kind of remark indeed, even a snobbish remark when one considers that it is directed at a man whose origin was the working class of West Belfast and who, by his own talents, had made himself one of the triumvirate of top Party leaders—the other two, Redmond and Dillon, being gentlemen; and one of them, Redmond, being a fully fledged country gentleman. And yet, considered in the context of statecraft, it was an appropriate and necessary remark. The aristocratic nobodies were not quite nobodies yet. And, since they were willing to be eased into national life, they had their uses.

The Irish Party was utterly opposed to Wyndham's Devolution scheme. So was the Ulster Unionist Party—or the Ulster Unionist section of the Unionist Party. The Unionist leader, Balfour, aborted the scheme. I have seen it said that Balfour gave in to Ulster Unionist pressure. But opposition to the scheme was common ground between the Ulster Unionists and the Irish Party, and that is what he gave in to.

The Unionist Party lost the 1906 election very heavily. It had been losing members to the Liberals for some years on the issue of an Imperial Tariff, and Balfour had baulked at bringing the Unionist Party itself to a definite policy position on the issue. It fought the Election more as a debating society than a Party, and it lost heavily. But the ten years of Unionist government had had a profound effect on the Liberal Party. The Liberalism of Cobden and Bright had given way to Liberal Imperialism. The Liberal Party had formally opposed the Boer War, but an influential group within it had supported the War, including the Concentration Camps and the crop burnings, and this group (led by H.H. Asquith, R.B. Haldane, and Earl Grey) was poised to take over the leadership in 1906. Campbell-Bannerman, a Gladstonian, was the nominal leader in 1906, but he was near the end of his tether, and he gave the most powerful Departments (Chancellor, War, and Foreign Office) to Asquith, Haldane and Grey respectively. And, when he retired

in 1908, Asquith became leader as a matter of course.

Campbell-Bannerman was an ineffectual Home Ruler. The Asquith group were not Home Rulers, and were not ineffectual either. There was therefore no question of a Home Rule Bill being introduced to the 1906 Parliament.

The 1886 Home Rule Bill was defeated in the Commons when the Chamberlain Liberals went into alliance with the Tories. The 1893 Bill was vetoed by the Lords. Both of those Bills were brought in by minority Governments, supported from the back-benches by the Irish Party. The Lords' veto on the 1893 Bill was not generally considered to be an unreasonable or provocative use of its powers. There is no formal British Constitution. The Constitution is only an argument. And there was a persuasive argument that a drastic Constitutional change, enacted by a minority Government in the interest of a group of backbencher which refuses to take any part in the governing of the state, needed to be validated by a General Election. The 1893 Bill might have been carried if, following the Lords' veto, an election had been called on it, and won. But no election was called, because it was a virtual certainty that it would be lost.

In 1906 the Liberals had an overall majority for the first time since Home Rule became an issue. If the Commons had passed a Home Rule Bill in that Parliament, the status of the Lords veto would have been much more problematical than in 1893. But no Home Rule Bill was introduced in Parliament. Instead of Home Rule, the Liberals introduced an Irish Council Bill, which was essentially a version of Wyndham's Devolution scheme. It provided for the establishment of a representative, but non-legislative, all-Ireland administrative body—a sort of 32 County local government body. It was vehemently opposed by the Irish Party and the Ulster Unionists, and was dropped.

However badly Ireland had been treated by England over the centuries—and one would be hard put to exaggerate the atrocity of English rule in Ireland—it was always, until 1913, treated as a single unit. It was so treated in the Irish Council Bill.

The Ulster Unionist view was that it should not be treated as a political unit at all, but merely as part of a unitary British state—with a fallback position that it should be treated as two political entities.

If the Council Bill had been supported by the Irish Party, it is unlikely that it would have been stopped by Ulster Unionist objections. And, if an Irish Council had been established, the Ulster Unionists would have had to function within it. The status of Ireland as a single political unit would thereby have been re-asserted in an administrative body with a representative element which would have progressively have taken the place of Dublin Castle. And, if the functioning of the Council did not have the effect of sapping the vigour of Ulster Unionism, it would at least have increased the difficulty of treating Ireland as anything but a single political unit in subsequent development.

But the Irish Party feared that, if the Council was established, there would be no subsequent development, that collaboration on an administrative body would work to the political advantage of Unionism, and that, if legislative Home Rule was not

established by a single Act of Parliament, and in antagonism with all Unionist elements in Ireland, Irish nationality would wither. At least, it acted as if that was what it thought.

O'Brien saw the Devolution/Council issue in a very different perspective:

> "The sectarian bigotry which in the late century divided Ireland was a modern invention belonging to the 19th century, and, like most of the scourges which fell upon Ireland, was a consequence of the Union. The Irish Protestant clergy, who used to be men of the largest and most liberal culture, were first inoculated with their sectarian views by the epidemic of evangelical zeal which came from England...
>
> "It is not easy to set bounds to the transformation Mr. T.W. Russell might have effected among the Ulster Presbyterians if he had been encouraged to spread the conciliation evangel instead of being coerced to drop it. Nothing except folly of our own would have prevented the sects from insensibly gliding into the same common interests. In a famous phrase of Grattan's, 'unless both sides had lost their understanding, they must have lost their animosities'. As all these auspicious omens were met with an insult or a blow—with recriminations going back to the days of Oliver Cromwell for their point, and contempt and ridicule for 'scratch alliances with Tom Sloane'—the sudden check in the movement among the Irish Unionists is not only so much a reproach to Protestant patriotism as the aberration of a few Nationalist leaders and leader-writers.
>
> "...it seems incredible how any cultivated Irish Nationalist should in our more enlightened days, and when all the material interests have changed to our side, declare to be a chimera and an impossibility that power of amalgamation with the native population which has affected all the races that ever came to Ireland, and against which for so many centuries England in vain directed act after act to counteract the fatal spell of Irish manners and of Irish wives. More extraordinary still that the effort to make such a coalition the prime object of national policy—the policy of every great Irishman from the days of Grattan to those of Parnell—should be at this time of day branded as *lese patrie* in the name of Irish Nationality and Irish Catholicity" (Olive Branch, p403).

I think O'Brien's view of the 18th century was mistaken, but it would pass muster as a distant sentimental background to a policy rapprochement between Catholic and Protestant Ireland in the early 20th century. And it is certainly true that the signs of willingness for a rapprochement put out in Protestant Ulster were rebuffed by the Irish Party—and by developments in the sphere of religion proper, on the Catholic side, in these years.

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(The bitterness within the Nationalist side over the issues of land purchase and devolution was so intense that O'Brien brought a libel action against the Freeman's Journal in 1907. It had denounced him for "unnatural services to insatiable landlordism", betrayal of the farmers, and conspiracy with the Unionists to destroy

the Irish Party.)

The Ancient Order Of Hibernians

The *Daily News*, on 13th May, 1908, commended the Redmondites for supporting the Liberals' Irish University Bill, despite criticism of the Bill by the Catholic Hierarchy, and it reflected as follows:

"The plain fact is that it is coercion, and coercion alone, which has made clericalism a great political force in Ireland during the past—as it has choked every kind of progressive movement. Let the national question once be solved, and opinion in Ireland will follow the natural line of democratic advance. Home Rule means the liberation of intellectual and moral forces which to-day are turned from their proper work. It is coercion which perpetuates Rome Rule."

A few days later (16th May), John Redmond was the "Man Of The Week" in the Daily News "Character Study":

"Parnell was the incomparable guerrilla chief, mysterious, secret, elusive, touching the imagination of his fellows to a sort of frenzy of devotion; Mr. Redmond is the commander-in-chief of a regular army, pursuing his campaign in the open country according to the laws of Parliamentary strategy. He is not a dictator; he is the head of a staff.

"Mr. Redmond could not wear the rebel robe, for his genius is Parliamentary and constitutional. He is, indeed, one of the ablest Parliamentarians in the House. He has the spirit of Parliament in his blood. Four generations of his family have sat in the House, and he himself learned the rules as a clerk in the House, and later by breaking them in those thrilling days when the duty of every Irish member was to smash the machine of government... It is difficult to remember that this grave senatorial figure... learned the art of war in the fierce school of faction and rebellion...

"Today the House has no warmer admirer. 'Putting aside its attitude to Ireland', he says, 'it is the finest assembly in the world—so manly and generous... It came to love Biggar with his quaint figure and his interminable speeches. And you remember when Bradlaugh was dying it passed a resolution cancelling the wrong it had done him. That was a fine and generous act'...

"He is the orator of the House—the last representative of a tradition that has passed. Other men rise to speak: he rises to deliver an oration...

"He is above all a man of the world and of affairs... He is alone a sufficient answer to the foolish view that the Irish have not the gift of self-government... Through all the bitter war that followed the fall of Parnell he remained loyal to his old chief—loyal in the face of English morality and Irish clericalism. He marched out of the battle with his little band of nine, and wandered with them through the wilderness for nearly ten years. At last he brought all the scattered flock together...

"He can be generous even to his political foes. 'I like Balfour', he will tell you. 'He bears no malice. When the round is over he shakes hands...'

"If the old ferocities of the Irish issue have vanished from the House it is largely due to him as well as to the softening influence of time. He has no anti-British sentiment and will never talk of 'cutting the painter'. 'Our stake in the Empire is too large for us to be detached from it', he said to me. 'We Irish have peopled the waste places of Greater Britain. Our roots are Imperial as well as national.' He rejoices in the new spirit that has come over Ireland. The old religious strife is dying. 'When I first went to Belfast I went carrying my life in my hand... The last time I went to Belfast I spoke in the Ulster Hall... and a third of the audience were Protestants...'

Unlike Parnell he is a Catholic, but in his urbane way he has fought an heroic fight with clericalism. When the Parnell split came he elected to stand by his political chief and to defy the lightnings of the Church. It needed courage. He has sat in his pew and heard himself denounced by name from the altar as the anti-Christ. He has seen the congregation rise in a body and walk out in revolt against the priest. His ultimate triumph was won without sacrifice and it involved the end of the political domination of the priesthood. The secular power of the priest was split on the rock of Parnellism.

"There have been moments of weakness. He made a mistake in tactics when he responded to Cardinal Logue's appeal an brought his party over to the support of the [Unionist] Education Bill in the autumn sessions of 1902. And his action in moving the rejection of the Irish Council Bill at the [Party] Convention did not square with his reception of the Bill in the House. His judgment is sometimes overruled by expediency. He is not the autocrat of his party as Parnell was: he rules by consent.

"When Home Rule comes it is to be hoped that it will find him still in the saddle."

The *Daily News* was a newspaper of some consequence in the life of the British state, and its editor at this time, A.G. Gardiner (who wrote this Character Study), moved in the inner circles of the state.

The paper was founded by Charles Dickens, the Novelist, who found Catholicism highly distasteful on both moral and hygienic grounds. But it was expected that, wherever the evangelical light of truth and freedom could be beamed in (as these things are understood in Britain at any particular moment), Catholicism would decay.

(The maverick Cork Jesuit, Sylvester Mahony, alias Fr. Prout of Watergrasshill, was, under a second alias which escapes me, Dickens's correspondent in Rome around the time of the election of Pope Pius IX, when a liberal takeover of the Vatican was anticipated.)

The *Daily News*, like many things British, lost its virtue on 6th August, 1914. And I seem to recall that, after many transmigrations of soul, it finally came to rest as *The Sun*.

The "Greater Britain", in which Redmond claimed a stake for Ireland, was the

British state which was extending around the world. The name comes from a very influential book called, *The Expansion Of England* (1883) by J.R. Seeley. Seeley revealed to the first explicitly post-Christian generation of top people that the meaning of English history was the expansion of England as a state, and as a state-bearing people. Greater Britain was the Britain of Cecil Rhodes and Lord Milner and the Boer War. It was an ideal that gripped Liberals no less than Unionists. and it involved the expansion of the British people (the English people with Celtic ancillaries) around the world, as bearers of British state power. The ideology of the brief German expansion into Eastern Europe under the leadership of the Anglophile Hitler was an imitation of the ideology of Greater Britain from about 1890 to 1916.

William O'Brien commented on this English Radical eulogy of Redmond in his weekly paper, *The Irish People*, on 23rd May, 1908. He did not think it was wise of Redmond to pose before a gallery of English Nonconformists as a fighter against the clericalism of the priest, and "to revive the memories of a most lamentable episode in our history". He said the article indicated that English observers saw little to fear "...from the 'virile combative movement' which we were told at the meeting of the Central Branch [of the UIL] was to be waged in the English Parliament as well as on the Irish hillsides". And he pointed out that the Greater Britain statement was given as a direct quote, and had not been repudiated by Redmond.

Eighteen years on from the Parnell Split, John Redmond, the intransigent Parnellite, is the darling of the Nonconformist Radicalism whose Conscience had been the cause of the Split. "Parnellism" is now what is most acceptable in Irish Nationalism to the Nonconformist Conscience. And Nonconformist Radicalism is approaching the pinnacle of political power as Lloyd George becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer when Asquith replaces Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister.

What is afoot in English politics during the next couple of years is the making of arrangements for war on Germany by Asquith, Haldane and Grey through the Committee of Imperial Defence, and the working up of a popular agitation in connection with Lloyd George's *"People's Budget"*.

Redmond, the Parnellite, the Independent Oppositionist, has bound the Irish Party into a tight alliance with the Liberal Imperialist/Radical Liberal Party, even though it has struck Home Rule off the Parliamentary agenda for the first Parliament in which a Liberal Government might introduce it with a real prospect of success.

And what has been happening in Irish nationalist politics during this period of great radical upsurge in England? The Ancient Order of Hibernians has been taking over the running of the United Irish League.

The *Ancient Order of Hibernians* is a problematical organisation to produce a history of. As far as I know, no academic historian has even attempted it. It tends in academic history to be treated as having been a negligible factor, but that is because it is ill suited to academic treatment.

It exerted an immense influence on Irish political affairs for a period of ten or twelve years, and then disappeared from the awareness of the general public in most

of the country. In North Cork, where it was more vigorously opposed than anywhere else, it left its name behind it in the form of the Hibernian Hotel in Mallow, which in the fifties was *the* place to have wedding receptions. But I am sure that, by my generation, any known connection of the Hibernian Hotel (which was generally called the High B) and the AOH had gone.

Jack Lane tells me that there was a Hibernian Hall in Millstreet, which was formally de-commissioned by means of an elaborate religious ceremony some years ago, but that he had been unaware of its AOH status until it called attention to itself by the decommissioning ceremony.

I never heard the name, "Ancient Order of Hibernians", until I went to London in the late fifties and began to mix with Belfast people. And I hardly believed in its existence until I went to live in Belfast and saw it. But it was by then a very pale shadow of itself, even in Belfast.

There is only one history of it that I know of: *History Of The Ancient Order Of Hibernians*, by J.J. Bergin. But that was published by the AOH itself in 1910, and is more a manifesto than a history. Sean McGouran of Belfast has been working on a biography of Joseph Devlin for some time, and a history of the AOH would be an essential component of it. I think, from discussing it with him, that I am in some disagreement with Sean about the AOH, but my ideas about it are so fluid that it is hard to say.

The really effective period of the AOH was the decade after 1905. During that period it was regarded as one of the worst things ever produced out of native Ireland, not only by William O'Brien, but by James Connolly and Patrick Pearse.

But what was it?

An Introduction to the 1910 *History* by Devlin himself says,

"...from the time of its foundation down to the present, the history of the Order is, to a large extent, the history of the Irish nation in its 300 years' struggle for religious and political freedom".

Bergin says:

"...the AOH was established for the protection of the Catholic peasantry; as a bodyguard for the Catholic priest, and for the deliverance of Ireland from the heel of the oppressor.

"It may be alleged by some that the necessities which called the Order into existence are not present to-day, and while conceding that the agitation has won many triumphs for the people..., yet I assert that there is still a pressing and absolute necessity for the existence of a strong, militant Catholic Society such as the Hibernians. We are surrounded on all sides by the forces of Freemasonry, Socialism, Atheism, Proselytism, and all other combinations which collectively are doing considerable injury to the Church and society. These institutions must be fought openly and fiercely by organised Catholic opinion and influence...

"In the AOH no favour or privilege is sought, but the policy of the Order insists that fair competition will be the controlling force in securing positions of emolument for Catholics, and this policy should be adhered to.

"Recently the Order was converted into a benefit Society... The whole Constitution of the Society has also been changed within the past four years, so as to bring it more into conformity with the requirements of the times, but no alteration of policy or constitution can alter the fundamental motto of the Order—Faith and Fatherland."

Bergin mentions a suggestion that the Order was established in 1565, but says that he can only vouch for its existence since 1641, when it played a part in the attempt led by Rory O'Moore to uproot the Plantation. And he quotes the song:

"Do you ask why the beacon and banner of war
On the mountains of Ulster are seen from afar?
'Tis the signal our rights to regain and secure,
Through God and our Lady and Rory O Moore."

The organisation was known by different names over the centuries, chiefly Defenders and Ribbonmen, and it played a part in the United Irish movement. It was carried abroad by the emigration of Catholic peasants, and it took its name, Ancient Order of Hibernians, in America in 1838. The Constitution of the Order in America was changed in 1884 to admit people of Irish parentage—birth in Ireland having been a condition until then. A minority rejected the change and this led to division. The decision to register as a Friendly society led to divisions in Belfast and in Scotland in the early years of the 20th century.

The Order in Ulster was re-organised under a new constitution by Devlin in 1905. And that was its effective foundation as a movement which exerted a general influence on Irish politics.

When I first came across Bergin's *History* I was inclined to dismiss it as largely an invention. But, when I stopped to consider the predicament of Catholics in the region of the Ulster Plantation for 300 years, I was much less inclined to see it that way. A Catholic peasantry survived through all those generations. There was no place for them in the public life of the Plantation. And they undoubtedly had some form of collective existence.

The United Irish movement held out the prospect of a kind of public life in which Catholics might participate freely, but it was suppressed by the Orange movement. The Catholic population of Belfast was minuscule at that point. During the 19th century a large Catholic proletariat accumulated in Belfast with the progress of capitalist industrialisation. One might have expected this Catholic proletariat to have come under the hegemony of Liberal/Radical politics. Belfast, on the face of it, ought to have been a Liberal city after 1832. It had its first ever election in 1832. Tories didn't stand a chance there. All four candidates were Reformers. But fierce conflict developed amongst the Reformers. The elders of the progressive movement denounced the two candidates who won the election and drove them to become Tories, and the logic of party-politics took over from there.

The largely unskilled Catholic workers in Belfast, drawn from the outlying regions of the Plantation, necessarily began by living a life of their own in the early 19th century. And their vigorous communal life was such that, as early as 1802,

Martha M'Tier wrote to her brother, William Drennan, that, though the Catholics in Belfast were a "poor and unknown body", yet "at their chapel there is more news than any other place", and "I begin to fear these people, & think like the jews, they will regain their native Land" (Drennan Correspondence, Aubane Typescript, No. 368).

And as it began, so it continued.

It is not at all surprising that a body such as Devlin's AOH should have arisen amongst the Catholic proletariat of the very industrial, very Protestant, and Orange city of Belfast. From the 1832 fiasco to the present day, the party-politics of the United Kingdom state have never been functional there. And, from 1886 onwards, there has not even been a pretence of normal party politics. Liberals and Tories set aside their differences in the politics of Ulster Unionism. And it is not at all surprising that, in the face of the great Orange/Unionist combination of the dominant Protestant community, the Catholic community should have devised a kind of parallel body to the Orange Order, in which religious and political action was blended.

What is surprising is the rapid spread of the AOH throughout Nationalist Ireland, and the dominance which it achieved over the structure of the United Irish League.

The AOH was an urban and predominantly working class institution, and it acted in certain respects as part of the working class of Britain—that was the meaning of its registration as a Friendly Society. The Nationalist movement in the rest of the country, regardless of Dublin, had a rural character. A collective organisation of Catholics was certainly required to exert pressure for equality of treatment in Belfast, but was not required outside Ulster. And yet the AOH spread around the country very rapidly after 1905, and Devlin became Secretary of the UIL.

Why was this? Presumably because the Party was empty of internal life. It refused to be the organiser of land purchase. It rejected the Council Bill. It rebuffed representative Ulster Protestants, such as Lindsay Crawford, who were willing to attempt a new departure in Irish affairs. And it was in alliance with a Liberal Party with a large Parliamentary majority which was doing nothing about Home Rule. And so the bulk of the Party was filled with the bustling sense of Catholic-nationalist purpose from West Belfast.

The AOH had sufficient reason for existence in Belfast in the condition of the Catholic community there. The condition of its spread through the greater part of Ireland where it had no useful function was the political emptiness of Redmondism. Redmondism in its second phase stood idly by while the AOH honeycombed the Party.

I can see no good reason to condemn what is called the "Rebellion" of 1641, as I have explained elsewhere. But it was utter foolishness for the leader of a constitutional nationalist party, looking for legislative Home Rule to be enacted by a Westminster Act of Parliament, to allow his party to be honeycombed by a

militant lay Catholic organisation with a 1641 programme. That was certain to maximise Ulster Unionist resistance to Home Rule. It might not, technically, be right to describe the AOH as Catholic Clericalism—though it had extensive support from the Clergy—but the difference was not such as would commend it to Protestant Ulster.

There was also a Catholic Clericalist innovation at this time—the promulgation of the *Ne Temere* decree against mixed marriages.

Mixed marriages were not unusual in Belfast. And, on the whole, they followed a customary rule of thumb, whereby daughters took the mother's religion, and sons took the father's. The *Ne Temere* decree declared this to be invalid, and the Church set about breaking up some existing marriages, saying that they were not marriages at all.

The AOH dominance in the Irish Party and the promulgation of the Ne Temere decree gave an unprecedented edge to Ulster Protestant resistance to the Third Home Rule Bill when Redmond finally got it. I hardly think that Parnell would have stood idly by while the AOH honeycombed his Party, as his staunchest disciple did; or that he would not have thought it his business as Irish national leader to do something about the Ne Temere decree.

William O'Brien thought that Redmond had been in private agreement with him in almost everything—the temporary retirement of Parnell, land purchase, the council Bill. Very likely he was. Yet he let the pseudo-revolutionist Parnellism rip in 1891-5; he let Dillon have his way with land purchase; and he shot down the Council Bill. And then he let the Irish Party become a quite explicit Catholic-nationalist Party—a party as organically connected with a Catholic freemasonry as Ulster Unionism was with the Orange Order.

The Split In The Party

With the obstruction of land purchase and the rejection of administrative Home rule by the Irish Party, the interweaving of the Ancient Order of Hibernians with the Party organisation, and the failure of a Liberal Government with a clear majority to act on Home Rule, the scene is almost set for the emergence of the *All-For-Ireland League*.

Lloyd George's Budget was a contributory factor. It was a social reform budget, and to increase revenue it put a tax on land and increased the duty on whiskey. In Britain the Land Tax was a tax on landlordism, but without any intention of abolishing it. A class struggle against landlordism was worked up by the Radical Liberals led by Lloyd George. Great speeches were made denouncing the landlords as oppressors of the people, in spurious imitation of the French Revolution. In England this was all good fun. But in Ireland it had largely ceased to be the case that the owners of the land were landlords. The land had passed into the ownership of the farmers. A Land Tax was therefore a tax of a different kind in Ireland than in England. It was a tax on producers, and was fiercely resented by the social element which was the substance of the people.

But the events which precipitated the formation of the new party was a Liberal Finance Bill dealing with problems that had arisen in the financing of land purchase, and the suppression of criticism of the Bill at a Convention of the United Irish League. As neither the Liberal Government, nor the Irish Party, had any interest in ironing out the difficulty that had arisen in the land purchase arrangements, the Bill that was introduced was not relevant to the problem. The Budget suited the government because it saved money, and it suited the Irish Party because it averted the loss of a useful enemy.

O'Brien had rejoined the Party shortly before the Convention at which this Bill was discussed (February 1909). He was prevented from addressing the Convention on the subject of the Bill by barracking organised by the AOH. Other Cork delegates were prevented from reaching the platform by a strong-arm mob ferried in from Belfast to keep order with batons. And one of the Hibernian slogans was, *"Down with the Russian Jewess"*, i.e., O'Brien's wife, Sophie Raffalovich.

In the aftermath of this "Baton Convention", O'Brien himself resigned from the Party and from political activity. He went to Italy to let his nerves settle down, and while there he wrote *An Olive Branch In Ireland*, an account of Irish politics since the Parnell Split.

But the tactics of the Party leadership at the Baton Convention had a startling effect on the Party in Cork. A substantial section of it did not just resign: it organised itself into a separate Party, adopting as its programme the policies which "the Party" had rejected since 1903, along with opposition to the Budget.

The House of Lords vetoed the 1909 Budget on the ground that it was not a simple Finance Bill (which, by custom, the Lords did not tamper with), but made Constitutional changes. The Government went to the country on the Budget in mid-January 1910. The result was that its Parliamentary majority collapsed, and equal numbers of Liberals and Unionists were returned. But the result of the Baton Convention was that Redmond lost all but one of his seats in Cork.

A newspaper called *The Cork Accent* was launched on 1st January, 1910 in preparation for the election.

The Irish Land & Labour Association

The formation of the All-For-Ireland League might almost be described as a revolt of authentic Parnellism against the official but spurious Parnellite, Redmond. But, if it is put that way, it must also be said that it was a Parnellism more authentic than Parnell's own. It was the implementation of Parnell's *Manifesto*, which Parnell himself never succeeded in forging into a practical political programme.

Parnell put down various markers in the last ten months of his life. To develop those markers into a programme of action, he would have had to say that the attempt to gain Home Rule through alliance with the Liberals, in antagonism with the Unionists, had no future; that the Party needed to free itself from dependency on the Liberals; and that, to regain effective freedom of action, it was necessary to accept that Home Rule was not an immediate prospect, and to proceed by more

roundabout means, including a more self-reliant internal development in Ireland. But Parnell did not say that, and therefore the strategy which was implicit in the Manifesto was not developed.

Within the context of Parliamentary action designed to gain Home Rule in alliance with the British Party which had adopted a Home Rule policy, Tim Healy was entirely in the right against Parnell. The Party was right. Davitt was right, both in his criticism of Parnell's conduct, and his statement "The [Parnellite] minority in the country, however, included a majority of the most active local leaders" (Fall Of Feudalism, p643).

A generation later, Parnell's anti-Party campaign, which had been merely destructive in 1891, had constructive consequences. The seeds of revolt which he had scattered at random bore fruit. But this revolt was directed against the arch-Parnell cultist of 1891, John Redmond, and Tim Healy had a prominent place in the rebellion.

The speed with which an effective challenge to the party was mounted in Cork after the Baton Convention had much to do with the existence in North Cork of an organisation called the *Irish Land and Labour Association.* The ILLA saw itself as part of the national movement, but it had never been incorporated into the organisational structure of the Party. The independent organisation of Land and Labour was the foundation for the independent nationalist challenge to the Party in the first 1910 General Election.

It is necessary to say something about the very idea of *Land & Labour*. I grew up, until the age of 21—which in times gone by was well into adulthood—in the North Cork region in which both the material conditions of the workers, and much more important, the social relation between workers and employers, had been very heavily influenced by Land & Labour, and by the vigorous agrarian terrorist movement which preceded it. (One of its three TDs in the forties and fifties was always a Labour man, Paddy McAuliffe, who lived in a Labourer's Cottage, or, as it was sometimes called, a Sheehan's Cottage.)

In my twenties, for reasons I need not go into here, but had nothing to do with feeling that life in that region was inadequate, or that there was a big, exciting world out there that I had to experience (because I had no such idea), I left Slieve Luacra and went to London. There was a socialist movement in London in those days and I naturally gravitated towards it. That socialist movement had a set of theoretical assumptions about the world which made such a thing as Land & Labour incomprehensible, and I had ingrained habits of thought and action which made it impossible for me to see English Socialism in the era of Michael Foot as anything but a parrot socialism. And I was not astonished when it collapsed.

The original programme of the Land & Labour Association was published by Davitt in *The Labour World*, and at one point he came to Cork to help the movement. The founder of the Land League who had become a London Socialist saw nothing strange in the idea of Land & Labour. And in *The Labour World* he set out a perspective of self-reliant working class development of the kind the tenant-farmer

class had undertaken. But English Socialism did not develop that way—apart from a twenty-year period connected with Ernest Bevin. And now English Socialism is not there any more. Theoretical Socialism for a mass populace in which the only role for the individual is to recite slogans devised for him by theoreticians has not worked out very well.

There is an interesting passage in a novel about the French Revolution that is all too relevant to this point.

> "'Where there is power there will always be the abuse of it.'
> "'*Not if the tenure of power is dependent upon its equitable administration.*'
> "'The tenure of power is power. We cannot to dictate to those who hold it.'
> "'*The people can—the people in its might!*'
> "'Again I ask you, when you say the people, do you mean the populace? You do. What power can the populace wield? It can run wild. It can burn and slay for a time. But enduring power it cannot wield, because power demands qualities which the populace does not possess, or it would not be populace. The inevitable, tragic corollary of civilization is populace'." (Rafael Sabatini: *Scaramouche.*)

Land & Labour did not establish a regime of mass Socialism. But it did exercise a lasting effect on social relations in its region.

D.D. Sheehan leader of the ILLA, describes his political origin in the wild Parnellism of 1891:

> "The one and only time I saw him was when he was a broken and a hunted man and when the pallor of death was upon his cheeks, but even then I was impressed by the majesty of his bearing, the dignity of his poise, the incredibly majestic glance of his wondrous eyes, and the lineaments of power in every gesture, every tone and every movement. He awed and he attracted at the same time. He stood strikingly out from all others at that meeting at Tralee, where I was one of a deputation from Killarney who presented him with an address of loyalty and confidence, which by the way, I, as a youthful journalist starting on my own adventurous career, had drafted" (*Ireland Since Parnell*, p15).

The effective challenge to the Redmondite Party in the January 1910 Election was due in very great part to D.D. Sheehan. What Sheehan had caught from Parnell was inspiration. And it was Parnellite inspiration that overthrew the regime of the empty Parnell-cultist, Redmond, in Cork in 1910.

Sheehan gives the following account of himself:

> "The writer of this work first saw the light on a modest farmstead in the parish of Droumtariffe, North Cork... His father was a Fenian, and so was every relative of his even unto the womenfolk... He was not more than seven years of age when the terrible tribulation of eviction came to his family...
>
> "It was something in the nature of poetic justice that the lad whose family was cast thus ruthlessly on the roadside in the summer of 1880, should, after the passage of the Land Act of 1903, have, in the providence of things, the opportunity and power for negotiating, in fair and friendly and conciliatory fashion, for the expropriation for evermore from all ownership in the land of

the class who cast him and his people adrift in earlier years.

"This writer has it proudly to his credit that, acting on behalf of the tenants of County Cork, he individually negotiated the sales of more landed estates than any other man, or combination of men, in Ireland, and that with the good will and indeed, with the gratitude of the landlords and their agents, and by reason of the fact that he applied the policy of Conference, Conciliation and Consent to this practical concern of men's lives, he secured for the tenants of County Cork a margin of from one and a half to two years' purchase better terms than the average rate prevailing elsewhere.

"For the rest he devoted himself during the better part of a quarter of a century to the housing and the social betterment of the workers in town and country, with results which are reflected in their present vastly improved condition.

"But his greatest effort, and what he would wish most to be remembered for is that, with a faithful few and against overwhelming odds, he took his stand for Mr. William O'Brien's policy of national Reconciliation, which all thoughtful men now admit would have saved Ireland from countless horrors and England from a series of most appalling blunders if only it had been given fair play and a fair trial....

"I entered the Party in May 1901, having defeated their official candidate at a United Irish League Convention for the selection of a Parliamentary candidate for Mid-Cork... In those days I was not much of a politician. My heart was with the neglected labourer and I stood, accordingly, as a Labour candidate, my programme being the social elevation of the masses, particularly in the vital matters of housing, employment and wages. I was not even a member of the United Irish League, being wholly concerned in building up the Irish Land and Labour Association, which was mainly an organisation for the benefit, protection and the education in social and citizen duty of the rural workers. Mr. Joseph Devlin was sent down to the Convention to represent the Party and the League. It was sought to exclude a considerable number of properly accredited Labour delegates from the Convention, but after a stiff fight my friends and myself compelled the admission of a number just barely sufficient to secure me a majority. This was heralded as a tremendous triumph for the Labour movement, and it spoke something for the democratic constitution of the United Irish League, as drafted by Mr. O'Brien, that it was possible for an outsider to beat its official nominee and thereby to become the officially adopted candidate of the League himself. In due course I entered the portals of the Irish Party, but though in it was, to a certain extent, not of it, in that I was more an observer of its proceedings than an active participant in its work. My supreme purpose in public life was to make existence tolerable for a class who had few to espouse their claims and who were in the deepest depths of poverty, distress and neglect. Hence, except where Labour questions and the general interests of my constituents were concerned, I stood more or less aloof from the active labours of the Party." (p140-2).

"...Let me say at once that in those days I had no attachments and no personal predilections. John Redmond, William O'Brien and John Dillon were all, as

we say in Ireland, 'one and the same to me'. If anything, because of my Parnellite proclivities, I rather leaned to Mr. Redmond's side, and his chairmanship of the Party had certainly my most loyal adherence. Otherwise I was positively indifferent to personalities, and to a great extent also to policies, since I was in the Party for one purpose, and one alone, of pushing the labourers' claims upon the notice of the leaders and of ventilating their grievances in the House of Commons whenever occasion offered. Furthermore, I do not think I ever spoke to Mr. O'Brien until after the Cork election in 1904, when, convinced of the rectitude of his policy and principles, I stood upon his platform... I was aware that, had he so minded, in 1903, when he was easily the most powerful man in the Party and the most popular in Ireland, he could have smashed at one onslaught the conspiracy of the 'determined campaigners' and driven its authors to a well-deserved doom. But the mistake he made then, as mistake I believe it to be, was that he left the field to those men, who had no alternative policy of their own to offer to the country, and who, instead of consolidating the national organisation for the assertion of Irish right, consolidated it rather in the interests of their own power and personal position. Thus it happened that a movement conceived and intended as the adequate expression of the people's will became, in the course of a short twelve months, everywhere outside of Munster, a mere machine for registering the decrees of Mr. Dillon and his co-conspirators" (p147-8).

"...When Mr. William O'Brien was labouring for the wretched 'congests' in the West and founding the United Irish League to make the great final onslaught on the ramparts of landlordism, a few of us in the South were engaged unpretentiously but earnestly to get houses and allotments for the agricultural labourers, and to provide them with work on the roads during the winter months when they could not labour on the land. Ten years previously we had laid the foundations of what we hoped would be a widespread national movement for the regeneration of the working classes. The founder of that movement was the late Mr. P.J. Neilan, of Kanturk...

"I was then a schoolboy, with a youthful yearning of my own towards the poor and needy, and I joined the new movement. Two others—the one John D. O'Shea, a local painter, and the other John L. O'Shea, a carman (the similarity of their names often led to amusing mistakes)—with some humble town workers, formed the working vanguard of the new movement, what I might term a sort of apostolate of rural democracy. Our organisation was first known as the Kanturk Trade and Labour Association. As we carried our flag, audaciously enough, as it seemed in those days, to neighbouring villages and towns, we enlarged our title, and now came to be known as 'the Duhallow Trade and Labour Association'... I was then trying some 'prentice flights in journalism and I managed to get some reports of our meetings into the Cork Press, with the result that demands for our evangelistic services began to flow in upon us from Kerry and Limerick and Tipperary...

"In time we interested Michael Davitt in our movement, and we achieved the glorious summit of our ambitions when we got him to preside at a great

splendidly attended by as gallant a body of Irishmen as could be found in all Ireland—men who knew, as none others knew better, how to fight, when fighting was the right policy, but who knew also, in its proper season, when it was good to make peace. The Press, however, shut its pages to the new movement...

"No human being could struggle under the mountain weight of responsibility that now rested on the shoulders of Mr. O'Brien. Wearied by the monstrous labours and fights of many years, deserted by his own colleague in the representation of Cork City... it would have been madness for him to continue.

"Accordingly he decided to quit the field again and to leave the clever political manipulators in possession...

"I had some reputation... as a successful organiser, and I wrote to Mr. Redmond offering my services to re-establish the United Irish League in my own constituency or in any other place where it was practically moribund. I received a formal note of acknowledgement and heard not a word more, nor was my offer ever availed of. On the contrary, the fiat went forth... not a friend of Mr. O'Brien should be allowed to remain in public life.

"In the autumn of 1909... it was conveyed to me that a raid on my constituency was contemplated, that the officials at the League headquarters in Dublin were, without rhyme or reason, returning the affiliation fees of branches which were known to be friendly to me, and that a Divisional Conference of my enemies was summoned for the purpose of 'organising' me out of Mid-Cork. I immediately resolved that if the issue were to be knit at all the sooner the better and I took my own steps to circumvent the machinations of those who were out, so to speak, for my blood. Hence when the bogus delegates were brought together in Macroom one Saturday afternoon a little surprise awaited them, for as they proceeded to the Town Hall to deliberate their plans for my overthrow, another and a more determined militant body, with myself at their head, also marched on the same venue. There was a short and sharp encounter for possession of the hall: the plotters put up a sorry fight; they were soon routed, and my friends and myself held our meeting on the chosen ground of our opponents..." (p218-23).

"We were in a most benighted state, without any trace of organisation of our own (except that I had the Land and Labour Association unflinchingly on my side), without any newspaper to report our speeches, and with only the bravest of the brave to come upon our platforms to say a good word for us...

"Mr. O'Brien, by a destiny there was no resisting, was forced into the fight in Cork City and emerged victoriously... I was left to fight my battle almost single handed, having arrayed against me two canons of my church and every Catholic clergyman in the constituency, with two or three notable exceptions. The odds were hopeless, but the result provides the all-sufficient answer to those who say that the Irish Catholic vote can be controlled under all circumstances by the priests, for I scored the surprising majority of 825 in a total poll of about 4,500" (p228-30).

The *Cork Accent* And *Cork Free Press*

The Cork Accent

The first number of *The Cork Accent* was published on 1st January, 1910. It carried the following explanation of the title, which was printed under the mast head of every subsequent issue:

> *"The Order of the Bosses was that no person with a Cork Accent should be allowed near the platform of the Molly Maguire Convention. 'The Cork Accent' will now help in saving Ireland from the Degrading Thraldom of an Incompetent Clique, who have ruined the Irish Cause, Betrayed the Irish Farmers, and have converted the Irish Party into the despised tail of British Liberalism."*

(The Molly Maguires was a name given to the AOH. At other times it was called the Board of Erin.)

It gave the text of a "Requisition" sent to William O'Brien in Florence requiring him to come home and do his duty. The Requisition had about 250 signatures, including groups from the Boilermakers' Society and the Gasworkers' Union.

Here is an extract from the first editorial, entitled *Our Mission*:

"Ireland is passing through a grave crisis. She is being plundered by the Radical Government and gagged by the Molly Maguires. She is being juggled with by English Ministers and humbugged and deluded by their Irish Allies. The Government has carried out Mr. Dillon's wishes and killed land purchase in Ireland... The Irish Party have been consenting parties to the carrying through the House of Commons of a Budget which will impose exactions in this country, the extent of which no man can estimate or foresee, and they are now openly pledged to assist the Government in passing it into law. Home Rule, with their consent, has been postponed to the Greek Kalends...

"...the Cork Examiner, since it enlisted under Mr. Devlin's banner and donned the uniform of Molly Maguires has outraged every canon of journalistic fair play and has sought to establish a tyranny in the South of Ireland worse than the Czar of Russia or the Sultan of Turkey ever attempted to put in force. That tyranny we mean to put down. We will make it possible for the voice of the people to be heard, and we will put the Cork Examiner in its proper place...

"In the fight which has now opened the Cork Examiner stands for a bastard form of Catholic Orangeism. It has attempted to make the South of Ireland the prey of a secret sectarian society which would batten on the resources of the country, which would keep Irishmen divided into two hostile camps, and

which would make the accomplishment of Home Rule impossible for all time... The banner which we now raise will never be lowered until Molly Maguireism will be banished as completely from Munster as St. Patrick banished reptiles from the soil of 'holy Ireland'."

The second number (3rd January) carried a report of a Representative Convention of the Irish Land & Labour Association of County Cork which was held in the Council Chamber of Cork City Hall, and was addressed by D.D. Sheehan. There were delegates from the following parts of the county: Canovee, Carrignavar, Liscarrol, Newtownshandrum, Araglen, Kanturk, Glounamuckla, Ahiohill, Buttevant, Ballinadee, Cullen), Fermoy, Lyre, Ballincollig & Ballinara, Charleville, Whitechurch, Inishannon, Newcestown, Cullen, Doneraile, Glountane & Little Island, Ballyclough, Donoughmore, Queenstown, Inniscarra, Berrings, Carrigrohanebeg, Crookstown, Kilnamartyra, Blarney, Ballinhassig, Dromtarriffe, Kilworth, Douglas, Riverstown & Rathcormac, Clandrahid, St. Mary's, Kilworth.

The General Election in late January brought resounding success to the Independent Nationalists (soon to be called the All-For-Ireland League) in Cork, and a rebuff for the Liberal Party in Britain. The Liberals' failure to gain a clear electoral mandate for its Budget brought about political stalemate, and political crisis, in Britain. The Liberals and Tories were of equal strength in Parliament. The Irish Party held the balance-of-power once more. A second General Election in December 1910 left the situation unchanged in Britain and consolidated the position of the AFIL in Cork. Redmond maintained a tight alliance with the Liberals and implemented the policy of enabling the Liberals to enact reforms in Britain which he had opposed vehemently in *The Parnellite* in 1895, on the condition that the Liberals would then introduce a third Home Rule Bill.

The Cork Accent drew the lesson from the experience of the preceding generation that it was a fatal strategy to tie the Irish national interest to one of the British parties and hope to gain Home Rule through intensifying the antagonism with the other. An attempt was made after the first General Election by groups of Liberals and Unionists to find a way around the Budget issue by compromise, and it thought that it was in the Irish interest to encourage this.

Its editorial of 3rd February was titled, *The Tories And Home Rule*:

> "While Mr. Redmond was leading his Party into the Government Lobby, it was perhaps not unnatural that the Tories should resent the conduct of men who were prepared to sacrifice Ireland in the interests of the Liberal Party, an who were ready on all occasions to find pretexts to vote in accordance with the instructions of the Liberal Whips. While this state of things lasted, antagonism to Ireland's claims was the attitude which the Tories inevitably adopted. There is no place for altruism in politics. 'Do as you would be done by' is the maxim on which all parties act. Hostility is met by hostility: blow is returned for blow. No risks can be run, and, where possible, the power of a proven enemy must be crippled. The very existence of the Liberal alliance made it impossible that the Tories would consider Ireland's position with an open mind. But the very moment Ireland showed a disposition to take a line of her own, to consider her own interests first,... a change came over the Tories dream [sic]. The existence of Irish grievances was realised. The necessity for a constructive policy became apparent. Many virtues were discovered in the Irish character. There was no longer any difficulty about admitting the evil effects of historical wrongs. There was a recognition that the time had come to turn over a new leaf in the relations between the two countries. This is what we see taking place at the present moment."

It mentions the Devolution scheme of a few years earlier, and mentions various signs that the Unionists were at that very moment willing to become flexible on the Home Rule issue. And then it says:

> "The Liberal Party has devastated, ruined, and desolated Ireland, and has driven millions of her best citizens into death, starvation and exile. The Irish politicians have worked for Home Rule with the wrong party in the wrong way."

This will only seem to be a statement of wild exaggeration if the reader forgets that Liberalism was the ideology of the Famine and the Liberal Party its overseer, and that the Tory/Unionist Party provided for the abolition of landlordism.

1910 was a fateful year both for Britain and for Ireland. Redmond's decision to proceed by using his balance of power to intensify the antagonism of the British parties on British issues as an adjunct of one of them, in the hope of getting Home Rule out of it at the end, did not bring Home Rule. And it caused the party conflict in Britain to get out of hand to such an extent that civil war seemed unavoidable when the opportunity for declaring war on Germany came as a welcome relief and diversion. What Britain learned from that frightening experience was that it should never again let any Irish matter become an issue in its party politics. It acquired a profound instinct of bipartisanship on Irish affairs, which has resulted in three-quarters of a century of the system of undemocratic government called Northern Ireland.

*

The *Cork Accent* announced on 10th February that a fund for the publication of a full-scale daily paper, to be called the *Cork Free Press* had been launched at Cork City Hall. The final issue of the *Accent* was published on 10th June, and the first number of the *Free Press* on 11th June.

A more extensive selection of reprints from the Free Press will be published separately at a later date. Only a small sample from 1910 can be given here. The accompanying notes are taken from the 1984 pamphlet reprint of these articles.

(I glanced at a *Dictionary Of Irish History*, published by Gill & Macmillan, to see what it said about William O'Brien, and saw that it described the AFIL newspaper as "the anti-Socialist *Cork Free Press*". It is a bizarre description. It would only make sense if the Redmondite *Cork Examiner*, which the Free Press was set up to counter, had been socialist, and if the Free Press had disagreed with it on the matter of Socialism. But it was the Free Press which had the support of

the Labour movement in Cork. I can only suppose that this bizarre description was arrived at through one of those way-out deductions from English theoretical Socialism that were quite common with Irish academics a generation ago.)

The Cork Free Press

1.

A Forecast And A Review

"We have come to a pause in the history of Irish politics, one of those acute crises, when, although the skies are darkened, and our ears are deafened amidst a war of words, the thoughtful minds of the country are anxious to wait, and consider a little, and look backwards, before plunging any further along the path of political and polemical strife. Readers of Barry O'Brien's *'Life of Charles Stewart Parnell'* will at once perceive a startling similarity between the circumstances of the present crisis and those which immediately preceded the supercession of Isaac Butt and the fifty nine *'gentlemanly members'*.

"We stand very much in like, but somewhat worse, position to-day. Thirty years is a long term in the history of mankind. During these thirty years, other nations have sprung, by leaps and bounds, along the path of progress. In America the population has doubled itself; and all along the prairies to the farthest verge of the Pacific new cities have been founded, new States erected until the limits of the mighty Republic have become conterminous with Nature's boundaries. England has grown in wealth and population and Imperial power. Her colonies have expanded into Republics, utilizing their own resources and finances for ever-new measures of public utility. Germany has grown into a Colossus; and a semi-barbarous nation has leaped to the front, not only as a military power, but even as a civilising influence over half the East. We are comparing small things with great—a little island in the North Atlantic with mighty empires. But is it so small? Is not that little island the cradle of the world-wide race? But alas! Whilst her children are building up the fabrics of kingdoms and republics over half the world, she remains in a condition of torpor and stagnation, her life-blood welling out in the open sore of emigration, her towns decaying, her population diminishing at the rate of a million a decade, her vast resources undeveloped, her faculties paralyzed, and her outlook as gloomy and melancholy as at any most disastrous period in her chequered history. We are such mendicants and paupers that we are effusively grateful for small mercies; but whatever we have gained during those thirty years would now seem about to be filched from us in the shape of extra taxation imposed on us by the votes of Irish representatives. There have been energy and suffering enough wasted in Ireland during the last quarter of a century to have built up the Roman Empire; and the question now is whether, after all this, we are to be content with finding nothing but a heap of Dead Sea Ashes in our hands. Let us consider a little.

"The sum total of our political profits in thirty years is—if we except the few crumbs of Land Bills that were flung by Dives to the Lazarus at his gates, and one abortive Home Rule Bill—a Labourers' Act paid mostly from Irish rates, a National University, which appears to be hectic from its birth, and one solid Act, which has turned 200,000 tenant-farmers of Ireland into peasant proprietors. What have these cost; and where have they been fought for? They have cost thirty years of tumult and agitation, an expenditure of about a million of money in subsidies from Ireland and America, untold suffering by eviction, imprisonment, exile, and death. But, where and by whom have even these measures been fought for, and wrested from an unwilling and hostile government? On the Irish hillside, in the prison, in the workhouse; but not by any means by the torrential eloquence that poured in a flood across the floor of the House of Commons, nor in the tournaments of painted laths, which we know were so amusing to the English House of Commons as to afford materials for cartoons for the English comic journals to this day. Parnell foresaw all this, and declared more than once that Irish liberties and Irish rights were to be fought for and won, not in Westminster, but in Ireland. Even the mighty engine he commanded—the solid phalanx of 80 Irish votes, that were to be flung into the scales when the two English parties equalised, with a 'Vae Victis' to the party that would not concede the last fraction of Irish claims—has been a melancholy failure. Only once was that omnipotent weapon put into requisition. Whatever has been won, has been won by the sacrifice of the Irish people at home; by their terrible and stern determination to end, once and for all, the appalling condition of things that obtained; and the largest and most bountiful measure of all was won by the exchange of a few words over a green baize table in Dublin between Irishmen who had at last begun to perceive that Ireland's problems could only be solved by herself, and that Ireland's salvation could only be worked out by Irish hands.

"From a purely utilitarian standpoint, therefore, it is clear that our work is only commencing; that much remains to be done that has not been done; that a great deal that has been ill done remains to be well done; and that, above all, the grand objective of Irish National aspirations, Home Rule, which, under the stress of Parliamentary eloquence, has become a mere phantom, dragging the Irish race through quagmire after quagmire of political trouble, and which now has almost thinned away to vanishing point, must be brought back and reduced, under the concentrated action of the people, to a concrete and tangible reality. A heavy task for the generation that is just now passing through.

"But this is not all. The rising generation of Irishmen has only been saved from the dreary fate of absolute scepticism by that marvellous instinct of emotional patriotism that has protected our race for 600 years. Everything they see around the around them when they emerge from the schools, which, under our unhappy systems of education, tend to stifle and destroy every germ of patriotism in the youthful mind, would seem to teach that patriotism is now

reduced to a practical system, in which self-interest has displaced that higher ideal of sacrificing everything for the common weal; and the still higher ideal of labouring and suffering for the motherland. The great Irishmen of the past, in whom, as they stood in the dock, Isaac Butt, a Protestant, and in one sense an alien, discerned the most perfect disinterestedness, the keenest sense of honour, the spirit of self-immolation, and the most absolute love of truth; those patriots of the past, whose motives were sublime, even if their methods were impracticable, are now scorned as 'hill-siders' and 'tinpikers'; and that generous policy that haunted the imagination of Wolfe Tone a hundred years ago; that was accepted 80 years ago by O'Connell as an indispensable factor in his efforts to repeal the Union; which, sixty years ago, Thomas Davis preached with his own marvellous eloquence and sincerity; and which, thirty years ago, Parnell accepted in his famous truism, 'Ireland needs the services of every one of her children,' is now derided as a fancy only fit for the distorted imaginations of Bedlamites. Every principle of Nationality is now subverted; all the teachings of the nineteenth century, and of its golden periods—'98, '48, and '67 are voluntarily discarded; political expediency has taken the place of political morality; and men shrug their shoulders to-day at events and words and works and toils, that at one time evoked the enthusiasm of the entire nation. No wonder that the young men of our generation look on in blank amazement; no wonder they ask for some guidance—some voice that will tell them whither we are tending; some new and powerful influence that will keep the flame of patriotism from dying down into dead ashes in their hearts. It is well known to the writer of these lines that such is the case. Dazed and bewildered in the tempestuous politics of to-day, looking in vain to blind leaders of the blind, they have to turn away in a kind of despair, and ask themselves, 'Where is the truth, if truth exists at all?' And who is going to sift the true from the evident falsehoods that are current everywhere? The echoes of great words and greater deeds are in their ears; the vision of triumphant Nationality is before their eyes. But din and confusion of contemporary politics dull the one and blind the other, and leave them helpless and bewildered and sceptical. There never was a generation of Irishmen so sorely tried. It is the worst and darkest period of the nation's occultation.

"Clearly then we must hark backward, and learn once again the principles of a Free Nationality—the first axioms and original data on which the politics of a nation should be built. We have to get rid of that stupendous frivolity that leaves a people without faith and without aims; and that scepticism which impoverishes the soul and makes it barren; and that superficiality that has filled the land with critics instead of thinkers, punsters instead of poets; scoffers instead of strong, serious, and determined seekers after what is best for individual growth and national progress. And this can now be done only through the Press. The world is growing tired of oratory. Speech falls today like the seed upon the stony ground. It is the sheet, the feuilleton, that flutters

above the toast and eggs of the aristocrat or the mechanic, or that penetrates the mountain cabin or the village forge, and is read on Sunday by the light of the peat fire, that sways the hearts and moves the convictions of the people But, if the power of the Press is great, so, too, is its responsibility; and it is nothing short of a crime against the nation and humanity for any great writer to lead the people astray, or seek to debauch their minds and obstruct their advancement by misdirection under the baleful influence of party spirit. And, unfortunately for us Irishmen, there is a traditional difficulty in viewing great political issues dispassionately, and in acknowledging that there is hardly a greater vice than consistency, when it means fidelity to the interests of a party, while flouting the dictates of conscience, and the principles of political morality. For it should ever be remembered that morality cannot be separated from politics, nor from anything else; and the man who believes that everything may be sacrificed to political expediency is as immoral as the man who cheats the public on the grounds of commercial necessity.

"One naturally seeks a motto, or rather a guide word, marking the aims and methods of a new journal like this. It is not far to seek. There are not many incidents in our history so dramatic as that which took place in Green Street Courthouse on that day when the Crown Prosecutor arraigned the proprietors of the *Nation* on a charge of treason-felony and seditious publication, and read out an article and a poem as treasonable, adding, 'The writer of these lines was afraid to give his name'. At that moment, a lady, dressed and veiled in black, stood up in the gallery overhead, and, lifting her veil, said simply, 'It was I who wrote the lines over the name of "Speranza"!' That lady was the wife of Sir William Wilde, leading oculist in Dublin, and chief of Irish antiquarians; the poem was *'The Year of Revolutions'*, the lines in that poem which we suggest for selection are:-

God, Liberty, Truth! how they burn heart and brain!
Those words, shall they burn, shall they waken in vain?

"These words may be taken to symbolize and even limit the aspirations of a new Irish journal. Religion—to be protected and defended within these four seas of Ireland from all outer contamination; and especially from that Socialistic-wave that just now is sweeping over Europe, and threatening to submerge England; Liberty—of speech and thought and action, subject to the laws of the Church and State; Truth—to be upheld at any cost, in its integrity; to be spread abroad, at any cost, in all its naked majesty! That is a fair programme. Let us dwell on one or two points.

"If there be one thing more than another which has escaped the solvent and destructive influences of this cynical age, it is the principle that individual liberty is the highest natural prerogative that God has given to men—a privilege that ought to be defended even at the cost of life. It was for this that martyrs shed their blood; it was for this that confessors went to prison, chanting the eternal theme, that liberty is indestructible so long as the spirit

survives. Stone walls cannot stifle it, nor chains control it, nor iron bars limit its greatness, even if they obstruct its operations. Now, it is not too much to say that our fellow-countrymen have voluntarily abdicated and dethroned that individual freedom for thirty years or more. Under a subtle plea they have been induced to place their social and political freedom in pledge to an individual, a clique, or a party. In the beginning, in order to cement the forces that were fighting behind Mr. Parnell, such abandonment of human liberty might have been defensible, although even then many minds revolted at the idea of an autocracy, irresponsible and more or less despotic. In many hearts the old Roman spirit survived; and many brave men growled between their teeth even then:

O, you and I have heard our fathers say,
There was a Brutus once that would have brooked
The eternal devil to keep state in Rome,
As easily as a King

"But the multitude shouted, unconscious of their self-degradation, and laid down their liberties, never caring to think when that priceless privilege could be picked up again. Since that time, under one pretext or another, this whole nation of ours has been compelled to pass under the Caudine Fork. It has disfranchised itself with the inevitable consequence that from the very lack of exercise of its political rights, it has sunk into a condition of mental atrophy, where it is unable not only to discriminate between the claims of individuals and parties to its confidence, but even to detect what subtle and dangerous consequences may lie hidden under fair-seeming words. We are told that discipline is necessary to advance the cause of the nation towards finality. So it is. But not the discipline of absolute disfranchisement; not the discipline of the muzzled mouth and the chained hand.

"There is much talk about unity. Unity by all means. But not the unity of the chained gangs of galley slaves, clubbed or whipped to their bunks at night, but the unity that springs from the spontaneous action of a free people, recognizing their own sovereignty, and demanding cohesion under principle, but not under coercion. And this is now the question of the hour. All other questions—Budgets, Land Purchase, Education, even Home Rule—sink into insignificance before this. Are we free men, or are we slaves in our own land? Has every Irishman who has come to mature age the right of forming his opinion about political questions, or has he not? We are told in the plainest language by the new masters, 'That faction (that is Liberty) must be crushed out with a strong and merciless hand, that it must be trampled until not an iota of freedom is left us'. What is the tyranny of England compared with this? Are we Irishmen no better than the negroes of South Carolina, or the umbrella-bearers of King Bomba? There was a time, and not so long ago, in Ireland, when this would not be brooked an instant, What would the men of '67 have said to such insolence? They would have met the challenge with a clap of thunder that

would have echoed from end to end of the land. For they knew well that a nation that would tolerate such an insult is past redemption. It would be madness to entrust it with self-government, for it is only races of the lowest mentality that engender slaves or tolerate tyrants. The people of Ireland, and the democracy of Ireland, are not so tame as to sit dumb under such a taunt as this. They know that when the hound crouches the whip descends.

"But who are the people, and who are embraced under that word that now bears such momentous significance—the democracy of Ireland? Certainly, it does not mean a section of the people. The very word excludes such a meaning. Certainly it does not mean the predominance of any one class or form of religious belief. No section of population has a right to say any more than the French King, 'The State? It is I!' For, whilst it is morally impossible that there should not be political parties and divided interests in every commonwealth, there should be no barriers against such a combination of forces for the common welfare as our wisest and greatest thinkers have hoped for, and which has been too long deferred. Patriotism is not the maintenance of the pride and privileges of one class; it is the desire for the common wealth and the readiness to sacrifice personal comforts or prerogatives where the welfare of the community is concerned, And if, as Mr. Parnell so frequently reminded the Irish people, the battles for Irish freedom must be fought on Irish soil, and the outposts at Westminster are practically powerless unless they are sustained from the centre it is clear there must be a combination of all classes and creeds, first to agree upon, then to formulate, claims that no English statesman would dare to flout when they come from a united people. 'I am not one of those', said Mr. Parnell, in a certain remarkable utterance, 'who believe in the permanence of an Irish party in the English Parliament. I feel convinced that, sooner or later, the influence which every English Government has at its command—the powerful and demoralizing influence—sooner or later will sap the best party you can return to the House of Commons. I don't think we ought to rely too much on the permanent independence of an Irish party sitting at a distance from their constituencies of Ireland, while we are making a short, sharp, and I trust, decisive struggle for the restoration of our legislative independence.'

"We have moved forward a pace since then, so far as power is concerned, but not, alas! in prudence and in the supreme talent of seizing opportunities We are wastrels and spendthrifts; and like all wastrels and spendthrifts, we take infinite pains to secure what we then fling away as worthless, We were offered the Gladstone University Act, and we rejected it. We obtained the Ashbourne Act, and just as it was about to emancipate the Irish peasant forever, we flung it aside for the phantom of land nationalisation. We took the Wyndham Act, tried it, and just as we found it a measure of supreme utility to our people, we killed it. We were offered Lord MacDonnell's Act—Home Rule, without the gilt letters, and we contumeliously rejected it; or rather, it

was rejected for us by our Directorate. And to cap the climax, Mr. Wyndham, Chief Secretary, seeing the phenomenal issue of the Land Conferences of 1902, made the generous offer, with just a spice of irony, which made the offer more sincere, 'We don't understand you, Irishmen. You are the Green Sphinx. Your riddle is unsolvable by us, or by the Universe. But perhaps you can solve it yourselves. Sit ye down, you, Nationalists, and you, Unionists. And whatever measure you can agree upon between yourselves—be it Land Measures, Local Government Measures, Education, or even Home Rule, I, George Wyndham, promise, with the aid of my Conservative Government, and with the House of Lords at my back, to pass it into an Act of Parliament.' Was the offer accepted? Of course not, We wanted a little more fighting, a little more speechmaking, a little more hunting after will-o-the-wisps, a little more blind trusting in the promise, 'To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow!' A little more blundering and plundering. 'Short, sharp, and decisive', said Mr. Parnell twenty-five years ago. Alas! And we are further than ever from national independence today Verily, there is much truth in the old Roman saying:

Non anser vult velli;
Sed populus vult decipi;
Et—decipiatur!

A goose does not like to be plucked.
But the people like to be deceived.
And let them be deceived!

"Lastly, we have said that truth may be, must be, incorporated in that guide-word that shall determine the working of this paper. Let us commence at once, here on the first page; no matter how unpalatable the truth may be. This Irish nature of ours is a constant subject for amazement. It is the Sphinx-riddle of the world. It is a puzzle even to ourselves. We are a high-spirited people; and yet we have placed our necks under the yoke of a dictator, or a secret camarilla in Dublin for over twenty years. We are an honourable people; who can brook dishonour. We are a clever people; but we have given to the world at large and to empire-building elsewhere, the genius that should be utilized at home. We are a generous people; and yet we are told we must keep up a sectarian bitterness to the end; and that Protestant ascendancy has been broken down, only to build Catholic ascendancy on its ruins. Are we in earnest about our country at all or are we seeking to perpetuate our wretchedness and backwardness by refusing the honest aid of Irishmen? Why should we throw into the arms of England those children of Ireland who would be our most faithful allies, if we did not seek to disinherit them? A weaker brother disinherited by a stronger will naturally be his enemy, not his ally. Do we suppose for a moment that any English electorate, Whig or Tory, Radical, Socialist, or Conservative, will grant autonomy to Ireland, until it is assured that the rights of the minority shall be safeguarded and respected? Do we think that protestations of toleration on

our part will be accepted, if the minority keep aloof, and maintain a suspicious silence? Do we hope that that minority will ever speak, until it is generously invited into the nation's councils? And see what we are losing. It is from the Protestant minority that every great Irish leader for 150 years, except O'Connell, has sprung. It is that minority which has given us our greatest orators, our greatest statesmen, our leading merchants, our greatest archaeologists, our first linguists, many of our greatest poets. It is the same minority that has given the Empire its greatest statesmen, its most illustrious warriors, it leading colonists.

"Think what Ireland would be to-day, if all that intellectual energy had been confined and exercised within the limits of Ireland. Think what Ireland would be to-day, if that stream of genius that has come forth from her schools and universities for the last hundred years had been diverted towards the needs and wants of Ireland, instead of being utilised by other and even hostile nations. But is the stream dried up, and the fountain sealed? No. Not by any means: There never was such intellectual power in Ireland as there is at this moment. It is everywhere. For Ireland's sake let us give it a fair chance! It is not true that our Protestant brethren are hopelessly alienated from Ireland. It is not true that they are any longer an English garrison. No power on earth can persuade us that a class which has given us such prodigies of genius as the first half of the nineteenth century did—genius, too, always devoted to the cause of Ireland, has been smitten with sudden barrenness. There must be in Ireland to-day many silent, yet worthy, successors of the Lord Plunket, who declared in the peroration of his great speech against the passing of the Act of Union, 'I shall resist it to the last gasp of my breath, and the shedding of the last drop of my blood; and when the hour of my dissolution is at hand, I shall take my son, as Hannibal of old, and make him swear on the altar of God, that he too, to the last drop of his life-blood) shall resist the invaders of his country's liberties'.

"For our country's sake let us not despise or alienate such generous help as is now offered. It is absurd to suppose that a nation which excludes from all political fellowship one-third of its population, representing half its wealth and intelligence, can make any progress towards independence or prosperity. Thirty years' failure of such policy ought to have convinced the nation by this time that Home Rule is absolutely unattainable without the consent of our Protestant fellow-countrymen; and it needs no great forethought to understand how unworkable a Parliament would be without their cooperation. We have already advanced a decade into the twentieth century; and whilst all the young nations of the earth are singing their songs of hope and victory, here we are wailing out our desolation in the ears of a tortured world, rattling our alms-box, and exhibiting our Lazarus sores to the nations. Once, and for all, let us stand on our feet like men. Let us call in and embody all the forces at our disposal. Let us no longer alienate the sympathies of our fellow-countrymen, and fling them into the arms of England. Let us no longer expatriate many brave young hearts that would gladly give their lives for Ireland. Ireland needs the services

of all her children; and it will be a crime against the motherland and humanity if just at this auspicious moment we decide to prolong the bitterness and disunion of centuries, rather than accept with fraternal cordiality the generous offer of wealth, and talent and power, moral and intellectual, such as probably no other race can produce, and entrain into the service of Ireland energies hitherto dissipated in fratricidal strife or lent to other nations who would gladly make Ireland the footstool of their feet forever.

"England owes her world-wide power, her Imperial supremacy, to her supreme talent of attracting and assimilating even the most hostile elements in her subject races. Hindu and Malay, Canadian and Australian, Celt and Saxon, Norman and Dane, all are harnessed to her triumphal car. Ireland, alas, has had the talent of estranging and expelling her own children, and turning them, like disinherited and dishonoured heirs, into her deadliest enemies. It is time that all this should cease, if we still retain the ambition of creating a nation; and if we prefer our national independence to the rancour and bitterness of sectarian strife, and the material advancement of our country to the dismal futility of nursing those passions and prejudices that have hitherto thrown back one generation after another of Irishmen into political methods that were reactionary; and social schisms and cleavages that make life one long sorrow to every patriotic and disinterested man."

[June 11, 1910]

["Canon Sheehan was a ...staunch supporter of the All-For-Ireland League, while the splendid leading article in the first issue of the Cork Free Press was from the pen of the distinguished pastor from Doneraile", *Cork Free Press*, 6th October 1913.

The *"Directorate"*, which is the target of this blistering offensive, was the executive committee—one might even say the Central Committee—of the Home Rule Party, or United Irish League. The *Ashbourne Act* was the first Land Purchase Act, passed by the Tories in 1885, and slighted by the Home Rule Party. Gladstone's *University Act* of 1873 provided for the establishment of a federal national University, incorporating Trinity, the Catholic University (founded by Cardinal Newman in 1854, now University College, Dublin), the Queen's Colleges (the present Queen's in Belfast plus the University Colleges in Cork and Galway) and Magee Presbyterian College, Derry. The University would be open, but the Colleges might be denominational. This was not enough for the Catholic authorities, who demanded a separate, and state endowed, sectarian University.

Lord MacDonnell's Act was the *1907 Council Bill*. *"Speranza"* was Oscar Wilde's mother.

The remark that "a semi-barbarous nation has leaped to the front, not only as a military power, but even as a civilising influence over half the East" must refer to Japan, which was then an ally of Britain and had spectacularly defeated Russia in 1905.]

2

Waving The Bloody Shirt

"The *Cork Examiner* yesterday almost eclipsed its own record in misrepresentation and falsehood in an article attacking the All-For-Ireland League. It declared that the policy of the new movement was to 'insist on the

acceptance of an evictor or a red-hot Orangeman as a test of the true faith'..., that 'nothing will satisfy the new emancipators but that we should likewise take to our bosom the Craigs, the Lonsdales, the Hamiltons, and the hungry horde of the Orange garrison', that 'we are to sue for the goodwill of the gracious Orangeman, and be content that we are to be allowed to go our own ways under the protection of the Landlords Defence Association'...

"It is impossible to disguise from ourselves that the object of the article from which these gems have been extracted, is to appeal to the worst instincts and prejudices of the Irish nature. Every suggestion which could arouse and inflame bigotry, which could dig a chasm between Protestants and Catholics, which could plant the seeds of enduring enmity in their breasts, has been availed of with an utter disregard of truth and patriotism. According to the *Examiner*, the whole Protestant community consists of evictors, of hungry Orangemen, of members of the Landlords Defence Association, of men whose hope and aim it would be to walk over the bodies of their Catholic fellow-countrymen. What is this but an effort to keep brother Irishmen in a state of purposeless antagonism and perpetual warfare? Whenever a Protestant shows a disposition to sympathise with Irish aspirations, and to work for the common welfare, the policy of the *Examiner* is to wave the bloody shirt. It flings at them every insulting taunt which can be raked up from the annals of religious strife in Ireland. It makes no secret of its desire that they should be treated as pariahs and almost as lepers in their own country. Under one pretext or another no man must touch them; they must not be allowed to enter the National movement; co-operation with them for any patriotic purpose is to be banned and forbidden; they are to find themselves absolutely shut out from all participation in public affairs; and finally, the decree of the midnight Lodge is to deprive them of their business, and to exterminate them from Irish soil. It was in pursuance of this object that the venomous attack in yesterday's *Examiner* was directed against the Protestants, who have identified themselves with the All-For-Ireland League.

"It would be a waste of space to attempt to deny a single one of the assertions which the *Examiner* put forward in its official capacity as the organ of the Molly Maguire secret society. The programme of the All-For-Ireland League is well known. It aims at certain definite objects. One is the complete abolition of landlordism in Ireland. This no longer forms part of the policy of the Irish Party. On the contrary, they have succeeded in passing an Act which perpetuates that system in the case of two-fifths of the holdings of this country. The only hope of 200,000 tenants being enabled to purchase their land rests with the All-For-Ireland League. In achieving this object the assistance of every Irishman is welcome, but, according to the *Examiner*, when men such as Lord Dunraven and Lord Castletown, who are no more Irish landlords now than the proprietors of the organ which assails them, say they are willing to work for the complete extinction of the landlord system, they should be

repelled as evictors, as members of the Landlords Defence Association, as conspirators seeking to keep the Irish tenants serfs and slaves. But, as if this were not enough, they are next described as hungry Orangemen, animated by the fiercest hostility to the Catholic Faith...

"But the *Cork Examiner* is only proving itself to be the faithful exponent of Mr. Dillon's principles. It is simply preaching his doctrine that one-fourth of the Irish population are to be treated as 'hereditary enemies', with whom alliance or co-operation is impossible. But when fighting had to be done with the evictor and the Orangeman, the *Examiner* took good care to keep out of the line of fire. Now, when the landlords are anxious to cease to be landlords, and to become good Irishmen, and when Orangemen proclaim that they are 'Irishmen first of all', and when they declare their adhesion to the All-For-Ireland League, the *Examiner* will be content with nothing less than perpetual strife and turmoil in Ireland, in which it would run no risks, but which would prove absolutely ruinous to the country...

"It seeks to call from Death's Valley the skeleton of the unhappy past. General Botha holds that the person guilty of such conduct in South Africa would be a public enemy. Is not exactly the same true in Ireland?..."

(June 16, 1910)

[*"The midnight lodge"* here refers to the Ancient Order of Hibernians. General Botha was a Boer leader in the war with Britain who advocated reconciliation of Boers and British after the war.]

3.

The Doctrine Of Eternal Hate

"No one can read the account of the proceedings at the presentation of an address by the Board of Erin to Mr. Abraham testifying to the gratification of that body at his selection for the Harbour Division of Dublin, without feeling that its great object now is to blind the public as to the part played by this secret sectarian society in Irish politics. Mr. Dillon described the statements made about this organisation as 'lies', ...'cruel, unfounded and treacherous accusations'. The fact that Mr. Abraham was chosen for a Dublin seat was held to disprove and demolish everything which had been said with reference to the aims and objects of the Molly Maguire Society. On the strength of that circumstance Mr. Dillon gave a glowing testimonial of tolerance and liberality to the Hibernian Association...

"Mr. Dillon's language at once raises the question whether the statements made about the Molly Maguires are a mere pack of scandalous inventions or whether they are all indisputably true. What are the 'lies' and the 'vile charges' ...against which Mr. Dillon fulminates. That the Molly Maguire society has no connection with the Ancient Order Of Hibernians in America; that it has twice been repudiated by Conventions of that body; that as a benefit society it has never published a balance sheet; that it is being run by a group of

politicians for their own sinister purposes; that no Protestant can be admitted into its ranks; that its foundation principle is to give the preference to Catholics as against Protestants on all occasions; that the result of acting on these lines must be the boycotting and extermination of the Protestant community; that its operations are conducted in secret; that it has been the chief agency chosen by Messrs. Devlin and Company for carrying out the Convention-packing scandals which have horrified the public, that it has been sworn in public Court that the majority of the members of the Standing Committee belong to this secret society; that in this way it has absolute control of the public funds, that it has in its charge the manipulation of the political machine, and that it exercises a power of political life and death over practically every member of the Irish Party; that it is proposed to erect a sort of Catholic ascendancy to take the place of the defunct Protestant ascendancy; that the effect of its operations must be to kindle the flames of civil war between brother Irishmen; that it seeks to make sectarianism the test by which individual custom, public contracts, offices of emoluments are to be decided; that it resorts to boycotting, waylaying, personal violence, and intimidation to attain its ends; that it has been denounced by the head of the Irish Church as a 'pest, a cruel tyranny and a system of organised blackguardism'; that the supremacy of such a society would mean the dislocation of trade, industrial paralysis, and the accentuation and perpetuation of religious strife; and that on the confession of Mr. Dillon himself it would make Home Rule impossible except by force of arms.

"This is the indictment which has been framed against Molly Maguireism. We invite Mr. Dillon to leave generalities and to point out a single one of these counts which is not absolutely true.

"But Mr. Dillon showed before he had concluded his speech the value of his panegyrics on the tolerance of the Molly Maguire Society. He declared that he 'did not believe in the toleration or conciliation which consisted of crawling to Protestants', or in 'conciliating men who have no idea of being conciliated and who mean to kick you all the same'. He 'scorned and despised that kind of conciliation' and 'so long as he had a voice to speak or any influence with the people of Ireland, so long would he set his face against the bogus and sham policy of conciliation', which meant, 'crawling and cringing at the feet of men like Barrymore and Castletown who are still our enemies and who are not worth conciliating'.

"If any person wants to know the true inwardness of Molly Maguireism he will find it in this declaration of implacable hostility to the Protestant minority in Ireland. We need not even notice the reference to Lord Barrymore, as it is only the gems we have culled from Mr. Dillon's oratory which could properly describe it. But Lord Castletown occupies a different position. He is a Home Ruler of many years standing; he is in favour of the complete and speedy abolition of landlordism; he is playing a memorable part in bringing about the establishment of the new National University; he is one of the most determined

opponents of the over-taxation of Ireland; he has proved himself to be in active sympathy with the cultivation of the Irish language and the restoration of Irish industries. But according to Mr. Dillon, Lord Castletown is an 'enemy who is not worth conciliating'. It is exactly the same with Lord Dunraven or Colonel Hutchison Poe... If none of 'the old enemies of our cause' are to be conciliated, even when they have espoused the National demand and taken their stand on the side of the people, then the only alternative is a campaign of ruthless hostility conducted against the Protestant minority. Mr. Dillon's language is open to no other interpretation."

17 June 1910]

[This editorial is a response to a speech made by Dillon at a public demonstration organised by the AOH to mark the unopposed return of [a Protestant Home Ruler from the Parnell era] William Abraham, the Redmondite candidate, in a by-election for the Harbour Division of Dublin. In the January election, Abraham had been defeated by the AFIL in North East Cork, a constituency in which he had been returned unopposed since 1892. When Harbour Division fell vacant,

"the claimants for the seat unanimously adopted the suggestion of Mr. Redmond that the Nationalists of the metropolitan division should adopt as their candidate the veteran Protestant Nationalist who was deprived of the seat he had so long held in Co. Cork on the ground that he adhered to the principles and methods of the pledge-bound Irish Party... Mr. Abraham is one of the old guard. He was in the movement forty years ago... An unobtrusive worker, he earned and kept the esteem of his colleagues by his earnestness and modesty. He, of all members of the party, should have been spared a touch of the 'Conciliation' policy. Although personally almost unknown in the constituency, Mr. Abraham was accepted without dissent on the recommendation of Mr. Redmond. There could be no more gratifying testimony to the regard in which the policy of Mr. Redmond and his colleagues is held. Factionalism would get short shrift in the metropolitan constituencies" (*Freeman's Journal*, 15th June 1910).

Abraham said, at his victory celebration in Dublin:

"They had been told again and again when the A.O.H. spread its organisation through Ireland, that that organisation set out as one of its cardinal features that not alone would no Protestant be admitted to its ranks, but that every position of influence would be shut out from the Protestants of Ireland The men of Harbour Division... had given the lie to that slander... Could there be a greater object lesson than that taught by that great Catholic constituency...? There was nothing in the whole history of the Irish movement that afforded such a proof of the toleration of those who differed from him in faith than the manner in which the people of Harbour Division had acted towards his humble self" (Freeman's Journal, 15th June).

O'Brien made this apt remark about the 'modest' Protestant Redmondites: "Young men of excellent gifts like... Mr. Stephen Gwynn... might have become the honoured leaders of a reawakened Protestant patriotism had they chosen the harder part of representing the traditions of their own rank and creed... They were content instead to merge themselves in the little group of tame Protestant Home Rulers maintained for obvious reasons at Westminster as the nominees of a Hibernian Party to whose inner rites their religion forbade their admission" (W O'Brien, *The Irish Revolution*, 1923, p117).

The Chairman of the AOH demonstration in Abraham's honour said it was significant 'because they had an exclusively Catholic society meeting to congratulate a Protestant on his

election'. Abraham responded in the manner laid down for Protestant Home Rulers (who represented nothing either in Protestant society or the Home Rule movement): 'Mr. O'Brien had set out with determination to crush and destroy the National movement, and to erect on its ruins an organisation composed of the hereditary enemies of Ireland... Well, they had that night given an answer to the slanders of Mr. O'Brien upon the A.O.H. They had given him (Mr. Abraham), a Protestant Nationalist, a welcome of which any man might be proud" (Freeman's Journal, 16th June 1910).

Dillon then made the statement to which the *Cork Free Press* replied:

"This is a frankly Catholic association, but it is not a bigoted association, and it is not an intolerant association. This association was founded for the purpose of defending the Catholics of Ireland against bigotry and intolerance, and all through its history, now extending over upwards of two hundred years, its duty has been to resist bigotry and intolerance."

This sort of thing is too much even for Dillon's admiring and essentially uncritical biographer, F.S. Lyons. Though Lyons did not care to give an account of the AOH, it had clearly impressed him as a thoroughly nasty institution. Referring to a speech in similar vein made by Dillon in Limerick later in 1910, Lyons makes this lame excuse for him:

"Dillon..., though he took no part in the affairs of the AOH, nevertheless defended it in public as 'the greatest association of Catholic Irishmen in the whole world' and claimed it was perfectly tolerant of other points of view. No doubt he made this speech in all sincerity... But in the light of the discontent which undeniably existed it is impossible to acquit him of a degree of *naivete* surprising in so experienced a man. It is possible of course that he took this line out of simple loyalty to Devlin, but it was probably just as much a product of that fastidiousness he had shown throughout his political career and which sometimes blinded him to the seamier side of Nationalism. Because he himself always instinctively took a high moral tone he found it difficult to believe that other, earthier men might not be able, or desire, to live on that exalted plane" (F.S. Lyons, *John Dillon*, 1968, p324).

That explanation is a damning indictment of a political leader in a period of political crisis and opportunity, and it is essentially in harmony with the comment of the *Cork Free Press* a few years later: "Poor Mr. Dillon is still trotted about in Mr. Redmond's train as the Japanese carry about images of their ancestors on festive occasions" (14th October, 1913).]

4.

Campaign In North Cork

Great Meeting In Knocknagree

"Yesterday we published an extended report of the great meeting held at Derinagree on Sunday by Mr. P. Guiney, MP and his friends to establish a branch of the All-for-Ireland League. After the meeting the party proceeded to Knocknagree...

"A most enthusiastic and cordial reception awaited the party at Cullen. Mr. Guiney and his friends were met on the outskirts of the village by a large band of horsemen, the Kilnahulla Band and a big crowd of supporters... The horses formed up in front followed by the band, and as the procession passed through the village there was great cheering and enthusiasm. Between Cullen and Knocknagree there were fresh accessions on route. Approaching Knocknagree

the crowd became still larger, many being attracted by the horn blowing, which was carried on by a number of youths. Outside the village a procession four deep was formed, and amidst a scene of great enthusiasm, excitement and cheering, they marched through the village... A meeting was held, Mr. Daniel O'Connor of Umeraboy West, being moved to the Chair. Amongst those present were:- [Names of people from Knocknagree, Killarney, Rathmore, Kiskeam, Cullen, Guineaguilla [Gneevaguilla], and the Doonasleenn Band. The Chairman made some introductory remarks.]

"Mr. Guiney, M.P. ...then addressed the meeting... He had no doubt but that their mission to Knocknagree was already a success... The All-For-Ireland League was wanted sorely by the people, as they had no organisation in the past that would help to

Right Their Wrongs

and protect them from injustice. The United Irish League was dead as a doornail for many years in that county, and it was dying fast throughout the country, not because it was a bad organisation in itself, but because it was bossed and controlled by a few men who were nothing more than the despised tail of English Liberals and Radicals (hear, hear). It had completely departed from the traditions and principles of its inception. Therefore the people would have no more to do with it. In the All-For-Ireland League they had a new and vigorous organisation, formed and founded on the lines of conciliation, but with all classes and creeds in Ireland who were anxious to work for their common land (hear, hear). The Irish Parliamentary Party, instead of working for the people, had of late years been a Party working for themselves... The climax of their baseness was reached in April last, when seventy-two of them voted for imposing an immense burthen of extra taxation on the country. The gallant men of North Cork were among the first to rebel against the foul tyranny of that Party, and to cast off the yoke of serfdom (applause). They asserted themselves at the polls, and they would do so again with no uncertain voice if required (hear, hear). The Irish Party sold the Irish cause, and for what did they sell it? For the gold which they so lavishly spent last year in fighting him (Mr. Guiney) and men like him. They were the tools and the

Slaves Of The Liberal Party,

and were pledged to try to hunt out of public life all such members who refused to support their Budget. Maurice Healy was refused admission into the Party because he would not vote for the Budget. Mr. Redmond got the Irish vote in England for the Liberals on the shadowy promises of Mr. Asquith in his Albert Hall speech, where he made a faint allusion to Home Rule. Well, the English people had got what they wanted, but did Mr. Redmond get the price for which poor Ireland was handed over to the tender mercies of the Liberal Party? He was farther off than ever from it.

"Mr. Clancy and Mr. Devlin said that the Budget was a blessing... Did any man listening to him, no matter how poor think it was a blessing to have a

halfpenny an ounce added to the price of tobacco? They all knew that a little whiskey was necessary in illness and at other times, and was it a blessing to have the price of it increased by a penny a glass? But they took very good care not to tax the Englishman's beer. That was let go scot free.

"They all saw recently how Mr. Tim Healy with characteristic generosity handed over the £500 which he received from the Federal League of America to Mr. Wm. O'Brien to be used in the interests of the All-For-Ireland policy, and for the benefit of Ireland. That was a noble and chivalrous act. Did they think that the man who extorted 24 1/2 years' purchase from his tenants would do such an unselfish act? No: Mr. Redmond had never done a disinterested political act since he first joined the Irish Party; he was always a salaried politician. On the side of Mr. O'Brien and Tim Healy there was real patriotism and love of country, and on the side of Redmond and Dillon there was nothing but

Love Of Money

"(A voice: "The greed of gold".). For the last twenty-five years neither the Irish Party nor their late representative had done one single act for the constituency. There were in all applications for reinstatement from 1,004 evicted tenants in that. Of that number only 196 have been reinstated; 121 had been promised land somewhere, and 600 had been told to go about their business. Let them contrast that to a small county like Dublin and they would find ten evicted tenants, he was told, to the one in Co. Cork. That was a sample of the manner in which Cork Co. was treated by the Irish Parliamentary party in the past.

"There was one thing that they would insist on in North Cork, and that was that no outside evicted tenants would be allowed to be dumped into that constituency until at least the claim of their own evicted tenants would be justly settled. (Applause.) Any men brought in under such circumstances would be regarded as grabbers. (Hear, hear.) They would keep their own land until their own men were settled down on it, until uneconomic holdings were enlarged and until industrious and deserving labourers got a fair share of the untenanted land in the county. (Loud cheers.) The U.I. League or the Irish Party had done precious little to hunt the grabbers out of Cork County. It was their intention in the near future to hold a monster meeting at Knocknagree, and he hoped that Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Sheehan would be able to be with them on the occasion. (Loud cheers.) As an instance of the wonderful growth of the new organisation he might mention that from from Cork County no less than £15,000 had been subscribed for All-For-Ireland purposes, nearly double what the Molly Maguire M.P.s could gather from all the rest of Ireland, as well as England, Wales and Scotland. When Mr. O'Brien started out on that campaign there was no organisation behind him. Now they had got the All-For-Ireland League, a substantial fund at their hack, and the *Cork Free Press*. (Loud applause.) The cause and the great principles associated with the name and

were growing and leaping into public favour in all parts of the country. It was a genuine movement to improve all classes, to better the condition of the people, and to secure Home Rule, happiness and contentment by unity of action, and a combined demand from all classes and creeds in the country...

"*Mr. J.L. O'Shea*, D.C., Kanturk, who was received with applause said, that Mr. J.C. Flynn, Mr. J.J. O'Shea and the rest of them wanted to muzzle the Irish workingman, but they failed, at least so far as North Cork, and other districts in that great county, were concerned. The present organisation was formed in no narrow spirit—every man was welcome, and every man had a voice in the constitution...

"The following resolutions, which were read by the Chairman, were then unanimously passed by the meeting:

1. That we, the members of the Knocknagree Irish Land and Labour Association, tender to Mr. P. Guiney, our worthy Parliamentary representative, a hearty Cead-mile failte on this, the occasion of his first visit to Knocknagree since his triumphant victory over all that remained of Molly Maguireism in North Cork.

2. The purpose of this meeting here to-day being to start a branch of the All-For-Ireland League, we wish to assure Mr. Guiney that we will give that League our whole-hearted and undivided support...

4. Knowing Mr. Guiney's services to the labour cause in the past, and knowing him to be a noble lieutenant under that noble and illustrious patriot Mr. William O'Brien, we feel confident that that great policy of conciliation—that policy of all creeds and classes—is the only rational policy to pursue, and we look forward eagerly to the day when Protestant North will unite with Catholic South for the common welfare of our country..."

[17 June 1910]

[It has been a peculiarity of that region, since it entered modern civilisation in the 19th century, that the countryside did not look to the towns for leadership, but was itself an active centre of development. Indeed, in comparing that area with the cities it would be more appropriate to speak of urban idiocy than rural idiocy. Abraham's trek from North East Cork to Dublin in search of a Parliamentary seat under Hibernian control is a striking example of this extraordinary relationship of town and country.

Patrick Guiney (1867-1913) was born in Kanturk, took part in founding the Land and Labour Association, emigrated to America where he spent more than a decade, returned in 1907 and secured election to the District Council, was included in Canon Sheehan's circle, won the Parliamentary seat for North Cork in January 1910, and was returned unopposed in December 1910.

Bantry-born *Tim Healy* had a chequered political career. In 1890 Healy let out the immortal whisper, "Ah, but who is mistress of the Party?" Over the next decade he was at loggerheads with O'Brien, who treated his fierce denunciations with humorous tolerance. But he was sound on the land question. He lost his Parliamentary seat (Louth) in December 1910. He ended his career as Governor General of the Free State in the 1920s.

The "24½ years purchase" refers to a notorious incident in 1903. Redmond was landlord. The price negotiated for his estate was two years' purchase over the price which the tenants' representatives in the UIL had aimed for as a norm around the country.

The meeting was opened by the chairman, *Daniel O'Connor*, of Umerabue West, which knows itself and the world even though it is unknown to map-makers.]

5.

Great Meeting At Kiskeam

[The report gives the names of people present from Kiskeam, Kingwilliamstown, Tureen and Kilnahulla. The last two places are not even villages. A traveller with superficial European social conceptions (a traveller from Dublin, let us say) would pass through them taking it for granted that they were traditional backwaters. And yet the most progressive political movement in Ireland, the only one which might have broken the barrier between North and South, was fermenting in these areas, while the long established towns in most of the South were welcoming the embraces of Molly Maguire.

Kiskeam is the birthplace of *Sean Moylan*, who organised and led the IRA in North Cork in the war of independence and civil war, and later took part in the construction of Fianna Fail.

Kingwilliamstown, usually known as Williamstown fifty years ago, is now generally known as Ballydesmond. A generation ago both names were in common use. The inhabitants of North Cork, a storm centre of social and national revolutions from the Land War to the Civil War, took little interest in the Gaelicising of place names that was rampant in less revolutionary areas. Charleville has stubbornly resisted prolonged official pressure to call itself by its official name of Rath Luirc.

The Kiskeam meeting was addressed as follows by *Patrick Guiney*.]

"The All-For-Ireland League, he said, had come into being to replace the old, defunct United Irish League, an organisation which was, to all intents and purposes, dead in the great county of Cork. Its demise was due to the fact that the people had no confidence in an organisation governed and controlled by a secret sectarian body, and which was completely bossed by a Juanta in Dublin. The All-For-Ireland League... was founded on the basis of conciliation and harmony amongst all classes and creeds in Ireland, who were willing to work for the national regeneration of the country so that the people may live in amity, peace and prosperity... The right hand of fellowship was extended to their Protestant fellow-countrymen who remembered, first of all, that they were Irishmen. It proposed, as had been so truly said, to

Bridge The Boyne

and to blend once more the Orange and the Green—(applause)—to work shoulder to shoulder for one great measure of national Emancipation, which item could not be very long denied them...

"All the efforts of Irish agitation in the past had been mostly to relieve the

Irish Tenant Farmer

of the huge and crushing load of unjust rents which they had been groaning under for centuries. To a great extent that object had been attained. But, at the way things were progressing at present if the thing was not checked there was

a grave danger that the taxes the Irish farmer would have to pay in future under the Budget would be even a more intolerable and crushing burden than ever the receivers of rent were of old (hear, hear.). The reductions they had gained in their rent were now sought to be filched from them in overtaxation. It looked as if St. Columbkill's prophecy was likely to come true that a time would come in Ireland when the taxes would be worse than the rent on the people. That arch hypocrite, Joe Devlin, had the effrontery to state that the Budget was a blessing for Ireland. Well, if it were a blessing to be robbed, then the people had a very beautiful blessing indeed. In the near future they would be bled to such an extent that many of them would frequently wish that there had never been an Irish Parliamentary Party.

"Mr. Redmond was kept dangling at the end of a string until the English people got their Budget, but what had Mr. Redmond got in return? Nothing. If the Land Act of 1903, which had conferred such blessings on the people, were allowed to continue in operation for a few years more, every tenant farmer in Ireland would be the owner of his own land (cheers). Instead of that Mr. Dillon, Mr. Redmond, and the hare-brained Joe Devlin, saw that if Land Purchase was allowed to go on unchecked, that there would be no need for an Irish Parliamentary Party, or any party, and they decided to get Mr. Birrell to introduce a Bill which would for ever put a stop to Land Purchase...

"Mr. O'Brien (cheers) expected blind and dumb obedience from no man, and every man before adopting a line of action should be convinced fully and clearly in his own mind as to the wisdom and necessity of it. Every man was expected to speak out his mind in the All-For-Ireland League. It was not to be controlled and wire-pulled by a triumivirate. It meant and it was destined to pull the people together and to shake off the sordid intrigues of selfish politicians It was to assume and take up again the great

Bold Policy Of Parnell

of complete independence of all English parties. Its books and accounts would be open for all to see. No man need fear that he would meet the fate of Mr. Ginnell who was thrown out of the U.I. League only because he asked what was being done with the funds."

[22 June 1910]

6.

[Orange And Green]

"...Because I love the orange lily, may I not be permitted to love the shamrock too? Because, until my eyes close in death, there will be dear to me the sight of an orange banner and the sound of an orange drum, I am not to have part or lot in the regeneration of my country? Because I love 'The Boyne Water', I am not even to whistle 'The Wearing Of The Green'. We, whose forefathers fought and bled for the right to worship God as their faith and consciences dictated, are to feel no sympathy with the gallant men of Cork in

the struggle for political and personal freedom.

"Just because I have fought hard, with speech and pen, for the maintenance of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, I hail the opportunity provided by the genius of William O'Brien for the promotion of the union of all creeds and classes in Ireland. I am for Union at all times and in all things—for the union of master and man in industrial effort, for the union of christendom against atheism and irreligion, for the federation of the British Empire, and then the federation of the world! Imperial Federation is rapidly coming to the forefront, and with it, and not before (John Redmond and Company, notwithstanding) will come Ireland's opportunity. An Irish Parliament for local affairs, must come with those of England, Scotland, and Wales. Meanwhile, it does one's heart good to see that the old nonsense about separation from England is dying a natural death—that at last Irishmen are realised that God Almighty, in 'the ground plan of Creation', meant these twin islands of Great Britain and Ireland to be interdependent and not independent. 'Ireland a Nation!' Certainly—the 'Emerald gem' in the Imperial Crown—a free nation amid the free nations of Canada, Australia, South Africa.

"For we are 'Sons of Empire' as well as 'Sons of Ireland'; and ours is a goodly heritage and a glorious future, under God's providence, if we can only rise equal to our vast opportunities...

"Orange Dog"'

[Letter, 22nd June 1910]

7.

Kerry In Line

"The All-For-Ireland League made a great stride on Sunday, when its banner was proudly unfurled in 'the Kingdom of Kerry', and we believe it is only a question of days until West Waterford takes its stand shoulder to shoulder with Cork, Limerick and Kerry. We shall then have a quadrilateral in the South of Ireland against which the battalions of the Molly Maguires will shatter themselves in vain. To Mr. Tom Guiney M.P., belongs the distinction of proving to the world that historic Kerry is now ready to fall into line with the adjoining counties in its support of the new movement. The meeting addressed by him on Sunday at Brasna, at which a branch of the All-For-Ireland League was established was a conclusive evidence that the people are only anxious to take their part in the work of saving the Irish cause from destruction. Every one will remember that in the old days Brosna contained some of the best fighting Nationalists in Ireland. When danger had to be faced and when risks had to be run, they were never found wanting at the call of duty. These men are now heart and soul in favour of the policy which the All-For-Ireland League was founded to give effect to..."

[12 July 1910]

8.

After The Battle

"Mr. O'Brien said, during the course of his speech in the City Hall yesterday, that the scene which was witnessed when he stated that the unnatural combination which exists between Dublin Castle, the Molly Maguires, and a section of the bishops of our Church, must be grappled with and brought down, would live in history... From every point of view it was one of the most remarkable assemblages ever held in Cork. It was convened only a few weeks after the close of an exciting and exhausting electoral campaign. It came immediately after the Christmas festivities, and it would perhaps not be very surprising if signs of a momentary slackness or apathy were visible. But was that the case yesterday? On the contrary, a meeting more representative, more enthusiastic, more unanimous, more determined, was never held in this city. It contained the pick and choice of the Nationality of Cork. There was hardly a portion of Cork County which did not send a deputation. There were men in the hall who had travelled ninety miles yesterday to be present. There were no special trains, no cheap fares, no exceptional facilities of any kind, and yet the spacious City Hall was packed to the roof. But, more striking even than the attendance, was the enthusiasm exhibited from the start of the proceedings to the close. It might be said that within living memory such a spirit has not been shown by the people... They had come to celebrate a great victory...

"In this county and city the power of the All-For-Ireland League is supreme. It has repelled without difficulty the attack made upon it. An attempt was made to smash it in its infancy... But the All-For-Ireland League still holds the fort. In eight divisions out of nine its enemies have been rolled in the dust, and, as to the remaining seat, we prefer to say nothing at present as to the influence and methods which have enabled it to be temporarily retained by the Molly Maguires. But the fact which stands out in bold relief is that the overwhelming majority of the Nationalists in Cork City and County have solidly ranged themselves behind the All-For-Ireland League...

"Mr. O'Brien naturally dealt yesterday with the situation which will present itself when Parliament meets. Mr. Stephen Gwynn has assured the public that a Home Rule Bill will be passed before the Coronation. Mr. Redmond has declared that the Lords' Veto is dead, and that there will not be the slightest difficulty about passing a Home Rule Bill, and that by placing trust in him the hopes and aspirations of the Irish people would be fully realised. The fact must be faced that the majority of the public outside Cork have shown themselves content to accept Mr. Redmond's promises... We must now wait and see whether we shall have Home Rule before the Coronation or even before Christmas. If so, we shall all join in paying our tribute to Mr. Redmond's statesmanship, but every intelligent man knows that there is not the remotest possibility of such a thing taking place. Mr. Birrell has laid down in the clearest terms that there must be a fresh appeal to the judgement of the people as a whole

before any Home Rule Bill can become law. The Irish public have preferred to shut their eyes to this patent fact, and they must be allowed to discover for themselves how they have been deluded and befooled. In the meantime the attitude of the All-For-Ireland League members must be one of watchful vigilance in the House of Commons. They will place no sort of obstacle in the way of the fulfilment of Mr. Redmond's undertakings... But while Mr. Redmond is intriguing and manoeuvering and log-rolling with English Parties at Westminster, the All-For-Ireland League will be engaged in doing its own work in Ireland...

"During the next few months the public will be able to appreciate the difference between the two policies before the country... Delusions will be dispelled. Their innate National instincts will assert themselves... They will turn away from a debasing political creed. They will have nothing to do with the effort to revive political bigotry in Ireland, to ostracise the Protestant minority, to make peace and happiness impossible in a divided and distracted land. They will realise that such tactics would alone make the attainment of Home Rule impossible. The All-For-Ireland League holds a different ideal before the people. It aims at making every one of the tillers of the soil the owner of his own holding... It seeks to combine all classes of the people in a broad based organisation which knows no distinction of class or creed or clan... For the past oblivion; In the future there is to be co-operation...

"It is sad to think that Mr. Dillon can claim that the majority of the bishops and priests of Ireland are opposed to a policy which is based on the noblest instincts of the human heart. But the fact has to be faced that this is the case. They have entered into an alliance with Dublin Castle, with all its powers of evil and agencies of corruption, and with the Molly Maguires, the most detestable form of secret society which ever cursed any land, in order to strangle and defeat the All-For-Ireland League. That is a task which is beyond their power to accomplish. They have twice essayed it, but they have on each occasion been worsted. But the All-For-Ireland League must be in a position to put down this monstrous combination. It is the price of civil liberty. It is the essential preliminary to any form of Self-Government..."

[7 January, 1911]

[In the General Election of December 1910 the Independent Nationalist MPs in Ireland as a whole were reduced from 11 to 8, but in Cork they increased from 6 to 8. The East Kerry, Louth, South Mayo, South Monaghan, and Westmeath seats were lost to the Redmondites.

The AFIL held all its seats in Cork. Guiney was returned unopposed in North Cork. In North East Cork, too, the AFIL candidate (Frewen) was returned unopposed. O'Brien had fought the North East as a second constituency in January, and had beaten the Redmondite, Abrahams, by a margin of almost 2 to I. (The practice of contesting two seats was not unusual then.) Since O'Brien also took one of the Cork city seats, he had resigned the North East, and Maurice Healy (brother of Tim Healy), who had been beaten for the second city seat, took it unopposed in a by-election. In December, Healy took the second city seat, beating Redmond (who was contesting it as a second constituency) into third place. The AFIL also

won South Cork, leaving Capt. Donelan in East Cork as the only Redmondite MP in the County.

Abraham (ex-North East Cork) easily held his new seat in Dublin (Harbour Division), defeating an Independent candidate by 3,244 to 631. The "metropolis" was one of the safest areas in the country for the Hibernians Limerick city too was solidly Hibernian: the Independent candidate there was defeated by 2,452 to 682.

The best Independent showings outside Cork were in Mid Tipperary, East Kerry, East and West Limerick, South Wexford, West Mayo and Armagh. Over a third of the vote was Independent in Mid Tipperary and East Kerry, and about a quarter in the others. And Tim Healy lost Louth by a few hundred votes.

The *Cork Free Press* gave the total Redmondite vote in the country as 92,709, and the Independent Nationalist vote as 39,729. It is not clear what the Independent vote represented outside the sphere of circulation of the Cork Free Press and the sphere of activity of the AFIL (Cork and adjacent areas). Though it cannot be assumed to represent such a coherent body of opinion as existed in Cork, it must at the very least have expressed stubborn admiration for O'Brien and serious discontent about the Party. Despite the best efforts of Devlin's apparatus and the oratory of Redmond and Dillon, more than a quarter of the nationalist electorate refused to toe the line.

On December 31st, the Cork Free Press commented that Redmond, wanting to be done with O'Brien and his colleagues, "decided to exclude them from the Party, his aim in deliberately creating a second Party in Ireland being, in Mr. T.P. O'Connor's choice phraseology, to exhaust Mr., O'Brien's cheque book. But he did not take the generosity and patriotism of the people of Cork into his calculation".

An assembly of the AFIL was held in Cork City Hall on 6th January, 1911.]

Epilogue

The course of events after 1910 was that the Liberal Party with Irish suppo enacted the Parliament Bill, which imposed a two-year limit on the Veto of t House of Lords. The Lords allowed the Parliament Bill to be enacted because t King had undertaken to create enough Liberal peers to carry it in the Lords if it w vetoed. Asquith had contemplated a compromise with the Lords by which t Budget would be passed and things left as they were otherwise. Redmond insist that things should proceed by way of the Parliament Bill, otherwise the Irish Par could not support the Budget in the Commons.

Once the Parliament Act was in place, the Third Home Rule Bill was introduce in the certainty that, even with the Lords delaying it for two years, it would enacted within the lifetime of the 1910 Parliament.

But the resources of the Unionist Party were not exhausted by the abolition the Lords' veto. It refused to accept two such fundamental changes of t Constitution as the Parliament Act and the Home Rule Act, both brought about a minority Government within a single Parliament, and the first making the secon possible, as being effectively constitutional. It refused to accept the validity of t Home Rule Act, unless an election was held on it before it was implemented. T Government and the Redmondites would not allow the enactment of Home Ru to depend on the outcome of an election. The Unionists said they would therefo treat a Home Rule Act as not being law. They encouraged Ulster Unioni preparations to resist the establishment of a Home Rule administration in Ulster b force. Senior Army officers gave clear indications that the Army could not be reli on to suppress an Ulster resistance to Home Rule. The Ulster Volunteer For brought in a large shipment of arms in the Spring of 1914. The Irish Volunteer set up at the end of 1913, was taken in hand by Redmond, and a large shipment arms was brought in for it in July 1914 by wealthy Redmondites.

The situation seemed to be heading for civil war, in Britain as well as Irelan The antagonism of the two British parties reached an intensity not known since t 17th century, when the party conflict took on a military form.

In these circumstances, Redmond gave way to a demand for Partition. Partiti was supposed to be a temporary expedient to let some of the heat out of a ve dangerous situation. But the thing about temporary expedients is that, if they pro to be expedient, they are unlikely to be temporary.

The final reading of the Home Rule Bill was carried in May 1914. Redmondi celebrations were held around the country. The *Cork Examiner* carried a report

the celebration in Millstreet:

> "The All-For-Ireland element in Millstreet were directly the cause of scenes of violence an disorder in that town on the 25th, the date of the final passage of the Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons, and again on Sunday night last. On the first occasion the Nationalists of the town and district marked the historic occasion by a procession with tar-barrels and torches through the streets. Some O'Brienites gathered on the footpaths, indulged in 'Down with Home rule' and 'Up Carson'. A number of them rushed forward and attempted to pull a torch from the hands of the man who carried it. He and his friends naturally defended themselves. A fight followed, and in the result the O'Brienites were cleared off the streets.
>
> "While the row was in progress, revolver shots were fired, some allege by the O'Brienite crowd, and a man named Jeremiah O'Leary, Coomlogane, was wounded in the leg. He was conveyed to the house of Dr. Leader where his injury was attended to...
>
> "The following day the police arrested a man named Jeremiah Forde, also of Coomlogane, and charged him with having fired the revolver". The case was brought before Mr. Hardy R.M., who sent it to the Macroom Quarter-Sessions (2nd June, 1914).

The Redmondites saw themselves as having achieved Home Rule. The All-For Irelanders saw them as having achieved Partition. The signing of the Bill was delayed while attempts were made to conciliate the Ulster Unionists, who were by then in no mood to be conciliated. Then, within three months of the Redmondite celebrations of victory, the Bill was signed by the King, along with another Bill which suspended its implementation indefinitely. And all that survived of it was Partition.

The AFIL had come through two very difficult years of apparent Redmondite triumph. It lost a number of seats to the Redmondites in the local elections of June 1914, but it was evident that it had consolidated itself. And so Cork had a two-party system. It was the only part of Ireland that had.

In August 1914 Britain dissolved its Home Rule problem by declaring war on Germany. The Liberal Imperialists could not conduct this war without active Unionist support. And the price of Unionist support was the indefinite suspension of the Home Rule Act, and a guarantee that it would never be implemented as it stood.

Redmondism entered its third phase on 3rd August, 1914. Since the reunification of the party in 1900, his position had been (according to his supporter and biographer, Stephen Gwynn), "that of chairman not of leader. Mr. Dillon, by far the most important of his colleagues, was away in Ireland. Any action Redmond took he must take not merely in an unusual but in a new capacity, as leader, at a great moment, acting in his own right" (*Redmond's Last Years*, 1919, p129). He committed Ireland to war on Germany on the spur of the moment, without consulting his

colleagues, even before the declaration of war. From that time on he was an extreme warmonger. And Redmondite journalists and writers were to the fore in developing British war propaganda.

(Dillon, who had taken an interest in foreign policy, and had for some years been strongly opposed to the trend of British foreign policy, thought the declaration of war was a great mistake, and that the war would have disastrous consequences for Europe regardless of who won. But, as Redmond had let him have his way over land purchase, he let Redmond have his way over the war.)

The *Daily News* and the *Manchester Guardian* campaigned against British participation in the European war right up to the moment of the declaration of war. British Liberal journalists found some difficulty in the transition to warmongering. On the *Daily News* T.M. Kettle (son of a leader of the Land League) showed the way with a tirade against Hunnish Barbarism and Nietzschean evil, and he was seconded by Robert Lynd. On the *Manchester Guardian* C.E. Montague (nationalist son of an unfrocked Irish priest) churned out the early war propaganda when its old-fashioned Gladstonian Editor, C.P. Scott, found it too distasteful. And Redmond's nephew and biographer, L.G. Redmond-Howard, produced a number of war pamphlets.

Instead of attempting to bolster up the traditional Liberal values against the Liberal Imperialists—as John Morley did by resigning from the Cabinet in protest against the declaration of war—the Redmondites helped to subjugate the Liberal backbenches to the war party.

(The *Daily News* said straightforwardly that Britain declared war on Germany. But the Redmondite *Cork Examiner* said: "Germany has declared war on England" (5th August.)

The AFIL decided to support the war for the purpose of ensuring that Irish participation in it was in the form of an Irish Army Corps. The War Office and Lord Kitchener was entirely opposed to this, and Redmond gave way on every point. His war recruiting was unconditional.

Redmond continued to give unconditional support to the war after the end of the Liberal Government and the formation of a Coalition in 1915. This Coalition included not only British Unionists, but the Ulster Unionist leader, Lord Carson. From that point onwards, the Unionists were the main force in the Cabinet. Redmond's project of proceeding through the antagonisms of both Irish and British politics had ended in shambles.

The war brought genuine Fenianism back on the agenda, while it carried Redmond, the posturing Fenian of the 1890s, to the extreme of what somebody has called Parliamentary cretinism.

The country was saturated with war propaganda. A Fenian minority launched a military insurrection against the British administration. At a minimal cost of life—compared with the loss of life in the monstrous, futile battles on the Continent—the political situation in Ireland was transformed. And the deflating effect of the Easter Rising on the British/Redmondite war propaganda undoubtedly

led to a great saving of life during the next two years.

The first response of the *Cork Free Press* to the Rising was to condemn it. But it quickly swung around to support of the Sinn Fein movement. And in 1918 the AFIL stood down in favour of Sinn Fein.

The 1918 General Election gave the clearest possible democratic mandate to Sinn Fein to establish an independent Irish state outside the United Kingdom. If the emphasis on democracy and the rights of small nations in the British war propaganda had been in earnest, it would only have remained for Britain to arrange its withdrawal from Ireland with Sinn Fein. Even if it chose to take the view that Ireland was not an authentic political unit, and that it had to deal separately with Ulster Unionism, it would still have been under obligation to negotiate with Sinn Fein its withdrawal from 27 or 28 counties.

(The 'revisionist' historians of recent years have worked hard at circulating the idea that Unionist Ulster was what at issue between the British Government and Sinn Fein. But that is patently untrue. This is proved by the Treaty negotiations. By the Fall of 1921, the Six-County statelet had been set up. And what Britain refused to the Treaty delegates was the independence of the 26 Counties. Lloyd George's threat of "Immediate and terrible war" was not made with regard to the North. It was made with regard to the recognition of British sovereignty over the 26 Counties by means of an Oath of Allegiance.)

Britain decided to continue governing Ireland in disregard of the 1918 Election result. Going by experience, it seemed a fair bet that the Irish democracy would give way, if it was firmly dealt with by a masterful hand, because the Irish were volatile and ingenious, but lacked endurance in support of a disputed position.

That was the lesson of history. But something new happened this time. The Sinn Fein electoral mandate was supported by a stubborn military resistance against the British attempt to over-rule it by force. And the War of Independence was fought for the most part in the area where the All-For-Ireland League had been effective in 1910. A region which had taken itself in earnest as a democracy in 1910, and which had supported a programme of purposeful Conciliation, took itself equally in earnest ten years later when Britain thought it could treat its electoral mandate as a bad joke.

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