

THE CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION MOVEMENT AND
THE SOCIETY OF UNITED IRISHMEN, 1788-1798

by

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CHAPTER I

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IRISH BACKGROUND, 1688-1791

In 1688, when the Glorious Revolution occurred in England, Ireland supported the Catholic King, James II. This opposition to Parliament and the subsequent victory of the forces of William III over James and the Irish at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, resulted in complete and less tolerant English control over Ireland. In 1692, Lord Lieutenant Sydney summoned the Irish Parliament, an English controlled legislative body which had lost its independence under Poyning's Law in 1494. A few Catholic as well as Protestant members came, continuing the practice that had begun in May, 1689, when James II called the primarily Catholic "Patriot Parliament." The English Parliament, in 1691, had reaffirmed the Act of Supremacy of 1559 which declared that the English monarch was the supreme governor of the Church and prohibited the sacrifice of the Mass. All members of the 1692 Irish Parliament were required, for the first time, to swear individually to the clerks an oath to the Act of 1691. The Catholics refused to do so and summarily left the halls of Parliament. Thus, the Irish Parliament conducted its business as an entirely Protestant body and continued to do so for the remaining 108 years of its life. In 1697, Parliament even went so far as to bar from its membership any Protestant who married a Catholic. Thirty years later, in 1727, Catholics

were denied the vote, both for elections of members of Parliament and in local elections.¹

After Catholics had been barred from the Irish Parliament, that body then proceeded to attack what it thought was the root of Irish support for King James II in the Glorious Revolution--the Roman Catholic Church. The parish priests were generally left alone but had to register their names with the Government. If any failed to do this, they were subject to banishment from Ireland. If they returned after banishment and were caught, they could be tried for treason, a crime which carried the death penalty. About 1,000 priests chose the course of registering their names with the Government and generally were left undisturbed in the performance of their religious duties; this was especially true during the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714), when there was a disposition on the part of the English Government to tolerate Mass.²

The parish priest was tolerated by the English and Irish Governments because his ecclesiastical authority and influence were only on the local level. In addition, he was poorly educated. However, in 1697, all Catholic prelates were

¹John F. Finerty, Ireland: The People's History of Ireland, I (New York, 1904), 413-14; Tom Ireland, Ireland: Past and Present (New York, 1942), 166.

²Finerty, The People's History, I, 417-20; Ireland, Ireland, 183.

peremptorily ordered to leave Ireland by May 1, 1698. If they returned, they would be guilty of high treason and executed. As a result of this law, only six Catholic bishops remained, they "...living in obscurity and danger."³ The object of the law was to let time eliminate the Catholic clergy and the spiritual leadership which they provided for the Catholic population. It was hoped that after the registered parish priests died they could not be replaced, since Catholic education was prohibited and there would be no bishop to ordain priests; the population would then, of necessity, turn to the Protestant spiritual leaders for guidance.⁴

In 1698, the Irish Parliament, in one of the first great enactments of the Penal Laws, excluded Catholics from the practice of law. The lot of the Catholic defendant thereafter grew worse. The decision as to his innocence or guilt was left to a judge without a jury of his peers. To make matters worse, all informers, priest-hunters, or others hired by the Government to inform on Catholic activities were paid by exactions on the Catholics themselves.⁵

Forced to do practically everything outside of the law, as the Penal Laws required them to do, the Catholics often

³ Ireland, Ireland, 180.

⁴ Ibid.; Finerty, The People's History, I, 417-20.

⁵ Ireland, Ireland, 180.

took the law into their own hands. Anyone known to have informed on a priest or prelate was likely to be severely beaten or even killed. The constabulary often found it impossible to apprehend the guilty party, as he could be hidden by any one of millions of faithful Catholic Irishmen. The failure of the Government to break the faith of the Catholic people is attested by the presence of twenty-four Catholic bishops in Ireland by 1750, operating under the papal Internuncio at Brussels.⁶

In the reign of George I (1714-1727), it was officially recognized by Lord Chancellor Bowes and Chief Justice Robinson that "The law does not suppose any such person to exist as an Irish Roman Catholic."⁷ In 1727, the enactment of the Penal Laws became complete with the repeal of the Catholic right to vote.* Edmund Burke had several biting comments about the Penal Laws. Referring to the English promise in the Treaty of Limerick of 1691 (which caused Irish Jacobite armies to lay down their arms) that the Roman Catholic religion would be tolerated and Catholic life and property would be legally secure, in 1765, he stated that "...there is not a single right of nature, or benefit of society, which has

⁶Ibid., 183.

⁷Seumas MacManus, The Story of the Irish Race: A Popular History of Ireland (New York, 1944), 460.

* See Appendix for compilation of the Penal Laws.

not been either totally taken away or considerably impaired."⁸ As Penal Law was piled upon Penal Law, a Catholic Irishman had very few legal rights left at all. The law only recognized him in order to repress him and not to give him aid.⁹

During the century from 1689 to 1782, the Penal Laws were not always enforced and were reduced in severity. Nevertheless, they had the effect of causing the most talented Catholics to emigrate. This situation was not the fault of the Irish Government only; the ultimate responsibility rested with Britain. Because of Poyning's Law, the British Government could disallow any law passed by the Irish Parliament. In the case of the Penal Laws, it did nothing. What was particularly bad in the religious persecution of the Irish Catholics was the relationship of numbers. Unlike the smaller groups of persecuted Catholics in England or Huguenots in France, the Catholics in Ireland comprised three-fourths of the population. They were governed and regarded as second-class citizens by an Anglican Protestant Ascendancy which comprised only one-eighth of the population but which possessed, by 1782, eighty-five per cent of the land. "The Protestant State Church of Ireland, with vast revenues and

⁸ Edmund Burke, Letters, Speeches, and Tracts of Irish Affairs (London, 1881), 52-53.

⁹ Ibid., 52-53; MacManus, The Irish Race, 460.

highly endowed bishops, was a minority religion in a land where people looked for leadership and guidance to the priests."¹⁰ Thus, the average Catholic peasant developed a stronger religious antagonism toward the Anglicans than he might otherwise have had. This also explains the political strength of the Catholic Church in Ireland.¹¹

That the Penal Laws were wrong for the country as a whole is a valid argument. How different might nineteenth and twentieth century British-Irish relations have been had the Penal Laws not existed and had England admitted the Irish with the Scots into Great Britain on an equal status in 1707. The prosperity of Great Britain as a whole would have been greater if the British could have turned toward an industrious and productive Ireland for many agricultural products.¹²

In 1779, the American Revolution began to cause serious economic problems in Ireland, especially in Ulster. An economy which had already been shackled by British commercial restrictions became more listless with the loss of trade with America. Petitions and addresses presented by various

¹⁰Ireland, Ireland, 182-83.

¹¹Burke, Tracts of Irish Affairs, 33-34, 53-54; Paul Blanshard, The Irish and Catholic Power: An American Interpretation (Boston, 1953), 24, 26.

¹²Finerty, The People's History, I, 423.

organizations requesting the end of trade restrictions met the inaction of the British Government. These organizations quickly developed into non-importation associations which were believed able to reduce Irish imports from Great Britain from £2,000,000 to £1,000,000 during the course of 1779. It was then brought to attention on May 11 in the British House of Lords that the war in America had begun with addresses and petitions, followed by non-importation agreements. With such sudden public attention given to the parallels between America and Ireland, the 8,000 Volunteers in Ireland began to realize that they could take advantage of the situation and participate in a greater role than merely as a home defense force. Their numbers began to swell and ultimately reached 100,000. Addresses and petitions for the end of trade restrictions were now backed by the threat of force. On December 13, 1779, Lord North (the British Prime Minister) presented a bill granting concessions to the Irish woolen and glass industries and an equal participation with Great Britain in the trade with the West Indies. The bill quickly passed and received the royal assent on December 23.¹³

In 1782, after Lord Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown, the Irish Parliament invoked the age-old maxim: "England's

¹³H. Butterfield, George III, Lord North, and the People, 1779-80 (New York, 1968), 83-84, 88, 175-76.

distress is Ireland's opportunity." Backed by 100,000 Volunteers in arms and led by Irish Whigs Henry Grattan and Henry Flood, it petitioned the British Government for a repeal of Poyning's Law. Upon such a repeal, the Irish Parliament would be directly responsible to the King; the British Parliament would be unable to disallow internal Irish laws. Aware of the sad state of British international affairs at that time, the "First Empire" having fallen, the British Government approved Irish demands. From 1782 until the Union of Great Britain with Ireland in 1801, the Irish Parliament operated independently with respect to internal affairs. Legislative independence, although more representative of Irish interests than before, did not guarantee the end of controlled influence. Rotten and pocket boroughs were numerous. The Anglican Ascendancy was the only group allowed to sit in Parliament. It was during the period of "Grattan's Parliament" (a popular name for the independent Irish Parliament from 1782 to 1801) that "Dublin Castle" became synonymous with "...the narrow-minded and unrepresentative system of government which...ruled the country till 1921."¹⁴ Although the Irish had attained nominal internal legislative independence, the continuing British influence

¹⁴ Edmund Curtis, A History of Ireland (Norwich, England, 1965), 322n.

on Irish affairs was seen by the Irish as equalling the continuing banishment of Catholics from Parliament as the worst political abuse.¹⁵

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the ideas of the French philosophes advanced throughout western Europe. In Ireland, any enthusiasm for complete autonomy which the ruling minority might have had was tempered by the realization that the adoption of such ideas would lead to rule by the Catholic majority. Previous plans for the invasion of Ireland by France and/or Spain had given England a feeling of insecurity which was not taken lightly. Many Englishmen honestly believed that the invasions had never materialized, not because the threat of them was unreal, but because of England's iron-handed rule.¹⁶

In 1782, at the same time that the Irish Parliament attained its independence from Britain with respect to internal affairs, several Catholic relief bills were introduced into the Irish House of Commons. After much bickering they were passed by the Parliament as a whole. However, by a majority of eight votes the House of Commons defeated one bill which would have permitted marriage between Catholics and Protestants. The Catholic relief bills of 1782 were

¹⁵Blanshard, The Irish and Catholic Power, 23-24.

¹⁶Nicholas Mansergh, Britain and Ireland (New York, 1943), 23-24.

only intended to alleviate the Irish problem in part. Obviously, bills providing partial relief could only partially appease the Catholics. Since the Penal Laws had done much harm to Ireland's Catholic population, even complete repeal was likely to leave much hostility.¹⁷

Although the legislative independence achieved by the Irish Parliament was hailed as a national revolution, neither Henry Grattan nor his most enthusiastic followers wanted to go any further along the path toward complete political separation. A degree of Irish independence had been achieved under Whig leadership, in both England and Ireland. Naturally, the Whigs were interested in preserving the social system that permitted their own welfare to flourish. Within a few years, however, political pressures threatened to change that system. By 1785, Ireland was filled with disturbance. The Catholics still suffered under the remaining Penal Laws. Farmers of all religions were mistreated by middlemen. The greatest reason for the unrest was the payment of tithes to the Anglican clergy and the "Church-rate" to maintain the Anglican churches. These were not paid only by Anglicans but by Catholics and Presbyterians as well. The years from 1785 to 1791 were crucial in Irish history. In the north, the Peep O'Day Boys were organized to rid Ulster of

¹⁷ John F. Finerty, Ireland: The People's History of Ireland, II (New York, 1904), 478; MacManus, The Irish Race, 454.

Catholics. In self-defense, the Catholics organized the Defenders. After 1789, many ideas of the French Revolution were adopted by the Whig Club in Dublin. On July 14, 1791 (the second anniversary of the storming of the Bastille), the Northern Whig Club went so far as to stage a public parade in Belfast in support of the ideals of the French Revolution--joined by many of the same Volunteers who had been so vital in attaining Irish legislative independence. The Catholics had not been the only persecuted group. As the Penal Laws had aggravated the Catholics, the British Navigation Acts had hurt Presbyterian-owned Irish shipping and industry. Each group could profit by supporting the other's desires. How formidable would a political and/or military union of the two groups be. The time was right to unite.¹⁸

¹⁸Eric Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy (New York, 1951), 47; Joyce, Patrick W., "Ireland," in Ireland and Scotland (Vol. XII in The History of Nations series, New York, 1932), 195-98.

CHAPTER II

THE REGENCY CRISIS TO THE EVE OF THE TORY-WHIG COALITION, NOVEMBER, 1788 - JULY, 1794

When King George III became so ill during 1788 that he was unable to continue his royal duties, there was no emergency in the Irish Government similar to that caused in Great Britain by the absence of the executive. Neither was the Irish Parliament in session nor, because of the powers vested in the Lord Lieutenant, was there need for the direct and immediate exercise of kingly prerogative and responsibility. Nevertheless, the Irish Parliament, when it reconvened, in February, 1789, pressed for the establishment of a regency. The Irish aspects of the regency crisis clearly demonstrated three things: that the Lord Lieutenant, George Nugent-Temple-Grenville, the Marquis of Buckingham, was unpopular; that the Government placemen could not be completely relied upon; and most important, that Henry Grattan and, Grattan's counterpart in the Irish House of Lords, Lord Charlemont, were totally committed to maintaining the Irish legislative independence of the "constitution of 1782."¹

¹John W. Derry, The Regency Crisis and the Whigs, 1788-9 (Cambridge, England, 1963), 198-99.

On February 5, 1789, the Irish House of Commons defeated a Government motion calling for delay of a vote on the regency matter until after the Regency Bill had been passed in Great Britain by 74 to 128. On February 17, the Irish House of Commons approved an Address to the Prince of Wales to assume full royal powers as regent of the Kingdom of Ireland by a two to one margin. The Irish House of Lords quickly followed suit. Lord Lieutenant Buckingham refused to transmit the Address, declaring he could not forward such a request to the Prince, who was still legally a subject. In response, the Irish House of Commons censured Buckingham by 115-83. While the effects of the regency crisis in Ireland were to be long-lasting, the immediate effect was the recall of Lord Lieutenant Buckingham.²

The Irish Parliament's jurisdictional controversy and its subsequent support of the Prince of Wales did not materially affect matters in London. By the time that the Irish delegation arrived in Great Britain to deliver the Address to the Prince, King George III recovered from his illness in late February, 1789. Grattan was thus as isolated as before. John Fane, the Earl of Westmorland was sent to become the new Lord Lieutenant, but without instructions such as would facilitate Grattan's evolving program. The Younger

²Ibid.; Edmund Curtis, A History of Ireland (Norwich, England, 1965), 327-28.

Pitt now knew that he could no longer trust even the Protestant Irish politicians. Although separation from Great Britain was not a question at the time, Pitt knew that the regency plan of the Irish Parliament, if successful, would have created an awkward situation. Grattan's support of independent Irish action in regard to the monarchy had warned the Prime Minister that the Irish leaders were at best unpredictable and unimpressed by ministerial authority. The regency crisis was a prelude to the troubles that Ireland would cause Great Britain in the 1790's. It was the beginning of Pitt's realization that a Union between Great Britain and Ireland was necessary.³

In June, 1789, Grattan and Lords Charlemont and Ponsonby established the Whig Club in Dublin for the stated purpose of promoting administrative and parliamentary reform. As wholesome as it was for members of Parliament to attempt reform of the Irish Parliament from within, agitation for reform outside the ruling aristocracy already had begun. Theobald Wolfe Tone, a Protestant barrister, believed that the major source of Ireland's problems lay in the clauses of the "constitution of 1782" that united Great Britain and Ireland under one sovereign, inseparably uniting the crowns

³Derry, The Regency Crisis, 198, 201.

of the two kingdoms. Although he believed Irish priests to be "men of low birth, low feelings, low habits and no education,"⁴ he knew that the only way to effect the rescinding of those harmful parts of the "constitution" was to have the support of a majority of the population--the Catholics.⁵

Although the period of Grattan's Parliament was prosperous for much of Ireland, there was a paradoxical increase in terrorism that boded ill for the future. The economic problems of Ulster, a shortage both of land and jobs, developed at times into open warfare between Catholics and Protestants. The Protestant poor resented the tendency of landlords to give leases to Catholics who, having lived for so long at the minimum level of subsistence, might be willing to pay more rent. The Protestant attitude in Ulster was summed up in the proverbial advice to disgruntled Catholics--Let them go "To Hell or Connaught." On the other side, much of the Catholic Whiteboy movement could be blamed on what was called the inertia of the Irish Parliament. This organization grew out of the compulsory and unconscionable

⁴Paul Blanshard, The Irish and Catholic Power: An American Interpretation (Boston, 1953), 25.

⁵Curtis, History of Ireland, 328-29; Seumas MacManus, The Story of the Irish Race: A Popular History of Ireland (New York, 1944), 500.

tithe system. Grattan tried to abolish that system but failed. He won a partial amelioration when in 1789, a law was passed exempting reclaimed bog land from tithes for a period of seven years; but tithe reform went no further. Apart from such minor concessions, there was little reason for lower class Catholics to be grateful to the Irish Parliament. Another approach, perhaps another organization, was needed. The vested interests of the state, and particularly of the Anglican bishops, were arrayed against any change whatsoever.⁶

With the legislative independence of Grattan's Parliament, and the accompanying increase in trade with Great Britain and America, came a new prosperity for some Irishmen. The economically-emancipated Catholic middle class enjoyed these material improvements. Understandably, the relative prosperity of the politically-aware Catholics produced a lull in political agitation for several years. However, lower class Catholics continued in a state of poverty and, as the 1780's passed into the 1790's, became increasingly unable to reconcile themselves to the existing political situation.⁷

⁶Curtis, History of Ireland, 329. Connaught, the western part of Ireland, was of the status of a frontier in the eighteenth century. For further information on the tithe system, see Chapter I, 10.

⁷Curtis, History of Ireland, 320, 324.

In 1789, the outbreak of the French Revolution caused many Irish Catholics to assess their political and economic fortune since 1782. The immediate and long-term success of the Volunteers revived and indeed strengthened the political appetites of the Catholic upper and middle classes. Seeing that the French Assembly, like the Protestant Irish Parliament before, had obtained more power, they decided that the political rights of their Protestant counterparts might be within reach. In 1790, the hitherto timid Catholic Committee was endowed with new vigor. John Keogh, a wealthy Dublin merchant, became active in the committee. More important, Wolfe Tone became its secretary. The first important result of the change was that the Committee sent a deputation to Pitt requesting Catholic emancipation. Pitt assured them that, if such an act were passed by the Irish Parliament, it would meet no opposition from the British Cabinet.⁸

In 1791 Lord Lieutenant Westmorland observed that "The tendency of these Dissenters is to unite with the Catholics ... [and that such a] union would be very formidable."⁹ This was not idle opinion. The first prerequisite for any Irish

⁸ Ibid., 331; Thomas Pakenham, The Year of Liberty: The Story of the Great Irish Rebellion of 1798 (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1970), 26-27.

⁹ Maude Glasgow, The Scotch-Irish in Northern Ireland and in the American Colonies (New York, 1936), 184.

independence movement of this era was to unite Catholic numbers with Presbyterian wealth. The most serious obstacle to such a union was the antagonism that the Protestant Ascendancy had fostered between the two groups. In 1790 Wolfe Tone had written "An Argument in Behalf of the Catholics in Ireland" in which he urged the Dissenters to unite with the Catholics and advised both Catholics and Dissenters to forget their differences and to effect a political union against the common enemy in order to achieve the independence of their country. In his words, they should "...consolidate the whole strength of the entire nation, and...form for the future but one people."¹⁰

In 1791 Wolfe Tone wrote a second pamphlet entitled "A Northern Whig." Attacking the "constitution of 1782" and thereby the Protestant Ascendancy, he urged Catholics and Whigs to unite to reform Parliament. Clearly, by 1791 the Catholic Committee was willing to think more positively about both democracy and the Presbyterians. As the Committee's new goals and tactics evolved, the Catholic aristocrats were resistive, but without significant effect.¹¹

In October, 1791, Wolfe Tone joined with a largely Presbyterian group to form the Society of United Irishmen in

¹⁰MacManus, The Irish Race, 504-05.

¹¹Curtis, A History of Ireland, 330.

order to attack the Protestant Irish Parliament by legal means. Its headquarters were to be in Belfast. The original purpose of the Society was to unite Catholics with Presbyterians, then to admit Anglicans who wished to reform their church. The goals soon announced by the United Irishmen made them de facto revolutionaries. They advocated political separation from Great Britain, because they believed that Irish Reform could not be attained through existing parliamentary means. The Society declared that the chief reforms they desired were to establish religious and civil liberties in Ireland and to establish an Irish Parliament representative of all of the Irish people. To achieve these ends, the United Irishmen turned not to those in the political forefront but to the Catholic masses themselves.¹²

The founding of the Society of United Irishmen effected a split in the Catholic population between the upper and middle classes, who still sought relief through negotiation with Great Britain, and the majority, who would force Catholic emancipation themselves. The Catholic aristocracy refused to become the leaders of a movement for the general

¹²Ibid.; Eric Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy (New York, 1951), 51. Other notable founders of the Society of United Irishmen were Napper Tandy, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Thomas Addis Emmet, Arthur O'Connor, and Rowan Hamilton.

body of Catholics. In January, 1792, Lords Kenmare and Fingall led more than sixty of their supporters in withdrawing from the Catholic Committee in order to clear themselves from even the suspicion of having supported revolutionary principles. Upon the defection of the aristocrats, the Catholic Committee turned to the middle class for leadership. The role of the Catholic aristocrats and Whigs would have been less important, even if no rift had occurred, because it was evident that they were not strong enough to persuade a Parliament, influenced if not corrupted by pensions, to agree to Catholic emancipation in the usual parliamentary way. Therefore, it was for multiple reasons that the new leaders were not inclined to be moderate. Paradoxically, the Society of United Irishmen originated in Ulster. Because the Dissenters had been subjected to the same kind of oppression as the Catholics of the south, it was the Presbyterians who sought an alliance with the Catholics because they felt a kinship in persecution.¹³

In order to keep Catholics and Dissenters from uniting, a Catholic relief bill was introduced into the Irish Parliament in January, 1792. Although it was greeted with public contempt because of its limited character and its underlying

¹³ John F. Finerty, Ireland: The People's History of Ireland, II (New York, 1904), 507-08; Glasgow, The Scotch-Irish, 184-85.

motive, it passed easily, having received Government support. It provided for marriages between Catholics and Protestants, Catholic admission to the practice of law, and it removed the remaining restrictions on education. Dissatisfied with the limited provisions of the January bill, the Catholic Committee met at the Tailor's Hall on Back Lane in Dublin on December 2, 1792. This meeting came to be known as the Catholic Convention or, in some quarters, the Back Lane Parliament. Its members drew up a petition which asked the King to extend to Catholics all rights of the "constitution of 1782." It was signed by all of the delegates present, including Drs. Troy and Moylan, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and Bishop of Cork, respectively. A committee of the delegates personally took the petition to London, thus bypassing the regular channels of the disapproving Irish Government. On their way, as the delegation of Tone and other Irish notables passed through Belfast, their carriages were unhitched and pulled joyously through the streets by well-wishing Presbyterians. On January 2, 1793, the King received the petition and subsequently instructed Lord Lieutenant Westmorland to consider the situation of His Majesty's Catholic subjects.¹⁴

¹⁴J. C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923 (New York, 1966), 248-49; Donald Grove Barnes, George III and William Pitt, 1783-1806 (New York, 1965), 334-35.

Immediately the Irish Parliament began work on a new Catholic relief bill. On April 9, 1793, it passed the Hobart Catholic Relief Bill. Against the wishes of Dublin Castle and the Protestant Ascendancy, this bill had been pushed through by Grattan, with the approval and using the influence of the British ministers at London. Its purpose was to appease the Catholics so that they would not become further disaffected with British rule and join the forces of revolutionary France. The provisions of the bill allowed upper class Catholics to carry arms; permitted Catholics to open their own colleges provided that they were associated with Trinity College and that they were not exclusively for Catholics; allowed Catholics to become justices of the peace; provided for Catholic land ownership, commissions in the army and navy, civil appointment, and entrance to Trinity College and the College of Physicians and Surgeons; and allowed Catholics to act as grand jurors. Most important, it provided for Catholic enfranchisement.¹⁵

Although the Hobart Catholic Relief Bill was passed by a margin of two to one in the Irish House of Commons, it fell far short of public expectation. The worst consequence of Hobart's Catholic Relief Bill was the indirect embitter-

¹⁵Curtis, A History of Ireland, 332; Barnes, George III and William Pitt, 335.

ment and division resulting from the members' display of resentment and hostility to those who were benefitted. Lord Chancellor Fitzgibbon denounced his Catholic countrymen, but he dared not oppose the popular bill. In the House of Lords, a majority of lords spiritual opposed the bill. Apart from attitudes, the bill itself had drawbacks. Certain public offices still were denied to Catholics: lord lieutenant, lord chancellor, privy councillor, member of Parliament, sheriff, sub-sheriff, and fellow of Trinity College. Furthermore, the Catholic Convention of 1792 had thrown such a fright into the authorities that they succeeded in passing, in the same session as the relief bill, the Anti-Convention Act of 1793. The Government also coupled Hobart's Relief Act to an Arms Act, prohibiting the importation or sale of gunpowder or arms. A magistrate needed no warrant to search for such items.¹⁶

In return for the 1793 enfranchisement of 30,000 Catholic 40 shilling freeholders, the British Government obtained the dissolution of the Catholic Committee. Upon passage of the bill, the Committee voted thanks to Wolfe Tone through the gift of £1,500 and a gold medal. Other members

¹⁶Curtis, A History of Ireland, 332; Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, 50-51.

of the delegation to the King were similarly rewarded before the Committee was disbanded. The United Irishmen were left without an important arm of action and the authorities believed that their problems were solved.¹⁷

Throughout the universe, political and social equilibrium is most rare. The year 1793 was not one of those rare times in Ireland. Her Catholics, comprising three-fourths of the population, were still the victims of serious discrimination. The more energetic members of the defunct Catholic Committee joined the Society of United Irishmen, if they did not already belong to it. There were, besides, many Englishmen and Protestants in Ireland who favored the seating of Catholics in the Irish Parliament because they believed that it would foster Irish representative institutions. In order to protect these institutions, Ireland would have to rely on Great Britain. The Irish Protestant Ascendancy, however, disapproved of the seating of Catholics because the Protestants believed that to do otherwise would insure a predominantly Catholic Irish Parliament in which the Protestants would become a minority reflecting the religious distribution of the population.¹⁸

¹⁷ Curtis, A History of Ireland, 332; Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, 50.

¹⁸ Finerty, The People's History, II, 513; Edward Raymond Turner, Ireland and England in the Past and at Present (New York, 1920), 101-02.

There was nothing illegal about the Society of United Irishmen during the first three years of its existence, but nevertheless in responding to it, the Government had acted in a very defensive, highhanded fashion. The Society, the Catholic Committee, and other such organizations were closely watched by Dublin Castle, so that it might quickly prosecute their members upon the first transgression of the law. In February, 1793, the Hon. Simon Butler and Oliver Bond served respectively as chairman and secretary of a meeting of the United Irishmen in Dublin which censured a committee of the Irish House of Lords for having conducted an illegal inquiry into the Defenders. The Castle promptly secured, without a regular trial, decrees which sentenced each to six months in prison and a fine of £500. Similarly, Hamilton Rowan, a prominent Society member and one of its founders, was sentenced to two years in prison and a fine of £500 for circulating a patriotic address to the Volunteers from the United Irishmen.¹⁹

Despite Government harassment, the initial programs of the Society of United Irishmen were extremely successful. The Society was highly popular for its stands for Catholic emancipation, tithe abolition, and against civil inequali-

¹⁹Joyce, Patrick W., "Ireland," in Ireland and Scotland (Vol. XII in The History of Nations series, New York, 1932), 201-02.

ties. The Northern Star, its journalistic arm, did much to spread the principles of the Society and publicize related events, such as the Back Lane Parliament of December, 1792. After the dissolution of the Catholic Committee and the transfer of many of its members to the Society, the movement quickly spread throughout Ulster and Leinster, then to Munster and Connaught. By 1794, it is estimated that the Society had more than 100,000 members. Some historians assert that, at its height, the Society's membership reached 300,000 regimented and brigaded members.²⁰

In early 1794, an Anglican minister, the Reverend William Jackson, arrived in Ireland from France by way of England. His purpose was to sound out, for the French Government, the feasibility of a French invasion of Ireland. In his company was a London attorney, a certain Cockayne, and the two had interviews with leading United Irishmen: Wolfe Tone, Leonard MacNally, Hamilton Rowan, and others. MacNally was a Dublin attorney who handled all of the Society's legal business and knew its innermost secrets. As events unraveled, Cockayne was a British spy. On April 28, the Reverend Mr. Jackson was arrested. Being compromised

²⁰ MacManus, The Irish Race, 506-07; Finerty, The People's History, II, 512-14.

by Cockayne, Hamilton Rowan and Wolfe Tone were forced to flee to the United States. Years later, after MacNally's death, it was discovered that he, who was so intimately connected with the Society of United Irishmen, was also a British spy. Much of the work of the British Army in suppressing the subsequent Rebellion of 1798 was made much easier by the espionage system established earlier by the Irish Government. Many high officials in the Society of United Irishmen were also Government spies. Furthermore, the British spy system in France relied heavily on mercenary Irish priests who compromised much of the Franco-Irish activity. When the rebellion finally occurred, the British Army had little trouble locating and arresting the rebel leaders in order to render the rebellion leaderless.²¹

On January 21, 1793, Louis XVI of France had been beheaded. The French declaration of war against Great Britain that followed a month later made the conservatives of Great Britain and Ireland so fearful of revolution that needed reforms were shelved as being too risky. This shelving included Catholic emancipation and helps to explain why Hobart's Catholic Relief Bill of 1793 contained only partial Catholic relief. Without emancipation, the concessions de-

²¹Joyce, "Ireland," 202; Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, 54.

signed to keep Ireland loyal were too little and too late. They were designed to appease the Catholics without actually giving them much power. They were made not in the sense of justice but from the apprehension of danger. Because of the war with France, Great Britain put aside any spirit of conciliation and with it any chance of winning the lasting loyalty of Ireland. Great Britain looked back upon the sixteenth and seventeenth century wars with France and Spain. Instead of providing Ireland with needed political and social reforms, these were abandoned in the face of what Great Britain believed to be political necessity.²²

The war between Great Britain and France caused a slump in the Irish economy which bred further resentment against the English. This only made the French revolutionary cause more attractive. To be sure, the Irish Government was deeply concerned about a landing in force by French troops. It was believed that such an event would mean at least the temporary end of British rule on the island. Although Grattan, a patriot, led the movement in the Irish Parliament to pledge Ireland's support for Great Britain, outside of Parliament French sympathies were so prevalent that they bid fair to encompass the whole Roman Catholic population.²³

²²Curtis, A History of Ireland, 332-33; Blanshard, The Irish and Catholic Power, 24.

²³Pakenham, The Year of Liberty, 27; Curtis, A History of Ireland, 334.

Because the Relief Bill allowed forty shilling Catholic freeholders to vote but allowed no Catholic to take office, the educated Roman Catholic was denied office while many illiterates of all denominations could vote--often following the whim of their landlords.²⁴ In 1794, an act for parliamentary reform was defeated. Nevertheless, under the influence of the French Revolution, the Catholic populace increased agitation for full emancipation. The Arms Act of 1793 had virtually abolished organizations such as the Volunteers by forbidding non-government organizations to carry arms. The accompanying Anti-Convention Act prohibited such meetings as the Back Lane Parliament. Because of these acts, those who wanted political and social change had to turn to secret organizations, less visible to the scrutiny of Dublin Castle. The Society of United Irishmen accommodated these desires by becoming more and more secret and by increasingly adopting the principles and tactics of the French Jacobins. Remembering the Irish opportunities of the English Civil War in the 1640's and the American Revolution (1775-1783), the Catholics' watchword remained: "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity."²⁵

²⁴J. H. Whyte, "Landlord Influence at Elections in Ireland." The English Historical Review, LXXX (October, 1965), 740-41.

²⁵W. C. Taylor, History of Ireland: From the Anglo-Norman Invasion Till the Union of the Country with Great Britain, II (New York, 1833), 255-56; Pakenham, The Year of

Although the American Revolution greatly influenced the United Irishmen, the Americans were too far away and too pre-occupied with their own problems to be of any major importance in Anglo-Irish relations. However, France was nearby. Because of this proximity, the Irish had greater hope of aid than was possible from the United States. From the French point of view, Ireland was also important. Just as royalist France had struck a blow at Great Britain by aiding the American Revolution, so republican France could strike an even greater blow by encouraging and aiding a revolution in a more integral part of the British Empire--Ireland. It was only natural that the Society of United Irishmen would seek France as an ally. The French Revolution had demonstrated to many Irishmen, as had the American Revolution to the Volunteers a decade earlier, that through violence they could obtain answers impossible through peaceful and legal means.²⁶

The problem of understanding the Irish greatly plagued Great Britain during the 1790's. Often events that occurred in England would be transported in the British mind to Ireland. On April 16, 1794, a Jacobin meeting of the London Corresponding Society at Chalk Farm, Hampstead, was attended by an estimated 6,000 persons. Many of those attending were

Liberty, 26.

²⁶ Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy, 51-52.

not actually Jacobins but were only curious. The British Government failed to note the difference and grew alarmed at the number of adherents to French principles in England. If Jacobinism was so strong in England, it must be rampant in Ireland, or so went the logic. As true as that was, it would not have been so if Ireland earlier had been treated as an integral part of Great Britain rather than as a colony.²⁷ Similarly, British and Anglo-Irish observers assigned derogatory labels to Irish personalities and events. Sir Jonah Barrington, an observer and participant in the Ireland of the 1790's, described Wolfe Tone as a follower of "that wild democratic mania."²⁸ On January 28, 1794, the Reverend Thomas Brand wrote to the Earl of Ailesbury concerning Jacobinism. He could not understand why any man of family would give up his noble birth and adopt the political ideas "...which make men think themselves able to govern and restrain the vulgar... [but only] led them uniformly to the guillotine."²⁹

²⁷ Great Britain Historical Manuscripts Commission, Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part VII, The Manuscripts of the Duke of Somerset, the Marquis of Ailesbury, and the Rev. Sir H. G. Puleston, Bart. (London, 1898), 262.

²⁸ Jonah Barrington, Personal Sketches of His Own Times (New York, 1859), 174.

²⁹ Great Britain Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Duke of Somerset, 261.

The support of Catholic emancipation by a revolutionary army, as the Society of United Irishmen was soon to become, equated the measure with treason. The one act which would have forestalled the bloody events of 1798, true and full Catholic emancipation, was ultimately postponed because King George III obstinately stood by his interpretation of his coronation oath. The British and Irish Governments, however, did not look with uneasiness upon the whole Irish Catholic population. The Catholic Church was an avowed friend of monarchy and religion and just as avowed an enemy of atheism and republicanism. The horrors of revolutionary France placed the Irish Roman Catholic Church officially on the side of the King, along with most upper class Irish Catholics. The famous Irish Brigade of the French Royalist Army transferred its allegiance en masse to Great Britain. This same attitude, however, was not shared by the lower class Irish Catholics. The reforms in favor of Catholics within the previous thirty years had hardly reached them. Suffering under landlord oppression, they sought retribution for existing grievances more than reform for future amelioration. All too easily, these grievances were transformed into Jacobin political ideals through the teachings of the Society of United Irishmen.³⁰

³⁰Blanshard, The Irish and Catholic Power, 23-24; Curtis, A History of Ireland, 333.

In 1794, John Keogh left the Society of United Irishmen, as did many other conservative members, because it prescribed an oath requiring of its members unquestioning loyalty. As the Society was subjected to increasing Jacobin discipline in the east and south, it acquired increased membership among the Catholic poor, for whom legislative reform meant little. Tithes and high rents were of great importance to them. Thus, outside of Ulster, the Society adopted added unofficial objectives. Because many of the Catholic United Irishmen had first been Defenders or Whiteboys, it was likely that the unofficial objectives would be sought through violence before the original main objectives could be achieved through legal means. However, until mid-1794, at least, the Society's leaders did not condone the violent oaths and attitudes of members in the east and the south.³¹

In the summer of 1794, Pitt's Tory Government was faced with a general crisis. French victories on the Continent threatened Britain's position and influence. French influence at home and in Ireland seemed certain to attempt the disruption of society. The Habeas Corpus Act had already been suspended in Great Britain on May 16. The time for a change in ministry and overall policy was at hand. While

³¹Finerty, The People's History, II, 514; Glasgow, The Scotch-Irish, 186.

it was uncertain what such changes might entail for unhappy Ireland, there was no doubt that statesmanship of a high order was required to avoid further deterioration.³²

³²J. Holland Rose, William Pitt and the Great War (Westport, Conn., 1971), 190-92.

CHAPTER III

THE TORY-WHIG COALITION TO GRATTAN'S RETIREMENT FROM PARLIAMENT, JULY, 1794 - MAY, 1797

The summer of 1794 was a gloomy one for Britain. She doubted whether her purpose and power would be sufficient to cope with her problems on the Continent and at home. Lacking in fresh and promising plans, Pitt's Tory Cabinet decided in July to bring into membership several Portland Whigs in the hope that this coalition would bring forth greater unity at home and a more successful war effort against republican France. As a stipulation of the agreement which produced the coalition cabinet, Portland's Whigs would direct Irish affairs. It was generally expected on both sides of the Irish Sea that Whig control over Irish affairs would mean replacement of Tory interests and personnel by Whig interests and personnel under a new Lord Lieutenant, William Wentworth Fitzwilliam, the second Earl Fitzwilliam.¹

By August 4, Fitzwilliam's probable appointment had proceeded far enough that he wrote Grattan and asked for his support. But things moved slowly. On October 15, Grattan met with Pitt at the Prime Minister's request but declined

¹J. Holland Rose, William Pitt and the Great War (Westport, Conn., 1971), 270-71; William Edward Hartpole Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland, I (New York, 1903), 163-64.

office in the Government, wishing to remain independently Irish. At that time, Portland declared that if Fitzwilliam were not appointed, the coalition cabinet would be dissolved. On November 14, Pitt discussed the matter further with Portland. Finally, on December 10, Fitzwilliam received his appointment as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.²

The great shortcoming of this arrangement was that, although Fitzwilliam was sent to Ireland, his instructions were not written, but merely oral. This fact opened the door to differences of recollection between Fitzwilliam and Pitt. It also led to a degree of latitude for Fitzwilliam which proved unfortunate. The oral understanding left Fitzwilliam certain that he had told Pitt that he intended to dismiss John Beresford, the highly reactionary Chief Commissioner of the Revenue in Ireland. It also assured him that, even though he was forbidden to sponsor Catholic emancipation as a Government bill, he was permitted to support a motion favoring emancipation provided it had been independently introduced. On the other hand, Pitt's impression of Fitzwilliam's instructions was that they required that the Lord Lieutenant submit in advance to London any contemplated dismissals from or appointments to the Irish Administration and any

²James O'Connor, History of Ireland, 1798-1924 (New York, 1926), 72-73; Donald Grove Barnes, George III and William Pitt, 1783-1806 (New York, 1965), 339-40.

action to be taken by the Lord Lieutenant with regard to Catholic emancipation.³

Because Fitzwilliam owned extensive Irish lands and was known to be a liberal landlord, he was enthusiastically received by the Irish populace on January 4, 1795. He believed that the partial Catholic relief of 1793 should be completed for the good of Great Britain and the Empire. Portland, the Home Secretary and his immediate superior, concurred. Nevertheless, it was Pitt's desire to let the matter rest until a peace was reached with France.⁴

Upon his arrival in Ireland, Fitzwilliam learned that the Catholics were determined to insist that Parliament consider the matter of Catholic emancipation. He sought the views of Catholic Lords Kenmare and Fingall in an effort to determine whether the matter might be postponed. These seceders from the Catholic Committee assured him that, although they desired to do nothing that would embarrass the Government, they believed that delay would be impossible. All Catholics in Ireland, they declared, wanted to press the matter forward to success. Fingall informed Fitzwilliam that

³Barnes, George III and William Pitt, 340-41; J. Steven Watson, The Reign of George III, 1760-1815 (Oxford, 1960), 394.

⁴Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 177-78; John F. Finerty, Ireland: The People's History of Ireland, II (New York, 1904), 525.

the remaining disabilities of the Penal Laws lay at the bottom of Catholic disaffection. From various sources the Lord Lieutenant learned that many Protestant politicians, including some who had opposed Hobart's Catholic Relief Bill of 1793, now favored complete emancipation because they reasoned that the state of the country was too dangerous not to complete what Hobart's bill had started.⁵

On January 7, only a few days after his arrival, Fitzwilliam dismissed three officials from what he characterized as "lesser" offices. One of these "lesser" officials was John Beresford, Chief Commissioner of the Revenue. Quite apart from the importance of his office, Beresford's power in Irish politics was wide-reaching. He was connected by marriage to Lord Chancellor Fitzgibbon. His family was one of the three largest borough owners in Ireland. Beresford's influence had placed his dependants or relatives in one-fourth of the positions of Church and State in Ireland. It was not for nothing that his nickname was "King of Ireland." Immediately, Beresford began writing to his friend Pitt strongly protesting his dismissal and demanding Fitzwilliam's removal. As Fitzwilliam's reorganization continued, other dismissed Irish placemen wrote to British leaders headed by

⁵ Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 180, 183-84.

the two most recent lords lieutenant, Buckingham and Westmorland, who were very influential with Pitt in the defense of Beresford and others.⁶

On January 8 and January 15, Fitzwilliam wrote to Portland about the state of Ireland, mentioning the Catholics' plan to introduce the question of Catholic emancipation during the coming session of Parliament. He informed the Home Secretary that he would do his best to defer Catholic agitation even though he believed it impolitic and even dangerous for the Government to do any less than openly support Catholic emancipation. He further declared that, if he received no instructions to the contrary, he would approve Catholic demands. Whether because of lack of interest, concern with patronage, or involvement with the war against France, London made no reply. By January 22, when the Irish Parliament met, Fitzwilliam had arranged for Grattan to give him the draft of the bill for Catholic relief. He promised that he would send it to the British Cabinet where it could be approved, disapproved, or modified. In this way, the Administration would appear to support the bill while the British Government had time to study the proposals. By not letting the Catholics know the exact details of the bill, the Government could approve of a slightly watered-down version and still

⁶ Ibid., 164-65, 172-76, 179; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 74.

appear to be the champion of the people.⁷

In accordance with his original instructions, Fitzwilliam made no mention of the Catholic question in his Speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament. He only asked that the country unite against the common foe and grant a liberal supply for the war. In response, Grattan urged conciliation among his colleagues. The tone of both Fitzwilliam's and Grattan's speeches aroused great expectations among the moderates that some pattern for Catholic relief could be found within the Irish Parliament.⁸

The year 1795 was believed to be a dangerous one for Ireland, and especially for Protestant Ireland. A well executed French invasion would at least temporarily succeed in expelling British power from Ireland, and the fear of a French invasion greatly affected Irish politics. With Catholic support of the Irish Government, the chances of a successful French invasion diminished. Because of Fitzwilliam's popularity, the prospect of Catholic relief, and the danger of a French invasion, Grattan's bill for war supply was passed by an unexpectedly large margin; only two votes were cast against it. For the first time since 1782, the Irish Parliament voted a large grant for the British Navy

⁷ Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 181, 184-87; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 74-75.

⁸ Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 187-88; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 75.

(£200,000). Military forces in Ireland were raised to 40,000.⁹

Meanwhile, on January 23, Beresford crossed to London in order to present his views and his complaints personally. Conferring with the Anglican Bishop of London, he persuaded the Bishop to advise the King that to grant Catholic emancipation would be a breach of his coronation oath. Unaware of Beresford's progress, and with the Catholic question temporarily in abeyance, Fitzwilliam again wrote to Portland on January 28. He suggested the importance of establishing a yeoman cavalry, but only after the Catholic relief bill had been passed. He also informed the Cabinet that he saw success for Catholic emancipation in the Irish Parliament and that, outside of Parliament, Protestant Ireland supported such a measure. On that same day, however, he received notice from Foreign Secretary Grenville that Beresford's dismissal was not in keeping with Fitzwilliam's instructions as understood in London. A few days later, Portland officially confirmed this Government view. Clearly, the oral understanding reached on December 10, had not produced a meeting of the minds.¹⁰

⁹Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 182, 187-88; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 75.

¹⁰Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 188-89; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 74-76.

By February, it would have been clear to an outside observer that the issue of prime importance to Fitzwilliam was not the same as that in the minds of the British ministers. He overlooked Beresford's dismissal as nothing more than a minor issue, while they did likewise with regard to Catholic emancipation. On February 10, being still without instructions on the Catholic emancipation issue from London, Fitzwilliam again wrote Portland and declared it impossible to delay any longer. The revived Catholic Committee, cooperating with the Catholic aristocrats who had seceded, was prepared to bring the matter to public attention forthwith. He explained their belief that the passage of a bill abolishing all disqualifications for Catholics was immediately important to the general welfare and security of the country. Grattan's plan called for just such a measure; it would even provide that Catholics should be eligible for the highest offices of the State, including the Bench. It was Fitzwilliam's belief that to oppose the measure would lead to dire consequences. Passage of the bill was essential for the harmony of Ireland and preservation of the Protestant Ascendancy and Protestant Church of Ireland.¹¹

¹¹Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 189-90; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 74-76.

On February 12, Grattan brought before the Irish House of Commons a motion for "leave to bring in a Bill for the relief of His Majesty's Catholic subjects." His speech, in accordance with Fitzwilliam's wishes, was vague and made no reference to the details of the proposal. The motion received only two opposing votes. Immediately, Fitzwilliam again informed London of the importance of full approval of the Catholic relief plan. He warned that anything short of full approval would only show backwardness on the part of the Government. An Irish Protestant opposition would then grow toward the measure where none previously had existed. More important, instead of being drawn toward the Government, the Catholics would become further and dangerously disaffected.¹²

On February 5, the King had received Fitzwilliam's letters to Portland and expressed surprise at the actions of the Lord Lieutenant. He then declared that it would be best to replace him rather than risk such a dangerous innovation as Catholic emancipation in Ireland. In London, a result of the King's statement had been a Cabinet meeting on February 7 to consider Catholic emancipation. The following day, Portland had written to instruct Fitzwilliam to defer the Catholic question by refraining from entering any engagements or even using encouraging language. This letter completely ignored Fitzwilliam's earlier warnings that delay was impossi-

¹²Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 190-91.

ble. On February 9, Pitt wrote Fitzwilliam, but his letter mentioned nothing about the Catholic question. It dealt solely with the removal of John Beresford from office. Pitt objected to Fitzwilliam's dismissal of Beresford without direct and specific authorization from himself. The letter charged Fitzwilliam with exceeding his powers, as there had been no prior agreement on Beresford's removal from the Revenue Board. Fitzwilliam received both of these letters on February 13, almost three weeks after Parliament had opened and more than a month after Fitzwilliam had written the Cabinet of the urgency of the Catholic matter. This harmful delay of instructions was caused by the seriousness of the war with France and to the lack of interest on the part of the British ministers in Irish internal affairs.¹³

In his reply to Portland's letter of February 8, Fitzwilliam complained on February 14 that it was lamentable that after so much delay, the Cabinet now ask for a further delay with regard to the Catholic question. He further stated that he would not be the one to lead the Government in opposition to or delay of the Catholic relief measure. In his reply to Pitt, he asked the Prime Minister to choose between Beresford and himself. As the King's minister, he should be

¹³Ibid., 191-93, 205-06; Barnes, George III and William Pitt, 343-45.

recalled if he could not be supported.¹⁴

Before Fitzwilliam's replies to Portland and Pitt reached London, he received new letters that strongly condemned him for allowing Grattan to introduce his motion of February 12. He was instructed to take no further action on the Catholic question. An alternative of a seminary for the education of priests and a fund for their payment was proposed by Portland. Because of Fitzwilliam's statement that he would not lead the Government in opposition to or delay of the measure for Catholic relief, on February 23, he was informed that his resignation had been accepted. He was authorized to appoint Lords Justices to carry on the Government.¹⁵

Fitzwilliam had warned the British ministers that to disappoint Catholic hopes would certainly cause a rebellion. Lord Charlemont warned that, if Fitzwilliam were recalled, the people might well fall under the control of the United Irishmen by the following Christmas. The immediate response of the Irish House of Commons was to amend its authorization of war supplies by limiting them to only six months. Both Houses of Parliament gave Fitzwilliam votes of confidence.

¹⁴Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 193-94, 194n.

¹⁵Ibid., 194-95; J. C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923 (New York, 1966), 254-55.

However, the Lord Lieutenant had de facto dismissed himself when he declared that he would not lead the Government in opposition to the Catholic relief measure.¹⁶

The importance of the Fitzwilliam episode lies neither in the nature of Fitzwilliam's powers nor in his interpretation of them but in the attitude generated by his appointment. His advent generated much hope and expectation among the Irish Catholic populace. His recall generated just as much, if not more, resentment. Even though in the early nineteenth century post-Union Irish propagandists attacked the Fitzwilliam episode as one deliberately engineered to provoke the Irish Rebellion of 1798, which, in turn, brought Union in its backlash, the evidence does not support this accusation. Fitzwilliam's appointment came as a result of the desire to keep together the coalition government in order to pursue more effectively the war against France. All problems that might cause division within the coalition would have to be suppressed. Fitzwilliam's advocacy of Catholic emancipation came to be such a problem. His recall and the subsequent appointment of Lord Camden (John Jeffries Pratt) suppressed the problem but did not solve it.¹⁷

¹⁶ Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 202-03; Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 342.

¹⁷ O'Connor, History of Ireland, 74, 76; J. C. Hansard, The Parliamentary History of England, XXXI (London, 1818), 1501.

On May 8, in an attempt to open debate in the British House of Lords on the Fitzwilliam affair, the Duke of Norfolk declared that Fitzwilliam's recall affected not only the life of one individual but "the probable tranquility of the sister kingdom and of this."¹⁸ He stated that Fitzwilliam believed it his duty to abolish "all restraints on the Catholics that were not absolutely necessary for the safety of the State."¹⁹ Norfolk then related how laws are passed for specific purposes and that the intention of the Penal Laws had been to keep papal political intervention in Ireland ineffective. Since it was ridiculous in 1795 to imagine such intervention, the laws should be repealed. That the House of Lords reacted negatively to Norfolk can be seen by the 25 to 100 vote defeat of a motion for an inquiry into the removal of Fitzwilliam.²⁰

On March 25, Lord Fitzwilliam left Dublin for England. His coach was drawn to the waterfront by some of Dublin's most respected citizens. Businesses closed and signs of mourning appeared everywhere. From that day until the outbreak of open armed rebellion in May of 1798, disloyalty

¹⁸ Hansard, Parliamentary History of England, XXXI, 1496-1500.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 1496-1500, 1521.

grew throughout Ireland. Disturbances occurred in Connaught but were forced underground when the Government had scores of the insurgents arrested and sent to serve in the fleet.²¹

On March 31, Lord Camden arrived in Dublin to replace Fitzwilliam. After the swearing-in ceremony, a riot broke out which ended with the death of two of the rioters. The carriages of Camden and of Lord Chancellor Fitzgibbon were stoned, and the mob attacked the Speaker's home and the Customs House. The trouble that accompanied the accession of Camden to the Lord Lieutenancy was only a small indication of future events. Fitzwilliam's recall cemented the alliance between Catholic and Presbyterian leaders and strengthened the extremists within the Society of United Irishmen. It also awakened a stronger interest among the Catholic peasantry on the subject of Catholic gentry representation in Parliament.²²

At the time of Fitzwilliam's recall, Grattan acted as a moderating influence. He believed that patronage, not the Catholic question, was the real reason for Fitzwilliam's recall. He thought that Camden, like Fitzwilliam, would come to support a program of Catholic emancipation as the

²¹O'Connor, History of Ireland, 76, 86.

²²Ibid., 76-77; Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 342.

only means of pacifying the country. In April, 1795, as directed by the Cabinet, Camden opened the Irish Parliament without a King's Speech. As Grattan had surmised, Camden agreed with Fitzwilliam that it was dangerous to refuse Catholic emancipation. Yet he also believed that the danger would not develop if no invasion occurred. Camden was instructed to follow an anti-Catholic policy. Portland impressed on him the importance of making the most influential Protestants in Ireland believe that Catholic emancipation would be subversive to the Protestant Establishment and, therefore, must not occur. In order for Camden to succeed in an anti-Catholic policy, the Government's parliamentary influence was fully utilized. Their efforts proved successful, as Grattan's Catholic Emancipation Bill which had been introduced in February was defeated by 84 to 115. The sincerity of the Government's anti-Catholicism was demonstrated to Grattan and all Irish Protestants when Fitzgibbon was created Earl of Clare upon the defeat of Grattan's bill.²³

As compensation to the Catholics for the defeat of the emancipation bill, the College of Maynooth was founded as a seminary for the education of priests. Because rising secularism in France and Belgium had closed many Catholic seminaries on the Continent, it was Dublin Castle's hope that the

²³ Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 206-07, 212-13, 214-17; Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 256.

founding of Maynooth would convince the Irish Catholic populace of the Government's sense of justice. Again, it was too little and too late. No such small concession could alter the atmosphere of civil, economic, and religious warfare that spread over Ireland. As 1795 unfolded, only one course was open to Camden--coercion. An Indemnity Act was passed to protect squires and yeomen who took the law into their own hands. An Insurrection Act became law in an attempt to disarm the disaffected. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended in Ireland, as it had already been in Great Britain.²⁴

Fitzwilliam's recall had clearly aggravated an already tense situation. The Portland-Camden policy greatly increased the extent of the unrest. Many of the moderates in opposition to Dublin Castle made a political move toward the left. Outside of Parliament, moderate Catholic lay leaders, pressed by the increasing boldness and radicalism of the moment, either turned politically leftward or were replaced. Fitzwilliam's brief tenure had given hope. His recall dashed that hope and weakened the determination of many erstwhile leaders to encourage restraint among their coreligionists.²⁵

²⁴Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 343, 345; Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 216.

²⁵O'Connor, History of Ireland, 61-62, 77; Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 255-56.

In the first few years of the Society of United Irishmen, some members had wanted complete separation from Great Britain while most would have been content with democratic reform and Catholic emancipation. 1795 was the year in which failure to achieve the goals of the majority was accepted. Continued Government opposition to any significant political reform caused the United Irishmen to become disloyal--no longer the "loyal opposition." The Society had little difficulty enlisting the membership of Catholic peasants after Fitzwilliam's departure. Largely successful with Presbyterians before 1795, the Society of United Irishmen became increasingly Catholic after Fitzwilliam's recall.²⁶

The rapid growth in membership of the United Irishmen was achieved through a more activist program which new Society goals reflected. The ideas of confiscation of property and the establishment of a republic on the principles of the French Revolution were added to interest in the betterment of social position. The Society informed its members that its triumph would lead to the abolition of tithes and the distribution of property under a "democracy" governed by Society members. Anglican church property, émigré property, and the property of those fighting in the

²⁶Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 157-59, 203-04; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 64n, 64-65.

British Army against the rebellion would be used to defray the expenses of defense for the newly freed republic.²⁷

The two most important events which strengthened the extreme wing of the Society of United Irishmen were the recall of Fitzwilliam and the "Battle of the Diamond." Because of economic turmoils in Ulster, poor elements of Catholics and Protestants clashed openly and often violently. On September 21, 1795, conflicting Protestant and Catholic parties assembled at the Diamond, in the Ulster County of Armagh. The leaders of each, a parish priest for the Catholic Defenders and one Atkinson for the Protestant Peep O'Day Boys, arrived at terms of peace. The two groups were retiring when a new party of Defenders arrived and opened hostilities. After the battle, twenty to thirty of the ill-armed Catholics lay dead at the cost of not a single Protestant life. The Protestants of County Armagh then determined to drive all Catholics from their homes and "To Hell or Connaught." These disturbances soon spread to other counties of Ulster: Tyrone, Down, Antrim, and Londonderry. Many peaceable Catholics did flee to Connaught, but others stayed and enlisted in the Society of United Irishmen.²⁸

²⁷O'Connor, History of Ireland, 65-66.

²⁸Ibid., 72, 77-79; Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 257.

The Orange Society owes its origin to the "Battle of the Diamond." On that day, the Peep O'Day Boys discarded their name and adopted one in honor of the great Protestant conqueror of Irish Catholic power at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690--William III. In the beginning, the Orange Society was Anglican but was soon broadened to include Presbyterians. Many Catholic writers claim that the original aim and obligation of the Orange Society was to exterminate all Catholics in Ireland. Refuted by evidence to the contrary since that time, the alleged oath of Catholic extermination did as much to perpetuate religious discord in Ireland as did the Orange Society itself.²⁹

The Orange Society was sponsored and promoted by the great Protestant landlords. Their purpose was to effect a split between the Catholics and Presbyterians of northern Ireland and thereby keep the tenantry from becoming too strong. Their aim was generally achieved. The persecution of the Catholics in Ulster, following the "Battle of the Diamond," was not met by turning the other cheek. The Defender movement evolved from one of self-defense into one of treasonable terrorism. These actions caused many Ulster Presbyterians to place their faith solely in the Orange

²⁹O'Connor, History of Ireland, 82-85; Paul Blanshard, The Irish and Catholic Power: An American Interpretation (Boston, 1953), 24.

Society and abandon the United Irishmen.³⁰

Fitzwilliam's recall, the subsequent repressive regime of Camden, and the founding of the Orangemen convinced United Irishmen leaders that the organization of the Society had to be altered. An elaborate organization of district and county delegations was created which received orders from a central committee in Dublin. An important part of this new organization was the Revolutionary Committee. Its major pre-rebellion function was to commit theft and murder, in which process it compiled an amazing record of going unpunished. The Irish Government could not rely on the heavily Catholic militia to control the Committee and the best of the Army was in reserve for or actually fighting the French. The Government feared enlisting the aid of efficient Orangemen because it did not want to induce a Catholic rebellion before it was ready to crush one.³¹

Throughout the winter of 1795-1796, the disturbances continued in Ulster. Many Catholics were forced from their homes in the dead of winter. As a result of testimony from several Irish notables, particularly Lord Gosford, a committee of thirty magistrates attempted to quell the disturbances.

³⁰ Tom Ireland, Ireland: Past and Present (New York, 1942), 195; Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 257.

³¹ Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 344; Maude Glasgow, The Scotch-Irish in Northern Ireland and in the American Colonies (New York, 1936), 189.

They unanimously passed a resolution which stated "that the Roman Catholic inhabitants are grievously oppressed by lawless persons unknown who attack and plunder their houses by night."³² In the summer of 1796, two Orangemen were convicted of murder. Several others were acquitted, despite what was regarded as clear evidence of their guilt.³³

Dublin Castle used its influence against the Protestant atrocities upon the Catholics of Ulster. On August 6, Camden wrote to Portland about the horror of the feuds between rival religious groups. The British Cabinet replied that he should attempt to conciliate the two groups. From the perspective of Dublin Castle, however, conciliation appeared to be impossible. In the Irish Parliament, the question was asked, "Of what benefit were the concessions granted to Catholics? for their turbulence seemed to increase with every concession."³⁴ Such talk only provided more Catholic recruits for the Society of United Irishmen. While the Presbyterian disaffection weakened the Society in the north, it greatly strengthened it in the south. The Catholic peasants of southern Ireland were told that an Orange massacre was imminent, with reference to the alleged Orange oath of exter-

³²O'Connor, History of Ireland, 80-81.

³³Ibid., 79-81.

³⁴Glasgow, The Scotch-Irish, 193.

mination. Their only salvation lay with the United Irishmen. Understandably, the spreading persecution of Catholics in Ulster greatly increased the membership of the Society of United Irishmen, including the wholesale absorption of the Defenders. Whenever an Orange lodge appeared in a district, the local Catholics sought security with the United Irishmen.³⁵

Although they were numerous, the United Irishmen were ill-armed. Thus they undertook the manufacture of pikes-- crude spears some twelve to fifteen feet long with a hatchet attached to the end. Pikes could prove quite effective against both cavalry and infantry, in those days of short-range rifles. But pikes against artillery would be a different matter. Because of this, Society leaders believed that a French army of 10,000 would be needed to give order and direction to an insurrection. The inclusion of the French in their plans forced the rebellion to be continually postponed until 1798 although popular feelings were becoming increasingly inflamed from the spring of 1795.³⁶

In the summer of 1795, negotiations had begun between France and the Society of United Irishmen. Edward John

³⁵ O'Connor, History of Ireland, 37, 66-67, 80-82; Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 257-58.

³⁶ O'Connor, History of Ireland, 68; Finerty, The People's History, II, 514-15.

Lewins became the accredited ambassador of the Society to France. Early in 1796, Wolfe Tone went to Paris to arrange for the dispatch of a French auxiliary corps. On April 20, Gen. Clarke, head of the Topographical Bureau at the French Ministry of War, promised Tone 10,000 men and a stand of 20,000 arms. Not knowing of Tone's arrangement, Lord Edward Fitzgerald proceeded to Hamburg in May to achieve the same results. It was on this trip of no eventual purpose that Fitzgerald was compromised by a British minister's mistress. To the authorities at London, she identified Fitzgerald as the designated leader of the proposed rebellion and described his invasion plan. This lucky break for the British resulted in Fitzgerald's arrest two years later.³⁷

As matters unfolded, Tone encountered countless delays from the French and a new plan of invasion was needed. In the summer of 1796, an interview was arranged between Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor for the Irish, and the French General Lazare Hoche in Switzerland. They agreed on a French invasion of Ireland to take place in December at the head of Bantry Bay, on the extreme southwestern coast. The interview and agreement came about because of Tone's assurance to the French Government that the situation in Ireland was favorable for an invasion. He promised that 500,000 Irish-

³⁷ Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 345-46; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 68.

men would rise against the British on the very day that French troops landed in Ireland.³⁸

In mid-October of 1796, a messenger from France related to United Irishmen leaders the plans for the Bantry Bay invasion. Soon to be launched, it would include 15,000 men and a great quantity of arms and ammunition for the Irish insurgents. On November 6, the Government proclaimed that treasonable societies existed in all of the counties located in Ulster. All persons were warned to desist from treasonable activities and all justices were ordered to disperse unlawful assemblies. On November 13, Lord Malmesbury, the British peace envoy to France, sent word to England that he was experiencing increasing hostility in his negotiations and that he believed reports that there were 11 ships-of-the-line and 15,000 troops stationed at Brest ready to embark for Ireland.³⁹

The French fleet for the invasion of Ireland set sail on December 18. The object was to establish a base from which British commerce could be strangled. This, the French believed, would ruin the British Navy for lack of funds.

³⁸O'Connor, History of Ireland, 68; Arthur Bryant, The Years of Endurance, 1793-1802 (London, 1948), 166.

³⁹O'Connor, History of Ireland, 68, 96; Bryant, Years of Endurance, 165-66.

Britain itself would then be open to attack and the most adamant enemy of republican France would be crushed. The waters around Ireland could be very convenient for preying on British shipping, since shipping lanes to all points but the North or Baltic Seas had to pass near either France or Ireland. Any power possessing or allied with Ireland against Great Britain could wreak havoc on British shipping lanes with such a base for resupply and shelter.⁴⁰

The French fleet which set sail for Ireland in December, 1796, was composed of 17 ships-of-the-line, 13 frigates, 13 smaller troop transports, and 15,000 troops. Most of the troops were crowded on board the larger ships. All forty-three ships were able to slip out of Brest easily despite the British blockade because an easterly gale had been blowing for six weeks and had blown the British blockaders far out into the Atlantic Ocean. The path to Ireland was open.⁴¹

Once out of Brest, the French did not have it so easily. As the result of a missed change in orders, the French fleet dispersed into several separate groups. By accident rather than design, most of the French fleet reassembled. Only eight ships were missing, but one of the missing ships was

⁴⁰ Bryant, Years of Endurance, 166, 168; Alfred T. Mahan, Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812, II (London, 1905), 253.

⁴¹ Bryant, Years of Endurance, 167; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 68.

the Fraternité, aboard which were General Hoche and Admiral Morard de Galles, the fleet commander. On December 21, the regrouped French fleet sighted the Munster coast on a calm, sunny day. There was still no sight of either the Fraternité or the British Navy.⁴²

Late in the day of December 21, the easterly wind freshened. In order for the French to land at the head of Bantry Bay, thirty miles of water had to be traversed. By December 25, the wind had reached gale force. It was extremely cold and a driving snow filled the air. During the previous three days, the inexperienced French sailors had scarcely moved up the bay at all. That evening, Admiral Bouvet, the commander in the absence of de Galles, ordered his ships to return to France. On January 14, 1797, the last ship reached Brest. Had the French fleet landed in Ireland, the invasion would undoubtedly have been at least initially successful. British regular troops in Ireland numbered only 12,000, most of them green recruits. At Cork, where a supply of British naval stores worth £1,500,000 was kept, only 2,000 troops and 2 field guns awaited the arrival of Hoche's 15,000 seasoned veterans.⁴³

To be sure, the Irish Government was deeply concerned

⁴²Bryant, Years of Endurance, 168-69.

⁴³Ibid., 169-71.

about a landing in force by the French. Dublin Castle was certain that such an event would mean at least the temporary end of British rule on the island. Despite the failure of Hoche's expedition to land at Bantry Bay, the British remained very concerned because of the ease with which it reached Irish waters and returned to France.⁴⁴

The appearance of the French in Bantry Bay made little impression among the Catholic peasants in the south. In Ulster, however, the fleet's presence brought great excitement. During the next few months, Government arms supplies were stolen. Many trees were cut to make pike handles. Mysterious beacons were seen from hilltops at night. Behind the scenes, the Society established an elaborate military organization in order to be ready when the French returned, and landed.⁴⁵

During the first few months of 1797, Ulster remained the hotbed of United Irishmen agitation. Although the majority of Society membership was now in the Catholic south, the United Irishmen in Ulster were well-armed, whereas those in the south were not. On March 3, Camden's Chief Secretary, Thomas Pelham, reaffirmed an earlier report that secret so-

⁴⁴Eric Strauss, Irish Nationalism and British Democracy (New York, 1951), 52.

⁴⁵Bryant, Years of Endurance, 204; Barnes, George III and William Pitt, 353.

cieties existed in Ulster. His report declared that the societies were active in nightly assemblies and in drilling, had ample stores of arms, and murdered those who joined the loyal yeomanry. Their actions went unpunished because of the fear that assassination put into every potential witness. Immediately following Pelham's report, Lord Camden placed Ulster under martial-law and ordered General Gerard Lake to disarm the province. On March 13, from Belfast, General Lake issued a proclamation calling for the surrender of all arms and ammunition and for information leading to the discovery of arms. Because of a lack of officers, small bands of leaderless soldiers, militia, and yeomanry produced outrage upon outrage on the citizens of Ulster. The severity with which Lake's troops acted in the north where women were raped and houses burned while the search for arms occurred in the middle of the night provided United Irishmen leaders with emotional appeals to enlist further support in the south.⁴⁶

At first, General Lake was afraid to use the militia to disarm Ulster because he feared that it included many United Irishmen. Lacking enough regular troops and yeomanry, he decided to use the militia from the start of his anti-terrorist campaign on March 13. His fears were exaggerated. One

⁴⁶O'Connor, History of Ireland, 86-87, 100-01; Watson, The Reign of George III, 396-97.

militia company, the Monaghan, proved so loyal as to destroy the printing press of the journalistic arm of the United Irishmen, the Northern Star. Lake's success in Ulster was phenomenal. His forces captured several revolutionary leaders, papers revealing secret negotiations with France, 50,000 muskets, 22 cannon, and 70,000 pikes. This large seizure of arms took the teeth out of the rebellion in the part of Ireland most materially prepared for it. Furthermore, the repressive measures scared many property-owning United Irishmen into timidity. That repression and the mere presence of the Army in Ulster frightened so many potential rebels that, when the rebellion finally did break out, Ulster counted little.⁴⁷

Between the repeal of Poyning's Law in 1782 and the arrival of Fitzwilliam in 1795, bills for the reform of the Irish Parliament were introduced and defeated in 1784, 1785, 1793 and 1794. Between the defeat of Grattan's first Catholic emancipation bill in 1795 and the Irish Rebellion of 1798, Grattan brought forward the question of Catholic emancipation together with parliamentary reform three times. Each time his motion was defeated. At most, Grattan could count on thirty to forty supporters in Parliament. In May,

⁴⁷Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 260; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 87.

1797, he and his followers seceded from Parliament. His message of secession was short and to the point: "Having no hope left to persuade or dissuade, and having discharged our duty,...from this day we shall not attend the House of Commons."⁴⁸ When Parliament was dissolved in August of that year for general elections, Grattan declined to stand and retired into private life.⁴⁹

⁴⁸O'Connor, History of Ireland, 48.

⁴⁹Ibid.; Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 217-18.

CHAPTER IV

GRATTAN'S ADDRESS TO THE CITIZENS OF DUBLIN TO THE IRISH REBELLION, JUNE, 1797 - SEPTEMBER, 1798 AND THE ACT OF UNION

In June, 1797, Henry Grattan lambasted the political system in which he had lost faith when he discussed the "Present State of Ireland" in an "Address to His Fellow-Citizens of Dublin." Grattan warned that 1797 was much like 1782. As the Irish people had then escaped the dominion of the British Parliament, they must now refuse to "...prostrate themselves to the legislative usurpation of another body--a British Cabinet."¹ He then claimed that the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics, although designed to quiet their spirits and shield them from rebellious ideas, had instead distracted a quiet people and driven them to action. Grattan recounted how certain men imprisoned by Charles I had brought about the English Civil War and suggested that anyone imprisoned without due process of law "...he, too, will have his political consequence."² With obvious and repeated reference to Pitt's Cabinet as "that Minister," he declared

¹Henry Grattan, Present State of Ireland! Mr. Grattan's Address to His Fellow-Citizens of Dublin, On His Retiring From Parliament. To Which Is Added His Answer to the Independent Citizens of Dublin (Philadelphia, 1797), 10-11.

²Ibid., 17.

that "...that Minister has found it a more pressing experiment to defend Cork than to take Flanders."³ Grattan then proposed Catholic emancipation and reform of the Irish Parliament as the cures for this illness of the state and charged that the King's adherence to an outdated interpretation of his coronation oath was ridiculous at such a time of crisis. He urged the King to unite and identify with his people so that they would not unite against him, seeing their salvation in democracy. Grattan declared that "...the best method to secure your house against a Defender, is to secure the Commons' House against a Minister."⁴ The retired parliamentarian exclaimed, "MAY THE LIBERTIES OF THE PEOPLE BE IMMORTAL."⁵ He may have been close to treason in suggesting that, since the American Revolution had influenced the revolution in France, both rebellions might well have effects on and lessons for Great Britain and Ireland.⁶

Grattan's "Address to His Fellow-Citizens of Dublin" was dangerous because, as he later admitted, its attack upon the Government tended to inflame the country at a time when moder-

³Ibid., 18.

⁴Ibid., 30.

⁵Ibid., 40.

⁶Ibid., 37.

ation was needed to deal with unsettled conditions. Nowhere were these conditions more dramatically displayed than in the Royal Navy. Between 1793 and 1797, the ranks of the Royal Navy had swollen from 16,000 to 120,000. Ten percent of these were Irish and, since 1795, an increasing number were impressed United Irishmen. A Navy which was already dissatisfied with pay and living conditions only needed these rabble-rousers to cause mutiny. On April 17, 1797, the Channel Fleet stationed at Spithead had mutinied. From Great Britain's viewpoint, the mutiny could not have come at a worse time. Ireland lay virtually defenseless, and a French army of invasion was preparing to embark in a Dutch squadron at the Texel.* News of the mutiny for better pay fell upon a horrified Parliament and brought, on May 15, the grant of a pay increase. But as Spithead returned to normal, the fleet at the Nore mutinied on May 12. This mutiny was more serious than mere grumbling over pay because it possessed no specific demands and degenerated into a rebellion for the sake of rebellion. It finally ended on June 15, when the mutineers became disgusted with the haughty airs of their self-proclaimed leader, Richard Parker. Twenty-eight mutineers were executed, as the British Government showed its con-

*The Texel is an island between the North Sea and the Zuider Zee.

tempt for this display of naval Jacobinism.⁷

Another instance of deep-seated and serious malaise was the rising which took place in Ulster during May in emulation of the naval mutiny at the Nore. After three or four engagements, the loyal militia and yeomanry suppressed the rising. Southern Ireland remained quiet. The Ulster rising did not spread because most Irishmen had been convinced that a general rising should not occur until the French attempted a second invasion. In June, John Beresford expressed the belief that had it not been for Camden's repressive measures and wholesale seizure of arms, not one loyalist would be safe.⁸

Although the Bantry Bay failure had caused a decrease in United Irishmen expectations of a French invasion, the mutinies at the Nore and Spithead aroused new invasion hopes. During the mutiny at Spithead, the Society sent Lewins and one McNevin to Paris to coordinate plans for another invasion. The French Directory then sent an agent to London to meet with Fitzgerald. The latter assured the French that they would be joined by the Irish militia and

⁷William Edward Hartpole Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland, I (New York, 1903), 218-19; Arthur Bryant, The Years of Endurance, 1793-1802 (London, 1948), 185-98.

⁸J. Holland Rose, William Pitt and the Great War (Westport, Conn., 1971), 346-47.

yeomanry upon their landing. The Society estimated that the number of French troops needed would be between 5,000 and 10,000.⁹

In late July, in Paris, Lewins and McNevin did much to undermine Pitt's efforts to achieve peace with France. Lewins obtained a promise from Paul Jean Francois Nicholas Barras, a member of the French Directory, that France would go on fighting until Ireland was free. In fact, however, French invasion plans were not materializing. Ireland's age-old slogan, "England's distress is Ireland's opportunity," might well have been reworded in relation to France: "France's success is Ireland's misfortune." With Austria about to surrender at Campo Formio, the French believed that all their war resources should be concentrated in an attack against England itself; there would be no advantage in bothering with Ireland. On September 11, the pride-swollen French Directory gave the British envoy Malmesbury twenty-four hours to leave France. On September 19, the strongest French advocate of an invasion of Ireland, General Hoche, died of consumption.¹⁰

Meanwhile, in Ireland, objections by citizens of Ulster

⁹ Ibid., 346; James O'Connor, History of Ireland, 1798-1924 (New York, 1926), 68-69.

¹⁰ Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 348; Bryant, Years of Endurance, 212-14.

to the harsh way in which General Lake's men searched for arms fell on deaf ears. Talk of Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform was virtually equated with treason by the authorities. When Portland asked Camden if something could not be done for those Catholics who had remained loyal during the Bantry Bay invasion attempt, the latter replied that concessions would only further the cause of rebellion. Dublin Castle would do little to stop the Protestant outrages against Catholics, although the repeated insults and injuries were clearly feeding Catholic fanaticism. The Catholic exodus from Ulster spread the word of Protestant atrocities throughout Ireland. Many people who had awaited Hoche's invasion attempt one year earlier with apathy had, by autumn, become enthusiastic at the prospect of a French invasion. The United Irishmen no longer primarily found strength in disarmed Ulster but in the south, among Catholic peasants.¹¹

At the end of 1797, United Irishmen hopes remained high for a French invasion. Notwithstanding searches, arrests, and confiscations, the Society estimated its strength at 110,000 armed men in Ulster, 100,000 in Munster, and 68,000 in Leinster. The Ulster leaders, who wished for an immediate

¹¹Bryant, Years of Endurance, 205-06.

rebellion, were outvoted. The Leinster leadership believed that foreign help would be needed. This caution caused a further falling out between Ulster Presbyterians and Leinster Catholics--the former accusing the latter of betraying the chance for victory.¹²

Early in 1798, religious differences and mistrust seemed to accelerate. At the same time that rumors spread among Catholics of a wholesale attack by Protestants to destroy all Catholic churches and chapels, Protestants believed that their churches would be destroyed by the Catholics. While Catholics swore the Oath of Allegiance to the British Crown in their public church meetings, once outside they made pikes. Many magistrates would only accept the Oath of Allegiance from Catholics upon a concurrent surrender of arms. Many Catholic priests knew of their parishoners' double-dealing and gave it their unofficial approval.¹³

The British Government and Dublin Castle were fighting republicanism not only in Ireland but also in Great Britain. French naval preparations at Brest and Toulon pointed to possible landings in Kent or Sussex as well as in Ireland. In February, 1798, General Napoleon Bonaparte, fresh from

¹²J. C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923 (New York, 1966), 261; W. C. Taylor, History of Ireland: From the Anglo-Norman Invasion to the Union of the Country with Great Britain, II (New York, 1833), 266.

¹³Maude Glasgow, The Scotch-Irish in Northern Ireland and in the American Colonies (New York, 1936), 196-97.

his victories of the first Italian Campaign, surveyed a flotilla at Dunkirk. Such actions fostered hope among British Jacobins of French successes in the British Isles. As a result, certain revolutionary societies were established, modeled in part on the Society of United Irishmen. On January 5, 1798, a society of United Britons was established. On January 30, the London Corresponding Society emerged from a period of inactivity. Shortly thereafter, a society of United Englishmen and a society of United Scotsmen were founded. On February 5, the United Britons sent an address to the Society of United Irishmen. It declared that the goal of the United Britons was the emancipation of both islands.¹⁴

On February 26, Sir Ralph Abercromby, Commander-in-Chief of the Army in Ireland, issued an order rescinding Camden's executive order which had allowed militia officers to use force without a magisterial warrant. In his order, he described the "...army to be in a state of licentiousness which must render it formidable to everyone but the enemy."¹⁵ This

¹⁴Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 349; Thomas Pakenham, The Year of Liberty: The Story of the Great Irish Rebellion of 1798 (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1970), 31.

¹⁵Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 353.

statement drew immediate criticism from Irish loyalists and a demand for his recall. For the time being, however, Camden and Pitt attempted to overlook Abercromby's statement. On the day of Abercromby's criticism of the Army, Dublin Castle achieved a breakthrough in its effort to capture United Irishmen leaders. A United Irishman named Reynolds revealed Society plans of a conspiracy and a secret meeting of the Dublin Committee of the Society to be held on March 12. Police raided the Society meeting and seized eighteen members, including McNevin. Fitzgerald escaped, but another informer soon gave Dublin Castle information concerning both his whereabouts and the hideout of the Sheares brothers. This information would lead to the arrest of all three immediately prior to the start of the rebellion.¹⁶

Government successes continued. The French pledge to free Ireland caused a reaction among Ireland's Catholic bishops who feared the spread of French irreligion. On March 10, Dr. Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, denounced the principles of the Society of United Irishmen. He did so because he knew his subordinates would not speak out for fear of assassination. On April 6, Bishop Dillion of Kilmacough asked his lay leaders to reject all clandestine oaths. Al-

¹⁶Ibid., 353-54; Bryant, Years of Endurance, 235-36.

though some of the younger clergy were republicans, most priests did everything they could to stop the progress of the United Irishmen. Nevertheless, such high and official Catholic opinion had little effect on the primarily Catholic Society of United Irishmen. On March 17, a Society proclamation declared that the "...organization of the capital is perfect."¹⁷ In the south, the rebellion was fast coming to a head.¹⁸

On March 30, Camden and his Privy Council ordered all loyal subjects to aid the suppression of the conspiracy which had broken into open acts of violence and rebellion. Four days later, Abercromby ordered all arms to be given up within ten days and enjoined all who had pertinent information about rebels or their activities to report it. He promised protection for those who complied and threatened that those who did not would have troops quartered on their property. On April 22, Abercromby repeated his appeal for arms. He also warned that the plans of the conspirators already had been discovered and that troops already had started acting upon previous warnings. At this point, however, Camden and Pitt yielded to the public clamour concerning Abercromby's earlier

¹⁷O'Connor, History of Ireland, 87.

¹⁸Ibid., 69-70, 87.

criticism of the Army, and accepted his resignation. His replacement was General Lake, of Ulster infamy. Lake's previous success in Ulster was repeated as the Government seized many more insurgent weapons.¹⁹

Throughout May, 1798, Dublin Castle's official statements warned of the imminence of rebellion. On May 1, Beresford warned that the Toulon squadron would join that at Brest in an expedition against Ireland. Pikes were being made in great quantity and the idea of a general rising was prevalent. Dublin was reported to be armed and rebellious, as were several surrounding counties. The French were expected within a month. On May 9, Beresford suggested seizing a number of malcontents and threatening torture to get information. Declaring that the quiet of the countryside was deceptive, he warned that where the insurgents were already armed and organized, there was quiet; only where they were organizing was disruption noticeable. On May 10, John Lees declared that Galway, in Connaught, was arming for revolt. On May 19, he reported that a rising in Dublin was expected the next day. When the next day proved peaceful, Beresford declared that the rising would take place on May 21 because of a vigorous Government arms search.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., 96-98; Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 262.

²⁰ Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 355-56.

On May 19, police officers Swan and Ryan and Major Sirr captured Lord Edward Fitzgerald in a Dublin slum. Swan and Ryan were both wounded, Swan mortally. Fitzgerald received a wound in the shoulder which became infected; he died on June 4. On May 21, the Sheares brothers were arrested. Two days later, Samuel Neilson and other Society leaders met the same fate.²¹

Fitzgerald's capture removed the key to established United Irishmen plans for the capture of Dublin, which had been set for May 23. Among his belongings at the time of his arrest were found a green uniform, the route of the Kildare rebels in their advance upon Dublin, and a plan for the seizure of the chief officials of Dublin Castle. Papers in the possession of the captured Sheares brothers revealed that the rebels were to give no quarter. By May 23, the planned day for the outbreak of the rebellion, the authorities knew the rebel plans so well that they were able to seize thousands of weapons.²²

Dublin Castle began its vigorous action of arrest and arms seizure on May 19 because it feared the French fleet at Toulon. It was clear that the Irish Government was attempting to crush disaffection before that fleet arrived.

²¹ Ibid., 354; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 96, 96n.

²² Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 355; Bryant, Years of Endurance, 236.

Early in June, Camden learned that the French fleet had left Toulon on May 19. The French armada included 40,000 picked troops, 300 transports, and 50 warships. Not until July 5 did Pitt learn that the fleet's true destination was Egypt.²³

During the Irish Rebellion, Pitt's correspondence with Camden, although not plentiful, assured the Lord Lieutenant of his support in the latter's policy of coercion. The scarcity of Ireland-bound correspondence from the Prime Minister can be explained by his essentially full commitment to the war effort. On June 13, the King wrote to Pitt declaring that Camden must take advantage of the terror created by rebelliousness in order to persuade Government supporters of the need for a Union between the two kingdoms. He also advised Pitt to make no further concessions to the Catholics.²⁴

Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt fooled the United Irishmen as much as it did the British and Irish Governments. They had planned their rebellion for the end of May, believing the French invasion fleet would arrive at that time. The arrest of prominent Society leaders on May 19 hurried the rebellion along. The United Irishmen Directory in Dublin ordered the insurgents in Kildare and Westmeath to rebel on

²³Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 356-57; Bryant, Years of Endurance, 234-35, 239.

²⁴Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 356, 358-59; Pakenham, The Year of Liberty, 243.

May 23. They were to seize the towns and villages on the approaches to Dublin while those in the city would murder its chief officials. General Lake, however, had stationed his command of 4,000 Yeomen in and around Dublin. The Dublin rising, therefore, failed to materialize. In Meath, on Tara Hill, a large body of rebels assembled on May 24, only to be driven away by 400 troops the following day. On May 26, Father John Murphy took command of 30,000 insurgents at Boolavogue, County Wexford. His command came to be the main body of rebels. On May 28, Murphy's force attacked the County Wexford town of Enniscorthy, massacring almost every Protestant there. He then removed his force to Vinegar Hill, overlooking the town. As 30,000 victorious Irish rebels camped on Vinegar Hill, Bonaparte was enroute to the Levant to further his personal glory. His opposition to republicanism strongly supports the suspicion that he planned for the Irish Rebellion to coincide with the departure of the fleet from Toulon so that Great Britain would be so pre-occupied that he could conquer Egypt and the Ottoman Empire. More than twenty years later at St. Helena, Napoleon recounted that "If, instead of the expedition to Egypt, I had undertaken that against Ireland, what could England have done now?"²⁵ This thought would haunt him the rest of his

²⁵ Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 364.

life.²⁶

In addition to the absence of the French and the seizure of arms, the Irish Government succeeded in persuading the Protestant insurgents of Ulster that the war around Wexford in the south had become one of a religious nature. The Ulstermen were led to believe that if they continued fighting and achieved victory, they would only be helping to achieve the goal of the Catholics in the south, which was likely to become the total extermination of all Irish Protestants. By June 13, therefore, the main body of Ulster rebels had given up the fight and gone home. The abandonment of rebellion in Ulster left the Wexford rebels practically alone. On June 21, the Government forces staged an attack on Vinegar Hill. Almost out of ammunition, the insurgents abandoned their position to the 13,000 loyal troops backed by artillery. On July 14, this last remaining column of rebels was defeated in County Louth, after a northward flight of more than 120 miles. For all practical purposes, the rebellion had ended.²⁷

On August 22, a small French force finally appeared. General Humbert and 1,100 men landed at Killala, in northern Connaught. After defeating the local opposition, the force

²⁶ Ibid., 357, 363; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 88.

²⁷ O'Connor, History of Ireland, 80-90.

advanced as a local revival of the rebellion occurred. On September 1, having learned of the French presence in Ireland, Pitt ordered all possible reinforcements to the island. A week later, Humbert's small force surrendered to a much larger force of 11,000 under Lord Cornwallis, who had replaced Lake as Commander-in-chief and Camden as Lord Lieutenant upon his arrival on June 22. Humbert's surrender brought open rebellion and warfare to a close.²⁸

There are many accounts of cruelty on both sides during the Irish Rebellion. This is attributed to each side's fear of what the other would do to them if they were captured. The regular British soldiers were in a strange land and among a strange people about whom they had heard terrible accounts. The Irish Militia, mostly Catholic, was afraid of being punished as traitors by a victorious rebel force. The Yeomanry, mainly Protestant, armed for self-defense from fear of being murdered at home. The rebels were a mob, neither expecting clemency nor consideration. All those involved believed that they had to win to survive. The casualties of the Irish Rebellion numbered 30,000 dead.²⁹

About ten years after the Irish Rebellion of 1798, a

²⁸Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 362; Pakenham, The Year of Liberty, 314, 363-64.

²⁹Jonah Barrington, Personal Sketches of His Own Times (New York, 1859), 172; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 90, 101.

story became widespread that Pitt had fomented it in order to achieve the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. However, it must be remembered that, between 1793 and 1814, Great Britain was engaged in a bitter struggle against France. During the years 1797-1798, the national survival of the British was definitely endangered. The naval mutinies at Spithead and the Nore revealed that the discipline of the British Navy was at an all-time low. Pitt was ready for peace: he was prepared to acknowledge Belgium as a French province and the Netherlands as a French vassal; to recognize French conquests in Germany and Italy; and to restore without compensation to France all colonial possessions taken during the war. Only the swollen pride of the French, which convinced them that Great Britain could stand no longer, kept Pitt from negotiating this humiliating peace. It would have been highly unusual defensive strategy for a country in such a position purposely to provoke a rebellion which would require an occupation force of 130,000 regulars, militia, and yeomanry by February, 1799. It would have been practically suicidal for a country in such a position to have intentionally engineered such a rebellion, believing that it could and would be assisted by the most powerful European nation in 200 years!³⁰

³⁰O'Connor, History of Ireland, 93-95.

Although the rebellion was not specifically engineered by the British, they took advantage of its outbreak. Prior to the Irish Rebellion, many British statesmen believed Ireland to be an unprofitable possession. Only when the rebellion erupted did they realize the island's importance. An Ireland not controlled by Britain was likely to be one controlled by France. Furthermore, the rebellion had caused a panic among Irish property owners. The British Government took advantage of this and pressed the matter of Union closely on the heels of rebellion.³¹

Chief Secretary Castlereagh, who had succeeded Pelham in March, 1798, was warned by an opponent that the prospect of Union would be the surest way of reviving the United Irishmen. Such a revival did not occur, but there were several reasons why Union would in fact be hard to achieve. Although not admitted by the United Irishmen, certain conditions had improved in Ireland during the eighteenth century, which many Irishmen realized and appreciated. Ireland had become more prosperous and had obtained a measure of free trade which tended to reduce the attractiveness of Union and free trade with Great Britain. The worst of the Penal Laws had been abolished. Since the American Revolution, a strong na-

³¹ Ibid., 109; Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 234.

tional spirit had risen which was recognized in the "constitution of 1782." However, Pitt and Castlereagh believed that the events of the 1790's had shaken the faith of many Irishmen in the "constitution of 1782" and that the idea of Union might yet prevail among them.³²

Strong Protestant opponents of the Union were the followers of Grattan and Ponsonby, the Orangemen, and the Protestant Bar. Pro-Union groups were not so easily labeled or identified. When the Irish Parliament met in 1799, the House of Lords passed a resolution for Union by 52 to 16. The House of Commons rejected it by 106 to 111. There were many abstentions.³³

Strong Anti-Unionist feeling among the Dublin populace and the country gentry, lack of time to explain fully the positive consequences and opportunities of Union, and the belief of many members of the House of Commons that their votes might be sold to the Government for a high price all contributed to the defeat of the proposal of Union in 1799. Before the issue was next presented, successfully, in 1800, the Government had the time and imagination to deal with the last two of these. Thus, the boroughs came to be treated as private property. Compensation was given to all borough

³²C. J. Bartlett, Castlereagh (New York, 1966), 13-14; Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 225, 229.

³³Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 232-33, 243-45;

owners, upon Union, at the rate of £7,500 per seat or £15,000 per borough. In this manner, the total figure of £1,200,000 was added to the Irish National Debt.³⁴

Cornwallis and Castlereagh privately desired Catholic emancipation to be written into the Act of Union. As this would lose the support of the Earl of Clare (Fitzgibbon), without whose support Union might not pass at all, concessions to the Catholics were promised only verbally. The danger inherent in oral assurances was that the Opposition might induce Catholics to oppose union by concrete promises of Catholic emancipation under an Irish Parliament. Such a movement began to develop. The Government soon made it known, however, that such an act would not survive the King's veto under an Irish Parliament. Thus, real Catholic support for Union developed. The violence of the Orangemen against Union also greatly increased Catholic support for it.³⁵

To achieve Protestant support (for the Union), especially that of the Established Irish Church, disestablishment was forbidden by the proposed Act of Union. It was also impressed upon the Church that Union would bring about a ratio of fourteen Protestants to every Catholic rather than

Bartlett, Castlereagh, 21-22.

³⁴Bartlett, Castlereagh, 22-23; Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 234.

³⁵Lecky, Leaders of Public Opinion, I, 230-31, 257-59, 261-62, 268-69.

the local Irish ratio of three Catholics to every Protestant.³⁶

At the beginning of 1800, in the Irish House of Commons, the Anti-Union forces still numbered 120. Public opinion in Dublin was so strongly anti-Union that many pro-Union members of Parliament went about armed. On February 6, the House of Commons carried Union by 158 to 115. The House of Lords approved it by 75 to 26. On April 21, the British House of Commons passed the Act of Union by 236 to 30, while the British House of Lords approved it by 75 to 7. On July 2, 1800, the King gave it his assent. The effective date of the Act of Union was January 1, 1801.³⁷

On January 29, 1801, King George III declared that he would reckon any man who proposed Catholic emancipation as his personal enemy. In February, Pitt resigned from office because of the King's opposition to Catholic emancipation and the Prime Minister's inability to keep the pledge he had given Irish Catholic leaders. Cornwallis and Castlereagh resigned concurrently.³⁸

Throughout 1799 and 1800, the thought of a French inva-

³⁶ Ibid., 236.

³⁷ Bartlett, Castlereagh, 27-28; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 118.

³⁸ Bryant, Years of Endurance, 315-16; Bartlett, Castlereagh, 34.

sion had filled Irish loyalists with dread and the disaffected with hope. The Union of 1801 took from the Irish people, for over 100 years, the right to decide the destiny of their nation. At the same time, however, it brought about a greater efficiency in government which laid both loyalist fears and malcontent hopes to rest. The concentration of political power at Westminster made foreign intervention in Irish insurrections less likely, thus making the insurrections themselves less likely. Without such violent internal strife, the country would prosper more. In addition, to place Irish affairs within a broader context might lessen the influence of provocative local interests such as the Anglican Ascendancy. Moreover, not the least of such potential fruits of Union would be a physiocratic enrichment of both islands as British and world markets would become accessible to Irish trade, and a more prosperous Ireland bought more from England.³⁹

With the political Union between Ireland and Great Britain, the goals of the Society of United Irishmen had been defeated. The purpose of the Irish Rebellion was political separation from Great Britain. The effect was to place tighter controls upon Ireland by Great Britain, first through military presence and then through Union. The platform of

³⁹Rose, Pitt and the Great War, 430; O'Connor, History of Ireland, 111-12.

the Rebellion had been Catholic emancipation, parliamentary reform, tithe abolition, and land reform. The direct result of the Rebellion was to postpone these reforms indefinitely. It was the Society of United Irishmen and its rebellion that led to the Act of Union, an act which appeared likely to foreclose the possibility of an Ireland for the Irish.

But the future was not in fact so dim. 1829 saw Catholic emancipation. 1837 brought the commutation of tithes and 1869 the disestablishment of the Irish Anglican Church. Late nineteenth century British political parties became slaves to the political power of the Irish bloc, since the Irish could often determine the parliamentary majority. By 1900, the land had been largely "reformed" out of the hands of the Anglo-Irish landlords. The participation of the Irish Catholic emancipation movement, which had been only one of the elements of the Society of United Irishmen during the 1790's, manifested itself in a different manner for the next century and a quarter. No longer merely a desire to provide Catholic representation in a legislative body, it provided a cement which held Irish patriots together through times of trouble and won sympathy and support from persons of conscience around the world. The Irish Rebellion of 1798, which had brought disaster to the Society of United Irishmen, could not destroy its spirit. This "united" spirit would

survive throughout the nineteenth century and forcefully reunite with another Society goal, Ireland's freedom from the influence and power of Great Britain, in the independence movements of the early twentieth century. The spirit and purpose of the United Irishmen survived and contributed significantly to the establishment of the Irish Free State.

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APPENDIX

A Compilation of Penal Laws Against the Irish Catholics

In force prior to 1692

1. The recognition of the Oath of Supremacy, stating the English monarch to be governor of the Church, is a qualification for office of any kind, including Holy Orders and a university degree.
2. A fine of one shilling shall be levied on all who are absent from worship of the Established Church on Sunday.
3. No Catholic shall be guardian of his own child.
4. No Catholic shall be a private tutor to a family unless through approval of the local parish of the Established Church and by swearing the Oath of Supremacy.

1692

5. No Catholic shall sit in Parliament.

1695

6. No Catholic shall acquire property, even from a Protestant, even if it is only a gift.
7. No Catholic shall take a free-hold lease longer than thirty-one years.

1696

8. No Catholic school shall exist within Ireland.
9. No Catholic shall send his children abroad to be educated.
10. No Catholic shall be the guardian of anyone else's children.
11. No Catholic shall bear arms, except those of the aristocracy protected by the Treaty of Limerick. Magistrates have the right of search.

12. All Catholic prelates are banished from Ireland.

1697-1702

13. No Catholic shall marry a Protestant.

14. No Catholic shall solicit charity funds.

15. No Catholic shall be employed as a gamekeeper.

1708

16. No Catholic shall practice law.

1709-1726

17. No Catholic shall own a horse above the value of £5 sterling.

18. No Catholic shall be a gunsmith or a gunsmith's apprentice.

19. No Catholic shall attend the University of Dublin.

20. No Catholic priest shall say Mass unless he registers with the Government.

21. No Catholic shall engage in trade or commerce.

22. No Catholic shall live in a corporate town or within five miles thereof.

23. No Catholic shall hold a life annuity.

24. Catholics must pay double for the support of the militia.

25. Catholics must make good all damages done to the state by the privateers of any Catholic power in which the state is at war.

26. Only the linen trade, grazing, farming, medicine, and brewing are open to Catholics.

27. Catholic employers, with the exception of those engaged in the linen trade, must not take any more than two apprentices.

28. Catholics shall not be grand jurors.
29. Catholics shall not take office within town corporations or with the Dublin central government.
30. Catholics must pay tithes to the Established Church.
31. By declaring himself a Protestant the eldest son of a Catholic shall become the owner of his father's land and his father will become a tenant for the remainder of his life.
32. By declaring himself a Protestant, any Catholic child above the age of infancy, shall be placed under the care of Protestant parents, and the Catholic father compelled to pay for the child's education and support.
33. By declaring herself a Protestant, the wife of a Catholic shall claim a third of his property and separate maintenance.
34. Catholic orphans must be left under Protestant care.
35. Any illegitimate child by a Catholic shall inherit all of that Catholic's property, to the total exclusion of any other children, if that child becomes a Protestant.
36. Any Catholic found educating his child abroad shall have all of his property confiscated and the child so educated shall possess no rights at all.
37. All children who are wards of the Equity Court must be raised as Protestants.
38. Any Protestant who can prove that the profit of a Catholic farm exceeds one-third of the rent shall become the owner of that farm.
39. No Catholic shall lease land.
40. No Catholic shall accept a mortgage on land for security on a loan.
41. No Catholic shall rent land worth more than thirty shillings a year.
42. A lease between a Catholic tenant and Protestant landlord is binding only upon the Catholic.

1727 - The completion of the compilation of the Penal Laws

43. No Catholic shall vote.*

* John C. Finerty, Ireland: The People's History of Ireland, I, (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1904), 417-19; Tom Ireland, Ireland: Past and Present (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), 184-85; Seumas MacManus, The Story of the Irish Race: A Popular History of Ireland (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1944), 458-60; Nicholas Mansergh, Britain and Ireland (London: Longman's Green, and Company, Ltd., 1943) 19-20; W. C. Taylor, History of Ireland: From the Anglo-Norman Invasion to the Union of the Country with Great Britain (New York: The Bradley Company, Publishers, 1833), 202-04, 207-23.

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THE CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION MOVEMENT AND
THE SOCIETY OF UNITED IRISHMEN, 1788-1798

by

Daniel Joseph Bowes

(ABSTRACT)

The turmoils and character of the present-day Irish people can best be understood through a knowledge of the events which occurred and relationships that existed nearly 200 years ago. For their support of James II in 1690, the Irish Catholics were gradually placed under a system of Penal Laws. These laws were completed in 1727 and were to remain in full effect for over half a century. Although not rigidly enforced, their existence made the Irish Catholics second-class citizens and assured an Anglican Ascendancy of wealth and power.

In the late 1780's and during the 1790's bad economic conditions related to overpopulation, and the outside influences of the American and French Revolutions, effected an increase in Catholic agitation for a better life. In 1791, the Society of United Irishmen was founded in order to combine these Catholic desires with the northern Irish Presbyterian political goals of a legislature representative of

all Irishmen and the end of British power and dominance in Ireland. Government opposition, followed by begrudged concession succeeded by increased opposition, caused the United Irishmen to become more and more radical until they no longer operated within the framework of the law.

After 1795, Catholics and Presbyterians began to drift apart because of Government and landlord intrigue. The United Irishmen still pressed forward toward a rebellion which they trusted would be aided by republican France and accomplish the freedom of Ireland. The outbreak of rebellion in May, 1798, saw not the French nor did the termination of it see Irish freedom. The religious animosities it brought into the open, along with its spirit, continue to exist to the present day--witnessed by the existence of the troubled British province of Northern Ireland and the free Republic of Ireland to the south.