

selves, and would be happily overshadowed by the larger concessions which would attract Ulster centripetally to, instead of repelling her from, the National Parliament.

"3. (The fears of a Spoils system worked by a two-penny-ha'penny Tammany.)—The Unionist minority are not the only Irish minority who regard with repugnance the ascendancy of a Secret Association confined to men of one particular religious persuasion, and using as its most powerful instrument the disposal of all offices and patronage from the highest to the lowest, not according to the merits of the candidates, but according to their proficiency in the signs and passwords of the Order. The growth of this sectarian organisation (whose object nobody has yet ventured publicly to put into words) is indeed responsible for the creation of three-fourths of the Ulster Difficulty which now darkens the horizon. I am confident that most of the far-seeing supporters of Mr. Redmond must be in their hearts as anxious as either the Ulster Minority or the Munster Minority to put an end to any danger from this undemocratic secret agency by having provision made that all offices of emolument (save only Ministers, Heads of Departments, and Judges) should be disposed of by a carefully chosen body of Irish Civil Service Commissioners who should throw them open to all candidates upon equal terms, and put an end to the scandal of dispensing Government patronage in partisan newspaper offices by sectarian preferences and secret intrigues."

These proposals were never made public by the Hibernian Press, nor by any newspaper in England. The only version of them circulated in three-fourths of Ireland was that I proposed to "hand over Ireland to the veto of twelve Orangemen"—the only justification for that atrocious libel being the proposal for an experimental period of five years, to give a minority of a million the security of a possible appeal to the Imperial Parliament, to be decided within one month, under circumstances which made it all but certain that, by reason of the very completeness of the security, the power would never be exercised. And this moderate price to purchase the confidence of one-fourth of the Irish population was held up to execration as "handing over Ireland to the veto of twelve Orangemen"—that, too, in a Home Rule Bill which, in the words of Mr. T. P. O'Connor, "contained as many English vetoes as there were padlocks in a gaol." Who can wonder if a country debarred from all chance of reading our proposals for themselves and so infamously led astray as to their real purport, should have taken half a generation of suffering to learn that the "factionists and traitors" were "fundamentally right" all along? For ourselves, so little did we claim any special foresight in discerning the possibilities of an incomparable National settlement in "an agreement amongst all sections, creeds, and classes of Irishmen," that the only clue we could find to the enigma how any sane body of Irishmen could detect in it any trace of treason to Ireland was that those who only saw in the Land Conference settlement "a landlord swindle" infallibly bound to end in "national insolvency" felt themselves now constrained to persist in the error at any cost against all evidence and commonsense.

Stand fast by our proposal, at all events, we did from start to finish against all the buffets of unpopularity and of carefully nurtured ignorance in Ireland and in England. Persons familiar with the state of feeling in the Ulster Party, and especially among the mass of the Northern population, prior to the Larne gun-running, will scarcely deny that "a Bill thus conceived, far from being a grievance in the sight of embittered Irish Protestants, would have been hailed by them as an Act of Political Emancipation such as the Imperial Parliament could never otherwise secure to them." But what of its reception by the Republicans? They were not then in existence, and with wiser counsels they might never have been, in any ponderable numbers. The opposition came from the self-aggrandising placé hunters of the Board of Erin; the clean-souled adolescents who were to be the rebels of Easter Week had not yet been made sick with the cajoleries of the Parliamentary politicians, and would see no more trace of treason to Ireland in our doctrines than in Davis's genial version of the Orange war-song, "The Battle of the Boyne," which they had been taught to lisp from their cradles:

"Boyne's old water,
Red with slaughter,
Now is as pure as the children at play;
So, in our souls,
Its history rolls,
Orange and Green will carry the day!"*

From the poorest standpoint of expediency, there stood one-fourth of the Irish population who must either be lived with or exterminated. The latter course was, happily, as impossible as it would have been heathenish, it would have expelled from the service of Ireland a leisured class of soldiers, sportsmen, and genial comrades as ineradicably Irish as a free admixture of Gaelic blood for centuries could make them, and an industrial population whose energy, probity, and solidity of character would endow an Irish State with some of its most precious elements of stability. To acknowledge that there were two unmixable Irelands would be to fly in the face of some of the most shining truths of our history. Gaelic Ireland's ethnic genius had never found any difficulty, even as late as the Williamite wars, in fascinating and absorbing all the successive invaders who, in conquering, were themselves conquered—the Norman Geraldines in Munster and the Norman Burkes in Connaught, the Danes in Dublin, the Scotsmen in Dalriada, the Belgians in Wexford, the Welshmen in Trawley, the grim Cromwellians themselves amidst the bewitching homes of Tipperary. The beadroll of statutes from century to century forbidding the adventurers from England—and forbidding them in vain—to "live Irishly" and take Irish wives, is one long English protestation of the homogeneity of the nation. Even the era of the diabolical Penal Laws, if it raised up fiends to debase the Catholic Gaels almost out of human shape into a separate race, "in the English and Protestant interest," produced also a dynasty of Protestant patriots as truly Irish as the eternal mountains that towered over Henry Grattan's woods at Tinnahinch. Flood was the only man of genius in the Irish Parliament who represented anti-Catholic bigotry at its darkest; yet even he made atonement for that one sunspot in his character by the will in which he left a considerable property for the encouragement of the study of Gaelic in Trinity College and the publication of the ancient manuscript literature of the Gael. With the graces and accomplishments of a cultured Irish nobleman, Charlemont strangely mingled in his character a gloomy Protestant bigotry; yet he, too, was so passionate a fanatic for Irish liberty that, as Commander-in-Chief of Grattan's Volunteers, his preparations for a war against the Parliament of England were more formidable than Sir E. Carson's more than a century later, and were authorised by sounder constitutional warrant. The man whom the English intellectual world now acclaim as the most sublime of their philosophers and statesmen was the Irish Protestant, Edmund Burke, who, for the inspired eloquence with which he scathed England's doings in Ireland, went within an ace of being slain by the Gordon rioters as an Irish papist adventurer. To tear out from the journals of the Irish Parliament the splendid pages which record the Protestant struggle for Irish freedom from Molyneux' first daring claims to the dying hours in which it succumbed to the Act of Union—to disown the romantic chapters added to our story by the Protestant Wolfe Tone when, after Parliamentary methods had failed, he appealed to the God of battles, and to disown them because the martyrs who died at his call on the scaffolds of Belfast and Carrickfergus and at Antrim Fight were Protestant Dissenters who had not taken the Catholic Sacrament—would be to cancel the entire history of Ireland since the Middle Ages, and has only to be set out in cold terms of logic to excite the abhorrence of every Catholic Nationalist with an uncorrupted heart.

Irish Protestant patriotism did not die even under the scalpel of Castlereagh's Act of Union. Lecky, whom certain family sufferings during the Land War unhappily alienated from the Irish Cause in his declining years, has left us in his books an immortal monument of the inborn

*"I would go as far as ever you went to win over Ulster," Mr. De Valera told me in 1922.

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