

brates who apprehended suspected persons without due authority, or who seized arms or entered houses, or did other divers acts not justifiable by law. Walpole, in his *Kingdom of Ireland* described what followed:—

'All the safeguards of the constitution having been suspended, numbers of persons were taken and flung into prison, and refused bail. Spies and informers were the only witnesses, and of these the Government had a whole army in their pay. The prisons overflowed, and, worse than all, no discipline was maintained among the soldiers, who were allowed to commit all kinds of excesses. They were even encouraged to play havoc with the miserable inhabitants. Houses were plundered and burned, women outraged, and children brutally ill-treated and murdered; villages and whole districts were devastated.' In the following year, 1796, Sir Ralph Abercromby, the hero of the Egyptian campaign, had command of the Irish army. He describes its condition on his arrival in Ireland as being utterly without discipline, and in one of his letters, speaking of the soldiery, he says:—'Houses have been burned by them, men murdered, and others half-hanged. Within the past twelve months, every crime, every cruelty, that could be committed by Cossacks or Calmucks, have been committed here.' In February, 1797, Sir Ralph issued a general order appealing to his officers to restrain the soldiery. Immediately the Viceroy called upon him to withdraw this order, and upon refusing to do so, he was forced to resign, protesting that Lord Camden had betrayed the situation of Commander-in-Chief, and had thrown the army in Ireland into the hands of a faction, and made it a tool under their direction. Lord Moira, speaking in the English House of Lords, thus describes the reign of terror that existed in Ireland in 1797:—

'My Lords,—I have seen in Ireland the most absurd as well as the most disgusting tyranny that any nation ever groaned under. I have been myself a witness of it in many instances. I have seen it practised unchecked. I have seen the most grievous oppression exercised in consequence of the presumption that the persons who were the unfortunate objects of such oppression were in hostility to the Government, and yet that had been done in a part of the country as quiet and as free from disturbance as the city of London. These were not particular acts of cruelty exercised by men abusing the power committed to them, but they formed part of a system.'

Lord Holland, in his *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, writes:—'It is a fact incontrovertible that the people were driven to resistance by free quarters, and the excesses of the soldiery, which were such as not to be permitted in civilised warfare, even in the enemy's country. Trials by courtmartial were frequent. Floggings, picketings, death, the pitch-cap, were the usual sentences. The measures which lead to the rebellion, suggested by Lord Clare and a remorseless faction, aroused the indignation of every man who had any sense of justice or feeling of humanity. The outrages perpetrated with the sanction of the Government excited horror.'

One more quotation and I am done. It is from Mr. Goldwin Smith, who will not be accused of a bias against England. In his *Irish History and Irish Character* he says:—'The peasantry, though undoubtedly disturbed state, might have been kept quiet by lenity, but they were gratuitously scourged and tortured into open rebellion. These were the crimes, not of individual ruffians, but of faction, a faction which must take its place in history beside that of Robespierre, Couthon, and Carrier. . . . The dreadful civil war of 1798 was the crime, as a candid study of history will prove, not of the Irish people, but of the terrorists, who literally goaded the people into insurrection.' It is only fair that I should add that the peasantry committed many acts of brutality which are to be deeply regretted and condemned, but it must be remembered they were, with one or two exceptions, isolated acts of retaliation, and done, not with the sanction, but in direct violation of the orders of their leaders.

CONCLUSION.

These are the main facts which led to the rebellion. I shall not continue to harass your feelings with this tale of cruelty and wrong. I have no desire to embitter the feelings and perpetuate the memory of these troubled times. I merely desire to point out these acts of misgovernment which did so much to alienate for the greater part of this century the vast majority of the people of Ireland from sympathy with the Empire, so that the position being better understood, one of the few remaining differences shall be the more readily adjusted.

In concluding an eloquent oration, Dr. Cahill called upon his hearers to emulate all their forefathers in an endeavour to bring together all that is good and noble in our national character by adopting one of their great principles:—'To do all that lies in our power to forward a union of affection and interests among Irishmen of every religious persuasion.' If we do this, he said, the few difficulties that yet remain will soon disappear, and we shall then take our place, as a solid unit, in the great, free, and enlightened empire, to which we have the honour and privilege to belong. (The speaker resumed his seat amid *salvos* of applause).

SIR ROBERT STOUT'S SPEECH.

Sir Robert Stout, who was accorded a very cordial reception, said they were met there that evening to commemorate an historical event that was of very great moment to Ireland one hundred years ago. It might be asked what need was there to refer to matters that happened so long ago? What had such celebrations to do with us who lived many thousands of miles away from where the incidents took place. It seemed to him that the study of history was the most useful study in which they could engage. That night they were really but turning over the pages of history which might have most important lessons for those present. How are we to decide the problems of our time if we do not know the trials, the failures, the successes, and attempted solutions of similar problems in the past? They were not called upon that night to justify rebellion, nor need

they lay down rules under which revolution was justifiable. An appeal to arms was the last ordeal which men should resort to when striving against oppression, but they should remember that they were dealing with a time in history when men had few other means of redress against oppression, and when the oppressed preferred to die fighting rather than die slaves. This was the resort of many people who had our sympathies, such as the Bulgarians and Cubans. How much more was such a resort justified 100 years ago, when there was no popular opinion, no powerful Press to voice the feelings of the people and sway the rulers of the nation. He had not time that evening to sketch the causes that led up to the rebellion of 1798; this Dr. Cahill had very ably and exhaustively dealt with. He wished, however, to disabuse the minds of many people regarding that insurrection who had an erroneous idea concerning it, and to apply the lesson which it taught to our own circumstances to-day.

THE INSURRECTION.

In the first place, it was not a Roman Catholic revolution. This was a popular error held by many persons who had not studied the question. The Society of United Irishmen was first organised in Belfast, and was composed mainly of Protestants. It was some years before it spread to the south and west of Ireland. Its principles were not revolutionary at all. In the first place the Society declared that the weight of English influence was so great as to organise a cordial union of all the people of Ireland to maintain liberty; that the only constitutional method of opposing that influence was by reform of Parliament; that no reform was practicable which did not include Irishmen of every religious persuasion. The United Irish Society only demanded redress of the many grievances under which the country suffered by constitutional means, yet before it had adopted any revolutionary ideas it was suppressed by the Government. In inquiring into the causes which led to the action of the United Irish Society in connection with '98 they must look outside of Ireland. An impetus had been given to it by the events which had taken place in France, and the Declaration of Independence in the American colonies—since known as the United States. The United Irishmen having failed to obtain a redress of the grievances under which they laboured for two centuries by constitutional means, were led to follow the example of France and America, where reforms had only been accomplished by revolutionary means. They were forced to take up arms as the only means which seemed successful elsewhere. The Society of United Irishmen had not, as was sometimes erroneously supposed, received any support from the Catholic Church, for many of the priests had been educated in France where the principles then propounded by the revolutionary party were distasteful to the clergy, and consequently many of the Irish priests and bishops were strongly opposed to the new doctrines. Proud, who was not likely to exaggerate the condition of things, said of the time preceding the rebellion:—'Rarely since the inhabitants of the earth had formed themselves into civilised communities had any country suffered from such a complication of neglect and ill-usage.' Thousands of Presbyterians had been driven from their homes, and found an asylum in the American colonies. Roman Catholics were even worse treated. Lord Charlemont, an ancestor of Lady Ranfurly, writing of the same time, told how a small minority treated the Irish people 'as an inferior race,' and flouted their claims. 'Thus,' said he, 'did Ireland possess many inhabitants, but few citizens.'

RUMOURS, ETC.

The speaker then referred to rumours and counter-rumours of intended massacres which were propagated in 1798. These rumours, he said, were untrue. The murder of 150 people at Scollabogue inflamed the wrath of the Protestants. Of those killed there, sixteen were Catholics, whilst the insurgent leader was a Protestant. The murder of these people was contrary to the orders of the insurgent leaders. Although many Protestants of the North stood aloof from the war, still most of the leaders were of that faith. As proof of this it might be mentioned that of the twenty prisoners sent to Fort George, Inverness, after the rebellion, ten were Anglicans, six Presbyterians, and four Catholics. The rebellion failed because of dissension and the want of funds and resources, and the pouring in of troops from England. Many Catholics were loyalists and fought against the insurgents. It was, as he said before, not by any means a Catholic rising. He had not time to dwell on what might be called a civil war, and if he had, would it be edifying to detail the cruelties which were inflicted by both sides? It was estimated that 400 Royalists were murdered, 2000 rebels exiled or hanged, 1,600 King's troops killed in battle and 11,000 rebels. The destruction of property was great. Neither side could be defended for what was done, but the impartial student must say that the strong who could have shown clemency exhibited little mercy. War is, as has been said, a horrid business at any time, and the war of 1798 was no exception. It was, however, illumined by great heroism, fearlessness, courage, and military strategy, and even those with no military training, like Father John Murphy, displayed great generalship. It was doomed to failure, the weak and the divided could not win, however heroic, against the strong and united. Providence, it is said, is on the side of the biggest battalions, and the Government had the best and most numerous bodies of armed men.

THE LESSON.

Now what were the lessons which this page of Irish history taught us? First, that if we wish for reform and progress we must not be impatient. The leaders of the United Irishmen got impatient at the slow progress of their agitation for reform. Short cuts are dangerous, and reform must come slowly, and the impatient reformer who thinks he can cure all the ills of the body politic at once, often delays the coming of the wished-for day. Then another lesson learned was that you cannot make people have only one religious belief, no matter how numerous might be penal laws and Test Acts. Men's beliefs are their own concern, and it is a fatal thing for the State to attempt to make all men believe

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