INFORMATION TO USERS

The most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book. These are also available as one exposure on a standard 35mm slide or as a 17” x 23” black and white photographic print for an additional charge.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6” x 9” black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
Ireland’s Celtic tradition: From the beginning to 1800

Peck, Theodore Tuttle Ives, M.A.

The University of Arizona, 1989
IRELAND'S
CELTIC TRADITION:
FROM THE BEGINNING TO 1800

By

Theodore Tuttle Ives Peck, M.A.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
In the Graduate College
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
1989
STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This thesis has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at The University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under the rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

Signed: Theodore T. Peck

APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:

Richard A. Cosgrove
Professor of History

28 April 1989
Date
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1. THE ISLAND</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2. INDEPENDENCE</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(300 B.C. TO 1170 A.D.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3. OCCUPATION</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1170 TO 1485)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4. CONQUEST, COLONIZATION AND RECONQUEST</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1485 TO 1714)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5. SUBJUGATION, REACTION AND UNION</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1714 to 1800)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

From the Celtic invasions of the fourth century, B.C., until its union with England in 1800, Ireland developed its own distinctive Celtic culture. Its Christian religion, language and literature, law, social structure and land system were of Celtic origin and different from neighboring England's. Almost twelve hundred years of independence allowed Ireland to establish its unique qualities and become recognized as a nation.

Then came three hundred years of English occupation and desultory control followed by two hundred and fifty more years of English conquest, confiscation and disruptive colonization. Finally came almost one hundred years of English economic subjugation and suppressed Irish indignation until nationalist Ireland in revolt was made a part of frightened England in 1800.

The years of independence produced a unique cultural tradition which English strength changed but could not extinguish. What remained in 1800, supported by an irrepressible demand for national independence, was Ireland's Celtic tradition.
INTRODUCTION

In 1948, the Republic of Ireland emerged as one of the new post-war nations of the world and took its place in the international community as a fully independent and sovereign nation. This was the same Ireland which had declared its de facto independence from the United Kingdom in 1937 after having been a part of it since 1800. It might appear that the Republic of Ireland was just another small nation split off from its parent at a time when world maps were being revised every year to reflect the dismemberment of old colonial powers. In fact, however, this was not Ireland's case because Ireland had become a nation in its own right almost eight hundred years before it became a part of the United Kingdom.¹

Not only had Ireland been a recognized European nation since before the Norman invasion of England but for more than a thousand years prior to that time it had been developing a national character of its own. Its people were the sole remaining society of Celts in the world, and the national character which led them to

¹ Ireland became a nation under King Brian Boru in the year 1002.
acclaim as well as misery may be called its Celtic tradition.

More than anything else, this tradition in each of its principal manifestations displayed a tendency to be different from other people and a demand for the right to be different. Irish religion, language and literature, law, social structure and land rights were of their own making, and in order to retain these and other expressions of their Celtic way of life, the Irish required the opportunity to govern themselves as family units and as a nation.

England found the Irish to be poor subjects. The great Victorian Matthew Arnold noted that, "Irishmen were not just second-class Englishmen but something different—quaintly different perhaps or even horridly different, but different."\(^2\)

It was Ireland's Celtic tradition that made it different and made its conquest by England a disaster for captor and captive alike. In 1948, the inevitable happened and Ireland resumed its former independence. Its Celtic tradition helped make this possible.

---

CHAPTER 1
THE ISLAND

The Ireland of which I write is a small island lying close alongside another island almost three times its size, and together they and a number of other little places and bits of land are called the British Isles. Both islands are structurally a part of the European continent and are surrounded by shallow seas, but the one hundred fathom line lies close to Ireland's western coast, showing it to be the edge of Europe. Ireland is less than fourteen miles from Scotland across the North Channel and about fifty miles from southern Wales across St. George's Channel. In between lies the Irish Sea, a rather private body of water which separates but has served to unite the two islands since Patrick was taken across it as a slave boy early in the fifth century A.D. The intimacy of the two islands has helped to protect Ireland against unwelcome foreign intrusion since England first took an acquisitive interest in its small neighbor near the end of the twelfth century. It also has tended, however, to accentuate Ireland's remoteness from the rest of Europe by restricting its external relations to the dominant island. As England has on occasion been
helpful, it also has come to be seen by most Irishmen as virtually the sole source of their problems. In the shadow of England, Ireland has always struggled with the problem of isolation.

Prehistoric upheavals of the land mass and the onrush of waters placed the two islands so close together that their destinies were sure to merge, but their physical natures and consequent cultures are different. Ireland contains about twenty million acres of territory, much of which is lake, bog or mountain, leaving the rest of it highly attractive farm land which has proved to be easily defended against invasion because of the island's rugged coastline and many internal natural barriers. Plentiful rainfall has normally enabled the rich soil to produce an abundance of food that has sustained the people and helped them recover from their many wars. Edmund Curtis comments that the high "survival value" of the Irish people may have resulted not so much from their physical strength as from their constant revival of manpower. As late as the year 1800, one of every three people in the British Isles was an Irishman.³

The remoteness of the island and its natural barriers have enabled the Celtic people of Ireland to avoid or withstand invasions which overcame England. Ireland was not touched by the Roman Empire or the Norman Conquest, nor was it exposed to the expansionist influences of the Crusades or the refinements of chivalry. Ireland was able to cling to its Celtic ways, its own Brehon law, its own style of Christianity, and its own decentralized form of society. Ireland never accepted the premises of feudalism that the land belonged to a king who could distribute it in fief to his lords for whom the occupants would work as peasant serfs. The Irish way of life was of its own Celtic making, decentralized, independent, and different from the English. So it remained, at least until 1603, when a long struggle to maintain Celtic independence gave way to superior English arms.

Lying due west of England, Ireland protects England from the storms which sweep down from the Arctic across the North Atlantic toward Europe. If Ireland were not there to shield England against the winds and absorb the constant rains which bring the enervating climate and

---

lethargy which Englishmen profess to disdain, England's low-lying coastline from Liverpool to Lands End would be exposed to the stormy North Atlantic. Ireland has been England's first line of defense for the coal mines of Wales and Cornwall and the maritime cities of the Bristol Channel. Rachel Carson suggests in her study of the oceans of the world that:

...centuries ago, when peasants on the lonely shores of Ireland saw the long swells that herald a storm rolling in upon their coasts, they shuddered and talked of death waves.

As Ireland has protected the vast southwestern coal producing areas which propelled England through its industrial revolution to leadership among great nations, it also has protected Scotland from an Eskimo existence by deflecting the warm waters of the Gulf Stream toward that northern land.

Ireland has the largest continuous area of limestone in Europe from which the normal upper coal-bearing layers have been eroded, leaving it barren of that major source of industrial power. England has been fortunate not to have lost that immense natural wealth, but Ireland's good fortune is in the resulting high

---

fertility of most of the land, as suggested by the Irish geographer E. E. Evans: 6

A continuing strong rural tradition is part of Ireland's heritage; the blame for its late and limited industrial development cannot be placed solely on British colonial policy or on Irish indolence.

Ireland has been a natural system of defense against unfriendly invaders. The coastlines are high and rugged, especially near Dublin and Belfast, where rock formations served first as fortifications and then as places of refuge. The only breach in the coastal mountain rim of Ireland is a fifty-mile stretch of coastline from Dublin north to Dundalk through which successive invaders have made their way. Within Ireland, the old province of Ulster was separated from the rest of the island by a belt of interlacing hills, lakes, rivers, bogs and swamps which provided convenient defense against intrusion from the south but easy access from the east at Belfast. 7 This natural fortification helps explain why native Celtic rule continued in Ulster longer than elsewhere. Also, at a later date, this natural defense system permitted Scottish settlers to immigrate and bring


to northeastern Ireland their Protestant religion and industrious ways of life, where it could flourish with protection against the Catholic and more agricultural South. In the North, the climate is cooler, the growing season shorter and the landscape is more austere, making it attractive to neighboring Scotsmen. Also, the limestone base of Irish land does not extend into the Northeast, thus reducing the fertility of the land and encouraging industrial development of that area instead. This has brought an unusual prosperity and a disoriented sense of independence to the people of the Northeast, which is not to be found elsewhere in Ireland.

Ulster included a little more than one-quarter of the land of Ireland until 1922, when six of its nine counties were separated from the rest of the island and designated Northern Ireland. This partitioned area, with less than twenty percent of the island but about thirty percent of its population, two-thirds of it concentrated in and around Belfast, is presently under English control. The rest of Ireland has been an independent republic since 1948.

Another area of Ireland which can be identified by its natural defense barrier is the land west of the Shannon River. The Shannon is the principal river of
Ireland running southward in a bow-shaped course about one hundred and sixty miles from its source in the Northwest near Donegal Bay to its mouth on the Atlantic Ocean west of Limerick. In a clockwise arch, it separates the area formerly known as Connacht from the rest of Ireland, enclosing it in a roughly elliptical area between the Atlantic Ocean and a bog-fringed line of interconnected shallow lakes and marshes. The river itself is sluggish, falling less than one hundred feet from source to outlet, and is better known as a boundary line than a navigable waterway. The Shannon can be forded at only a few places and provides a good defense against intrusion as well as a barrier to escape.

Except for the Vikings, whose maneuverable ships and expert seamanship gave them mastery over coastal waters and internal rivers and lakes, invaders have found Ireland's natural barriers difficult to overcome. The island's rugged coastline surrounds an easily defended area of rivers, lakes, mountains and bogs, most of which contribute to the island's productivity and beauty as well as to its protection. This is the land to which the Celtic people came and made into a nation called Ireland.
With the coming of the Iron Age during the fourth century B.C., repeated invasions of the British Isles by groups of warlike Celts from central Europe gradually overcame the Bronze Age islanders of both islands. These early Celts are described as "fierce heros, seething with war fury and invincibly armed with iron swords, who easily made themselves masters of a confident disjointed country still in a Bronze Age culture." Halfway through the first century B.C., when Caesar first invaded the British Isles, these Celts were not quite the same persons they had been when they dominated Europe. They had gradually adopted the ways of their new countries. In Ireland, the spirit of these warriors, their ardent and irascible temper, their poetic imagination and physical skills had fused with the ancient blend of races and customs they found. The result was a blend of tenacity and temperament, self-discipline and anarchy.
which their own style of Christianity could soon transform into a missionary zeal.\textsuperscript{8}

Under pressure from Germans on the east and Romans on the south, the Celtic people who once had dominated most of Europe needed new living space, and the islands off the northern coast of France offered little resistance. England and Ireland were the final conquests of the Celts, and their form of civilization flourished in these new lands until Roman power overcame it in most of England, leaving Ireland as the sole remaining Celtic stronghold in Europe. This same Ireland is today the only Celtic nation in the world.\textsuperscript{9}

Prior to the coming of St. Patrick in about 432 A.D., Irish history is a blend of folklore and fact, colored by tradition and authenticated only by antiquity, all of which makes it reasonable to fix the Irish Apostle's arrival as the most reliable start of Irish historiography. It was Patrick who, though not the first Christian missionary to attempt the conversion of Irish Celts, introduced the Latin language and encouraged its use as the basis for a structured written language to


\textsuperscript{9} Curtis, p.1.
record Ireland's ancient stories as well as the holy Christian scriptures. The preservation of pre-Christian lore began with Patrick, whose early fellow missionaries showed enthusiasm for the customs of the heathen Irish and wrote their legends into history. By Patrick's time, Ireland had become known as being favorably inclined toward Christianity. Prior efforts to convert the people had been hampered by the language barrier and a lack of knowledge of Celtic customs and problems. Patrick's personal knowledge of the Irish Celtic people, their language and way of life had been gained from six years of slavery as a cattle herdsman near the present city of Belfast, and his insight enabled him to do what others had failed to accomplish.

Ireland in Patrick's time was a group of family kingdoms, each with its own independent warrior king, over which a High King of Tara presided as a priestly figure with mystic powers and special spiritual privileges. There also were the druids, a large professional class of priestly wise men with extensive authority over the people and social equality with the kings. It was into this decentralized tribal society that Patrick carried his Christian evangelism, a

10 Scherman, pp. 99-100.
personalized effort to convert his former Irish captors. Professor W.H.C. Frend describes Patrick's mission as direct and expedient:\textsuperscript{11}

Patrick's method of evangelization was to work through the chiefs and their families and to build up local churches with their support. His organization was episcopal. He stressed his own status as a bishop and fixed his see at Armagh near the royal center of the king of Ulster.

Patrick's success was doubtless a result of his personal knowledge of Celtic social structure and customs, but there was also the personal nature of his teaching as shown in the thankful humility of his autobiographic Confessio and by the angry fire of his Letter to the Soldiers of Corotecus. The Confessio is an apologia, giving an account of his missionary efforts and thanks for divine guidance. It is the statement of an old man defending his life's work. The Letter to the Soldiers is a fierce denunciation and excommunication of a Welsh chieftain for the unprovoked attack he ordered against a group of recently baptized Irish Christians. It is from these that scholars have learned who St. Patrick was and what he did.

Of particular importance to the transition from paganism to Christianity was still another class of specially trained men known as the Fili, who were the custodians of the oral history of the people. When Patrick's Christian god replaced the old Celtic gods, the Fili became the champions of the Christian Celtic society which flourished in Ireland until it was uprooted by Elizabethan military power in 1603.

By the sixth century A.D., the Roman withdrawal and a hundred years of Anglo-Saxon settlement in England cut both Ireland and England off from the heart of continental Christianity, thereby isolating Ireland and leaving its church with its early monastic character that was to become its distinguishing feature. Ireland's strongly individualist monastic Christianity belongs to the sixth century because its development seems to be associated with the consolidation of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms that cut southeastern Britain off from western Europe and helped to restore the trade route from the Mediterranean area to Ireland. Byzantine-type monasteries and art forms, have been found along the same routes that brought Mediterranean objects to the British Isles. In its acceptance of what is believed to be the ancient Alexandrian calculation of Easter, the broad Byzantine-
type tonsure and other important elements of Eastern art, the Irish Celtic Christian Church appears to owe much to the Eastern world. Papal authority was never rejected, but Celtic independence caused controversy because the Irish church clung to its old ways, and the Irish people could see no reason to make changes. In about 540, under the influence of the Celtic monastery at St. David's in western Wales, a great center of Christian theology was established at Clonard in Ireland from which other monastic centers developed, to make Ireland a new source of learning and fountain of missionary zeal.\textsuperscript{12}

In this setting, a young priest, whose birth as an Irish prince and exceptional devotion to Christianity earned for him the name Columba, founded a mission on the tiny island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland. From its founding in the year 563 until the Viking raids of about 830, Iona was the most famous place of learning in all the Celtic lands of Europe. Columba died at Iona in 597, the same year that the Roman missionary Augustine arrived at Canterbury with instructions from Pope Gregory to convert the pagan English. By this time Columba had already converted much of Scotland, parts of northern

\textsuperscript{12} Curtis, E., pp. 11-12.
England and much of Wales and Cornwall.\textsuperscript{13} When forced to abandon Iona to the Vikings, the Celtic priests took refuge for themselves and their libraries at Armagh where St. Patrick's own church still stood as a spiritual beacon. Ireland's missions to the continent, originating at Iona and starting in about 574 soon extended over much of France, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland.

Of special significance to the growth of Irish Christianity and its influence upon the cultural stability of northern England was the famous Irish mission on the tiny island of Lindisfarne just off the northeast corner of Northumbria. In the year 633, a newly restored king of Northumbria who had visited Iona brought the Irish monk Aidan from Iona to what the historian Bede called "the thirty years episcopate of the Scots."\textsuperscript{14} During this brief period, the Irish mission at Lindisfarne reached southward to the Thames Valley sending Irish bishops and monks into central and eastern England, but Northumbria was its principal area of

\textsuperscript{13} Curtis, pp. 13-14; Scherman, K., pp. 155-157.

\textsuperscript{14} Curtis, pp. 15 and 7. The Romans called the inhabitants of Ireland "Scotae." The name Scotland comes from an Irish settlement in Argyle in 470 A.D., which expanded and carried the Scottish name to the entire area.
operations. For a hundred years Northumbrian kings spoke Irish.

In 664, however, an ecclesiastical conference of Northumbrian nobles and churchmen was held at the coastal town of Whitby, where it was decided that controversial Celtic deviations from orthodox Roman Christianity were hindering the church's efforts to bring stability to the kingdom and converts to the church. Attention was focused upon the old Celtic calculation of the date of Easter as practiced by St. Patrick, the Roman-slave hairstyle of Celtic monks, and the relative unimportance that the monastic Irish church placed upon bishops whose influence in their communities could be a valuable aid in maintaining civil order.¹⁵ At that time the expanding Christian church in adjacent Mercia, another large English kingdom, was becoming a centralized and disciplined instrument of Roman orthodoxy which could help fill the vacancy caused by the departure of Roman military and civil administration. The Christian church in Northumbria was permitting or even encouraging differences in ritual and independence of action among monasteries. In the interest of social stability, a

decision was made at the Synod of Whitby in favor of Roman orthodoxy as against Celtic individualism, thus bringing an end to the Irish presence at Lindisfarne. The Celtic monks returned to Iona, leaving England to its own form of orthodox Roman Christianity. This substitution of Roman organization for Celtic individualism, piety and zeal may also be seen as England's first assertion of the superiority of English ways over Irish customs. The Irish priests returned to Ireland as a group, and in collective rejection they were isolated and embittered. The reputation of their mission at Lindisfarne has survived the ages. Although sacked by the Vikings in 793, the Norman conquerors commemorated the two miracles attributed to St. Aidan at Lindisfarne and the lives and works of eight other saints and sixteen bishops of the early church connected with the mission by naming the island Insula Sacra. Today, it is known as the Holy Island of Lindisfarne.

As part of the Christian community of nations, Ireland owed allegiance to Rome but obedience to nobody outside Ireland. Ireland had never been part of the

16 Curtis, p. 16.

Roman Empire or even occupied by any other people since the arrival of the Celts a thousand years earlier. Christianity in Ireland, like the Irish people, had grown and matured outside the rigid constraints of any organized hierarchy. The decentralization which marked Irish society as a loose-knit assembly of family groups, the Irish church as monastic, and the Irish government as weak for lack of any uniform political force, also made the Irish people more tolerant and less fearful of foreign practices. Katherine Scherman describes Irish Christianity for which the Irish monks were ordered out of Northumbria as:

> pure, spiritual, intensely personal, dedicated only to absolute word of God. Rome's was materialistic, tightly organized, widely social in interest, intolerantly conformist.

The Irish way of life, as reflected in Irish Christianity, was different from England's and was therefore considered inferior and dangerous. For this reason, the Irish clergy were excluded as a group despite the prosperity of the mission they had founded. The Irish clergy were different from the Christian missionaries of that era. They observed ancient customs, they often were ascetic, and they nurtured an instinct

---

18 Scherman, p. 166.
for martyrdom. They were never accused of heresy in Northumbria, but their personal differences, especially when coupled with rituals no longer favored by Rome, made them suspect.

Irish missionary zeal, now frustrated in England, turned to continental Europe, where Irish scholars, scribes and priests pioneered the restoration of ecclesiastical traditions and classical Latin culture until about the year 900. During these dark years, they preserved classical art and literary treasures which otherwise might have perished. By 800, the Irish church had become an organization, distinctive in its own right, which remained largely unchanged for the next three hundred years.\(^{19}\) By this time, Ireland itself had reached a high level of cultural achievement, both artistic and intellectual, that lasted for the next three hundred years as Ireland's "golden age". Despite the lack of any true central authority to provide political strength, Ireland had developed its own style of civilization where its law, its language and its church functioned in harmony. The Celts had first subjected and then absorbed their predecessors in Ireland, and this blend of culture produced a racial consciousness which

\(^{19}\) Curtis, p. 18.
has since survived more than a thousand years of Irish national turbulence. The people spoke Gaelic, and churchmen spoke Latin, but the distinguishing characteristic of Ireland was its artistic and intellectual creativity. This was to be seen in its great monasteries, libraries and schools which trained scholars who exported Irish culture to continental Europe. Enthusiasm for the Latin classics was equaled by a desire to elevate the written Gaelic language from mere record keeping to poetry, history, lyrics and drama. Ireland became the first nation north of the Alps to produce a whole body of literature in its own language.20

The Scandinavian invasions interrupted the outpouring of Irish creativity from about 850 to 1014 when Celtic forces combined to drive the Vikings out. These foreign intrusions destroyed much that had been done and crippled the energy to do more, but Celtic zeal was not crushed. Early Irishmen accepted marriage with the Norseman and called the mixed race "Gall-Gaels". Some Irish kings took Viking wives. In Ireland, the vikings were mostly from Norway and were called "fair foreigners" while the Danes stayed closer to shore and attacked northern France and England, where the Celts

20 Curtis, pp. 19-21.
called them "dark foreigners". The Vikings first came to Ireland and England to plunder, kidnap, steal treasure and destroy what they could not remove. The Irish hated these marauders as ruthless and pagan invaders. Doubtless they had forgotten that until the fifth century it had been they, the Celts from Ireland, who were the sea-going bandits. Until Patrick changed their lifestyle through Christianity, they had done to others what the Vikings were now doing to them. Curtis writes:

He (Patrick) turned the Irish from a race of cruel conquerors whose galleys were dreaded on all the coasts of Britain and Gaul into a race whose enthusiasm was for missionary labor, Latin learning and the contemplative life. To the fifth century, no name sounded more barbarous and brutal than that of the plundering Scots.

The Viking presence in Ireland was ultimately brought to a close by the combined armies of Munster and Connacht in response to the challenge posed by the permanent Viking settlement at Dublin. A battle was fought at nearby Clontarf on Good Friday, April 3, 1014, and in a single day Ireland established for itself a precedent for future Celtic intertribal self defense. The Viking forces were routed, but not until long after they had ceased to be a dominant power in Ireland.

21 Curtis, p. 7.
Because of their uncontrollable savagery, the Norsemen had been feared. Although they had explored far and wide they had never tried to conquer Ireland. They were sea-going traders, and their coastal strongholds were commercial centers rather than military staging areas. The modern Norwegian author, Per Sveaas Andersen, comments:

There is general agreement among historians that the main basis of subsistence for the men from the East . . . was trade and craftsmanship, and not the tilling of the soil. The men of Dublin and other Norse towns traded with the Irish farmers and with other countries like France, England and Norway. The sources for such general conclusions are the Irish annals. . . ."

Else Roesdahl, a modern Danish archeologist, also supports the theory that the Vikings were traders, although cruel ones:

But they were neither better nor worse than their opponents and other robbers and conquerors of their times apart from their total lack of respect for religious foundations. The age was rough and cruel, and even Christians sometimes plundered churches and monasteries. The aim was profit through acquisition of easily convertible

---

22 Scherman, p. 222.

23 Anderson, P.S., Vikings of the West, 2nd Ed. (Disen, 1985), p. 73.

assets, land, political dominance yielding taxes and trade, excitement and fame.

The uninhibited zeal with which the pagan Norsemen satisfied their hunger for quick riches through plunder of defenseless Irish churches and monasteries where Ireland's removable treasure was kept probably accounts for the frightening historical image of the Vikings. The only records of their raids, theft and senseless destruction were written and preserved by the same Irish monks and scholars from whom the church treasures were stolen. It would seem that the victims were the scribes and, for historical purposes, also the judges.

Although the Viking problem temporarily diverted the course of Ireland's creative energy from learning and the arts to the necessities of self-defense, the two hundred years of Viking occupation (800-1014) provided impetus for Irish trade and commerce and also stimulated a rudimentary sense of Celtic ethnic unity to help strengthen Ireland's political structure. In addition to the military skills they taught the Irish, the Norsemen introduced new techniques of shipbuilding to improve Irish fishing fleets and began the minting of coins to facilitate trade. Most important of the economic contributions was the secular town to serve the needs of commerce and government. Dublin and other towns along
the eastern and southern coasts of Ireland were such places, all founded by Vikings and thereafter used by the Irish. Also, and perhaps of more lasting importance, was Ireland's initial experience with combined Celtic action to solve a common problem, their first experiment with national unity. The round towers which are still found on ancient church sites were observation towers used to warn against Viking raids. These, as well as Viking relics, attest to the wide range of Viking exploration in Ireland and thereby to the number of Irish kingdoms which were raided individually without hope of aid from other victim kingdoms. The Viking occupation, although as painful as might be expected in a cruel age, was not the "Norse tyranny" that Professor Curtis calls it, and it did not crush the Celtic tribes. It did, however, awaken them to the need and utility of joint action in a common cause.

Until the tenth century, there had been no true high-kingdom of all Ireland. The title was a mere invention of medieval historians to establish a precedent for the claims of Brian Boru, the organizer and leader of the Irish forces at Clontarf. Not only was there no central political figure among the Irish kings, there was

25 Scherman, p. 223.
also the Brehon tradition of electing kings from among members of royal families, thereby promoting family rivalries which further weakened royal power. In 800 the Irish kings could not join forces to protect their people against Viking intrusion. Confusion led to despair, and the country collapsed into a state of near anarchy, leaving Ireland easy prey to unwelcome Viking demands. In reaction to this prolonged demoralization, however, there eventually developed a Celtic resurgence under a minor but skillful king, Brian Boru, who had himself declared King of all Ireland in the year 1002. For the first time, Ireland had a political figure whose authority transcended tribal boundaries and whose exploits gave Ireland some faint sense of national consciousness. At his self-appointed coronation, orchestrated in imitation of his hero Charlemagne, Brian declared himself emperor of the Scots and claimed for himself the monarchy over Celtic people. To sanctify his rule, he declared the supremacy of the church at Armagh over the entire church of Ireland. Curtis calls this the "greatest moment in the history of native Ireland." Ten years later Brian Boru defeated the Vikings at Clontarf and ended the Norse occupation of Ireland. He was killed in the course of this action, but even the Norse sages
mention the battle of Clontarf as "Brian's battle." An early heroic age ended here, but for the first time Ireland knew a small measure of unity as a Celtic force to assert itself in time of need. Brian Boru's fledgling government was an informal union of four of the five major kingdoms. The fifth, Connacht, was not included because it was then considered a part of Meath. Three of the four were subordinate to the fourth, whose king was designated High King. This was a patriarchal society in which the nobles chose the best man to serve as their king. This produced a political structure that was weak in central command but strong in local resistance. Henceforth, no aggressor could rely upon total disorganization to render Ireland easy prey. Brian was Ireland's first strong king, whose reign saw the end of the Viking period and the restoration of Irish Christianity, art, literature and Celtic consciousness. Brian Boru is also credited with the adoption of the patronymics of the prefix "O" to mean grandson and "Mac" to mean son for Irish surnames. This degree of family identification may be seen as further evidence of a rising Celtic national spirit.26

26 Curtis, pp. 29-31.
Thus in the thirteen hundred years from Celtic origins in 300 B.C. to Celtic self-esteem in 1014 A.D., Ireland was brought from the Bronze Age into the Iron Age, with its own Celtic civilization and its own distinctive religion which it exported wherever it was accepted. Ireland had been the custodian of classical Latin learning and patron of the arts during the dark years after the fall of Rome. It also had produced an original literature and achieved at least a small measure of central government. In 1014, strengthened by survival and victory over two hundred years of Viking adversity, Ireland emerged as a Celtic nation in its own right. Brian Boru's death in 1014 left Ireland with a political structure and national will that lasted for one hundred and fifty years, until the Anglo-Norman invasion from Wales ushered in the English presence that exists today.

Ireland, from Saint Patrick to England's King Henry II, was a collection of family groups of various sizes and strength within the framework of the Brehon laws which had developed and been passed from generation to generation by a professional class of judges. These Brehon laws were a conglomeration of economic, social and political rules which produced a loose-knit nation quite different from feudal England. Unlike feudal law which
vested ultimate right to all land in a sovereign ruler who could grant portions of it at will to his principal vassals in return for their loyalty, homage and support, all land in Ireland belonged to family groups. The collectiveness of feudal England was pyramidal, but under Brehon law it was horizontal and limited to the amount of land any family controlled. In Celtic Ireland, power and prestige were measured in terms of the herds of cattle or land owned by a free family of four generations of adult male descendants of a common great-grandfather. Each male member of this family held an inalienable lifetime interest in a portion of the estate, which would be redistributed within the family upon his death. Professor C. C. O'Brien observes that under Brehon law a man had no legal personality outside his family. Further, the entire body of law was so much a part of Celtic consciousness that it was considered immutable, in theory sacrosanct, even when in conflict with Christian principals. Wherever Celtic people lived in Ireland, this law remained in force until the time of the Tudor conquest in 1603.27 Although the land was not alienable, possessions upon the land could be leased to other and

lesser free families on mutually acceptable terms, thus establishing a pattern of greater and lesser possession. This was a system of plateaus not unlike other social strata, but under Brehon law the land did not even theoretically belong to any central or even regional king. Also, Celtic nobles had no legal claim to the people or property of their subordinate estates. Under Brehon law, lands of the free sovereign families were not even in theory grants from any sovereign but, rather, from a basic political communal union of free and non-free families who acknowledged the supremacy of one of their own members. In Patrick's time, there were about one hundred and fifty such free families, each with its own king, but in 1170 King Henry II found many fewer ruling families. His arrival halted the Celtic move toward greater unity.

Underlying the constant shifts of dynastic power, there was a generally stable Celtic society with a clearly defined status, family membership and a sort of honor system similar to modern "face saving." Honor, as such, could be lost by violation of any of the traditional Brehon laws, even though some of them already were archaic. Christianity had been generally accepted but had made no perceptible impact on the old Celtic
social system, where multiple marriages and divorce were common. Clergymen were often married. Meanwhile, the economy was pastoral and was kept at subsistence levels.28

Following the death of Brian Boru in 1014, Ireland was troubled by a succession of ineffective kings who were occupied with personal dynastic problems as well as external clashes with departing half-breed Vikings as they retreated from their coastal lairs. Still clinging to its Celtic decentralization, the Irish church remained monastic and lacked an authoritative episcopate to unify its efforts and influence. Also, the Irish monasteries had become heavy with art treasure, increasingly subject to secular pressures, and prone to hereditary succession in the more important abbeys. As seen by Rome, the Irish church lacked both external authority and internal discipline, and the demand for reform was constant. This demand, of course, originated in Rome, but it was voiced in Canterbury, where all the archbishops since Augustine claimed for themselves the original apostle's papal commission to convert all of England and the British Isles. Again, as they had done at Whitby, the English

found fault with Celtic decentralization, preferring uniformity through an organized episcopate to the more individualistic observance of the faith which the Celtic monastic system allowed.

Celtic Scotland and Wales had already conformed their churches to Roman standards, but Ireland was attached to its old practices, even though Christian unity and doctrine were never rejected. Actually, there had been some concessions made in response to pressure from Canterbury, but these had come from those remnants of the Vikings who had become Christians and were now cut off from their Scandinavian heritage. They had adopted Irish speech and habits but remained a group to themselves, called Ostmen, occupying some of the old Viking areas including Dublin. They built their own cathedrals for their own bishops, whom they sent to Canterbury for consecration and generally turned from the Celtic Catholicism of Ireland to the Roman Catholicism of England. Still other Irish bishops, envious of the elevated status of continental bishops, were willing to accept reforms from Rome. From these episcopal developments, a degree of unity evolved within the monastic framework that produced an Archbishop and

Primate of all Ireland in 1106. This was a new position in Ireland, and it received the support of the High King, whose own kingdom of Connacht dominated the island at that time. During the balance of the twelfth century, prior to the Anglo-Norman invasion of 1170, rival kings were elevated and deposed while unresolved debate over church reform and Celtic-Ostman ethnic disputes prevented the growth of the central government that Ireland needed to survive. Curtis notes a new and unusual willingness to consider foreign aid:

On paper, the lines of a national self-governing and episcopal church had been laid down with the approval of Rome, but to be a success it needed a reformed and powerful state, and of this there was little hope. Everywhere in Europe, the revived Church, in order to carry out its great mission, allied itself with growing monarchy. Many of the Irish reformers came to regard without dismay foreign intervention.

The history of Ireland from the early Celtic invasions to its emergence in the eleventh century as a nation of five cooperative kingdoms under a single high-king may be seen as the development of a loose-knit but homogenous culture. The kingdoms were Leinster, Munster, Meath, Connacht and Ulster, and most of these would play a part in Ireland's growth until the year 1800. The

30 Curtis, p. 45.
island had its own form of Christianity, its own Gaelic language, and its own Brehon law which governed its society and the use and ownership of its land.\textsuperscript{31} Monastic Christianity had flourished and then spread from Ireland into England and then onto the continent, only to meet the opposition of the more centralized and disciplined orthodoxy of Rome. First at Whitby and then from Canterbury, the loyal but Celtic form of Christianity was under attack from the church itself. The language of the early Irish people was Gaelic, similar to Welsh and of Indo-European origin like Greek and Latin. Modified over centuries of Celtic expansion from somewhere in southern Asia through Europe to the British Isles, the language became Irish. Except for some seafaring words adopted from the Norsemen during their stay on the island, the language in the twelfth century remained as it had been since St. Patrick introduced the Latin alphabet which enabled the Celts to produce their own literature.\textsuperscript{32} The Celtic law was Brehon, and so it remained until the seventeenth century

\textsuperscript{31} "Brehon" is derived from "brithen", the Gaelic word for judge. Regular courts and judges existed in Ireland from prehistoric times.

\textsuperscript{32} O'Murchu, M. The Irish Language (Dublin, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland, 1985) p. 19.
when Celtic society itself became the victim of colonization. Half way through the twelfth century the Celtic people still measured wealth in terms of the size of their herds of cattle, lived in family clans of four generations of freemen plus other non-free people, within a complex and rigidly ordered social structure. All of this was prescribed by Brehon law which assured the security of land tenure and descent by keeping it inalienable and communal within the tribal unit. The basis for the ownership of land, which was to become a crucial point of conflict between Ireland and England, was a fundamental difference between the Irish and English ways of life.

Little more than one hundred and fifty years were to lapse between the departure of the Vikings and the coming of the English—years when Ireland could absorb the possible benefits of two hundred years of Viking occupation and blend them with its ancient Celtic institutions and customs. These were uneventful years for Ireland but tumultuous ones for neighboring England, where another group of Vikings, after about one hundred and fifty years of residence in northern France, launched the invasion of 1066 which forever changed the course of English history. William, Duke of Normandy, led the
successful invasion and thereafter reigned as England's King William I from 1066 to 1087. His great-grandson, Henry, Count of Anjou, became King Henry II of England in 1154 and soon brought an end to Ireland's independence.
CHAPTER 3

OCCUPATION

1170-1485

More than a century after the Norman conquerors brought feudalism from France to England and distinguished their presence there by imposing their own form of French upon the old medley of Celtic, Latin, Viking and Anglo-Saxon dialects to create an original English language, England began its conquest of Ireland under King Henry II. The smaller island to the West was the sole remaining center of Celtic culture in all the world, although parts of Scotland and Wales still retained strong elements of the Celtic tradition. Henry II was a politically astute leader whose English mother Matilda, the Countess of Anjou and former German Empress, and French wife Eleanor, the Duchess of Acquitaine and former Queen of France, had made him lord of more land in France than the French king and his other principal vassals together could claim. Like the other Norman kings of England, Henry II was a Frenchman who was primarily concerned with his French possessions. Twenty-

one years of his thirty-five year reign as England's king were spent in France, but he considered England a valuable property that deserved to be protected. Therefore, he sought to maintain its frontiers rather than expand them. In about 1155, not long after becoming King, Henry received authority from Pope Adrian IV to invade Ireland for the purpose of reforming the Irish church along orthodox Roman lines, but his primary interests lay in maintaining his vast Angevin empire rather than enlarging it.

In 1166 a fugitive Irish King, Dermot MacMurrough, who had lost his throne of Leinster, sought to recapture it with the aid of an English army. As a reward, MacMurrough offered eventual sovereignty to Henry, and spiced this offer with the pledge of his daughter Eva in marriage to the leader of the English invasion of his homeland. The conquest looked easy because Ireland continued to lack the central political authority needed to support an effective defense. At a time when Ireland was once again reaching new heights of artistic and literary productivity, its typical Celtic decentralization produced an internal confusion which

made Ireland seem easy prey to any disciplined invader. This fact was not lost on reluctant Henry. Valuable property was there for the taking, and a quick little war would be an easy way to please the political appetite of the papacy. A bitter controversy over the jurisdiction of church courts in England had already caused an embarrassing rift between King Henry and his Archbishop, Thomas Becket, who demanded stricter compliance with Roman orthodoxy in Ireland. Henry may also have had an eye for Ireland's rich farmlands, the treasure in its monasteries, and the busy commerce flowing between Dublin and the continent. His mother, the Empress Matilda, who had opposed his use of the Papal Commission to invade Ireland, was no longer alive to help guide him. It is also possible that Henry wanted more land so that he would have something to give to his youngest son John, who was only three years old in 1169, by which time Henry's three older sons had taken title to all his other properties.35 Declaring his papal authority to reform the Irish church to be the reason for invading Ireland, Henry authorized MacMurrough to recruit troops in Wales from which an invasion was organized and launched in 1170.

35 Kelly, pp. 134, 176.
The English invasion of Ireland was conducted with dispatch. The first assault by a small but professional army of "younger sons and gentlemen" soldiers of Norman conqueror stock was led by Richard Fitz Gilbert deClaire, 2nd Earl of Pembroke, who was commonly known as "Strongbow". He landed near Waterford in August of 1170, and within four months Dublin had surrendered to the invaders, while all remaining Irish resistance was scattered. Within six months, Strongbow married the daughter of the Irish King, who promptly died, leaving Strongbow King of Leinster. In October of 1171, King Henry came over from England with an army to claim Ireland for the English crown rather than allow his Anglo-Norman opportunists to establish a new Norman state for themselves. Within six months, Henry received the negotiated surrender of most of the important Irish kings and took their land. He then returned the land to them as feudal fiefdoms subject to the customary conditions of loyalty and homage. He also made Strongbow's ancient Irish kingdom of Leinster a part of the English earldom of Pembroke, thus creating a political channel for theoretical English sovereignty in Ireland. During these same six months, the Irish bishops adopted the reforms desired by Rome but without acknowledging Canterbury's
jurisdiction and asserting Armagh's supremacy in Ireland with obedience to Rome.

Ireland now had the episcopal and parochial church that Rome desired, and Henry could claim more land for his sprawling Angevin empire. Ireland became a Papal fiefdom of the English crown, and this remained the constitutional basis for England's authority in Ireland until England repudiated Papal jurisdiction and substituted royal for papal supremacy during the Reformation years from 1534 to 1541. Henry II and all succeeding Kings of England held the title "Lord of Ireland" until 1541, when Henry VIII took the title "King of Ireland." Having appointed a viceroy to govern Ireland in his name, Henry departed Ireland on April 17, 1172, never to return. He had spent a total of about six months in his new lands, and one month later he was reconciled with the papacy. Pope Alexander III published three letters regarding Ireland commending Henry for his reformation of evil Irish ways and granting him dominion over the Irish people. He also urged all Irish bishops to assist Henry and congratulated the Irish princes for receiving him as king without a struggle.

Before returning to England, Henry established military garrisons at Dublin and southward along the
eastern coast and appointed a viceroy to rule Ireland as his personal representative. He neglected, however, to establish any framework of government which could bring Ireland within the scope of England's rapidly developing central authority. Under King Henry II, much of the law of England was being changed in form and in substance. In Ireland, however, the Norman barons sought to expand their lands by conquest and division of Ireland among themselves with little consideration of law or conscience. For thirty years, royal power was nominal, and the new barons ruled as the viceroy's feudal council. The conflict and turmoil which the Anglo-Norman rule brought to Ireland showed the Celtic island to be subject to England's occupancy but not to its sovereign control. Neither Henry nor any of his successors until Elizabeth sought to conquer Ireland completely, and thus the Celtic social system as codified in Ireland's Brehon laws remained largely unchanged until the seventeenth century.

Henry II's ceremonial act of receiving Irish lands from the Irish Kings and then restoring the land to the former owners or others as fiefdoms according to English feudal custom must be recognized as the first clash

---

between Brehon Irish and feudal English views of the rights of kings and ownership of land. Henry was a French King of England whose style of sovereignty was a product of the once-Romanized continent of Europe. Lying outside the sphere of Roman culture that Henry understood and represented, Ireland and its people knew nothing about the Romanized world. Irish kings had been frightened into submission by England's vastly superior military force, but under their law they were powerless to surrender their lands to Henry because they did not own the land. Their tribes owned the land in common, and it was beyond the power of any Irish king to give away or accept the return of any of it. Henry, King of England, was an intruder who thought in feudal terms and must be pardoned for not understanding that the apparent acquiescence of his victims did not constitute the surrender which he believed it to signify. There was no meeting of the minds. This was no conquest but merely a change in circumstances, which depended on English force to ensure compliance with English ways. Under Brehon law, Henry's ceremonial exchange of land rights was meaningless, but England did not understand this. The Brehon inability of any person to give or receive land except through the family unit underlay much of the
trouble that plagued English occupation of Ireland, at least until Stuart era administrators finally decided how to ignore it.\(^{37}\)

For so long as Brehon law continued to be a major force in Ireland, English sovereignty could not exist. The ability to make and enforce the law is the essence of sovereignty, and the feudalism that Henry II and his successors tried to bring to Ireland had already expanded the scope of law-making authority from personal tribal leadership to territorial possession.\(^{38}\) If English feudalism had been accepted and taken root in Ireland as Henry and others mistakenly assumed, English sovereignty could have brought enforceable English law to the island. Celtic law and traditions, however, were too well established for desultory English efforts to dislodge, and they prevailed until after the Elizabethan conquest in 1603. Thereafter, despite the increase of English monarchial power from Tudor absolutism to Stuart divinity and then Parliamentary control, all but a very few of the people in Ireland continued to live within the framework


of Celtic society and the Brehon law.\(^{39}\) English common law never found a home in Ireland, and the history of Ireland from the invasion of Henry II to the Union with England in 1800 is a record of conflict between the English and the Celtic forms of government.\(^{40}\)

Many of Henry's Anglo-Norman invaders, however, were from southern Wales and therefore part Celtic in temperament and custom. These "gentlemen buccaneers," as Curtis calls them, were a restless group who had been restrained in England by the politically skillful King Henry but allowed to forage in Wales as far as their swords would take them. They carried this spirit into Ireland, but it was a spirit that the Irish understood and could accept. Adaptability had proved to be the genius of these Scandinavian people, first as Norsemen in Normandy and then as Frenchmen in England. At this early state of European development, there had not yet emerged a feeling of national collectivism, either defensive or aggressive, which might obstruct or discourage such natural international accommodation. Although a trend toward national languages seemed to be developing as


\(^{40}\) O'Connor, N.J., p. 12.
early as the twelfth century, modern nations did not exist until about the seventeenth century when feudal and religious loyalties began to yield to attitudes of national unity. Professor Boyd Shafer has described this phenomenon as the origin of nationalism.\footnote{Shafer, B.C., \textit{Faces of Nationalism} (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), pp. 27, 38, 40.} The invading Anglo-Normans could and did treat the Irish as equals with whom they could freely mix, and within the first generation they fought fiercely, but they also intermarried and gradually blended with the Irish.

The Anglo-Norman presence in Celtic Ireland, which began as a quick and easy military success, gradually became an administrative problem. Except for an eastern coastal area around Dublin, it was not a conquest, and the papal overlordship that the initial invasion secured for Henry gave him no dominion over the island or its people. The English presence began with unconditional control over the Irish lands, people, church and government following the failure of Ireland's military and social structure, only to decay into an impotent position over a dwindling number of expatriates in a small Irish-infiltrated enclave called the Pale. Even this area was surrounded by a demeaned and resentful
group of victims of English misgovernment. Englishmen who lived outside the Pale joined the Celtic community, adopting the Gaelic language and conforming to Brehon law. Sometimes, these expatriate Englishmen, forsaking English common law, even abandoned their rights of primogeniture and feudal titles. Meanwhile, some Celtic chieftains gradually reoccupied their former lands as civil strife and poor harvests caused a number of Anglo-Norman settlers to abandon Ireland and return to England. By the year 1500 English control was limited to the Pale.

The Anglo-Norman adventure was a failure for the English, but it disclosed a native Celtic solidarity that would eventually overcome the results of Ireland's typically Celtic political decentralization. Because Ireland had no central leader, group or capitol city, which if captured or defeated would render the island helpless, the Anglo-Norman "gentlemen buccaneers" achieved temporary acquiescence but never total conquest. The diffusion of military power among the Celtic tribal units prevented effective defense, but it also prevented total collapse. Between Henry II's establishment of English presence in 1171 and the imposition of the Statutes of Kilkenny in 1366, Celtic Ireland managed to survive and to maintain its own cultural homogeneity
despite severe loss of native manpower and the replacement of Irish leadership by English settlers. Magna Carta, which took two years to reach Ireland from Runnymede, became the feudal baron's bill of rights in Ireland, as Pollock and Maitland describe it: 42

Into Ireland, Englishmen have carried their own laws. A smaller England has been created across the Channel . . . Statutes and ordinances were sent from England into Ireland; the King's English court claimed a surrender over his Irish tribunals. It is probable, however, that even in those parts of Ireland which were effectively subject to English domination the native Irish were suffered to live under their old law so long as they would keep the King's peace.

English common law and English customs were to be used in Ireland, but these could be imposed only in conquered areas. Other people remained in Celtic ignorance of English law although their Irish chieftains were subject to forcible removal at any time. In this regard, it seems quite possible that if at this time, when England was strong enough to do so, it had made an honest effort to turn the Irish kings into tenants-in-chief on honorable and hereditary terms, it might have developed a loyal ruling class of native nobles who could have preserved English dominion.

42 Pollock, F., and Maitland, F.W., p. 221.
The great majority of the native Irish population, had been reduced to serfdom by the Anglo-Norman barons. A proud people was now fit only to tend and till the soil. Free tenants were sometimes reduced to bondage as others had been in England. Many freemen, even noble ones, were thus reduced in status or had to leave Ireland. 

To deny the Irish the right of freemen was to make them ignoble of blood to reduce to slavery the blood that has flowed in freedom from of old. A race so proud as the Gaelic aristocracy and which put the "free clans" so high in estimation was well aware of what such legal injustice meant.

Anglo-Norman penetration of Ireland produced victories mostly in the eastern and northeastern areas. It was temporarily diverted from 1315 to 1318 by an invading force from Scotland on a mission to ignite an anti-English combination of Celtic people. Its purpose was to win Ireland's freedom from England as Scotland's had been won at Bannockburn in 1314, and it brought a Scottish army of six thousand veteran soldiers into Ireland under the command of a Norman, Edward Bruce, who was married to the daughter of the Earl of Ulster, a descendant of the great Celtic Kings of Alba. The effort was a failure, but it provided a convenient opportunity

43 Curtis, p. 77.
for Irish leaders to submit a formal protest to Rome, complaining of English violations of its Papal Lordship contrary to Pope Adrian's grant. During this interlude, some Irish land was recovered from the English, but Ireland's hope for a foreign liberator was shattered. The crown of Ireland had been offered in 1263 to Haakon IV of Norway, who died before he could accept, and Edward Bruce had been seen as a possible successor. With his death in battle, all hope was gone.\(^{44}\) The Irish had also witnessed the ravages imposed upon some of the Anglo-Irish people in the Irish midlands and had come to see good in English behavior as contrasted with the Scottish ferocity. Edward Bruce, brother of Scotland's King Robert Bruce, became known as "the destroyer of Ireland, both of the English and the Gael."

During the fourteenth century, England tried to create a miniature copy of itself in Ireland but found that the survival of English law and customs required the presence of effective support from England. Otherwise Brehon law and Celtic customs would prevail among the Irish and be adopted by the English. Prior to the Scottish "invasion", England had refused to accept native Irish leaders within the protection of English law. In

\(^{44}\) O'Brien, p. 44; Curtis, pp. 99-101
1276, the English governor had even rejected the payment of a substantial amount of money for Irish parity under English law, thus contemptuously denying equality between the English and the Irish even when the two peoples of comparable social class lived in close proximity and in social harmony. Then, in 1310, an Irish Parliament composed of French-speaking Englishmen passed legislation declaring that, "no mere Irishman shall be received . . . ", this being the first use of the phrase "mere Irish" (Merus hibernicus), implying that Celts living by their own Brehon law under native Irish chiefs had no legal rights among the English. 45

By about 1330, English control of Ireland was characterized by the decay of effective government, failure of tax and trade revenues, and a revival of Irish Celtic activity everywhere outside the English "friendly" areas. Irish and Anglo-Irish protests over their exclusion from English law, the grants of great power to few favored nobles and the absenteeism of titled English landlords without whom English government was ineffective, attested to persistent English indifference to Irish affairs.

45 Curtis, p. 93.
In response to such protests, Ireland received a new royal deputy from London with instructions to resolve these persistent problems but little if any authority to enforce his orders. In 1331, this deputy, Sir Anthony Lucy, declared all freemen in Ireland were entitled to the protection of English law, but this legal equality with the English-born was never confirmed. Twenty-four prominent absentee English landlords were ordered to return to their lands in Ireland, but they merely ignored the command. Finally, a number of land grants to a few ruling Anglo-Irish families were revoked, but this action was resented by most of the Anglo-Irish nobles as a personal attack on a few selected members of their privileged class. These efforts to resolve basic issues merely seemed to lessen the Magna Cart rights of the Anglo-Irish nobles who as "English in Ireland" considered themselves the equals of the "English by birth". Furthermore, the low rank of the king's deputy who issued the reform offended their vanity.46

The Anglo-Irish were English settlers who had intermarried with Irish families and formed a new landed class. The result was the formation of a "patriot party" composed of a native and aristocratic group of people who

46 Curtis, p. 104.
claimed control of Ireland. From this time, at about the halfway mark of the fourteenth century until the revolutionary outbursts of the late eighteenth century in America, France and Ireland, a sizeable portion of the Anglo-Irish people of Ireland maintained a spirit of colonial independence.\textsuperscript{47} This independent, pro-Celtic sentiment is also to be seen in a revolt of the Norman-Irish chiefs in Ulster who, upon the murder of their Earl in 1333 recaptured most of his vast territory, thus showing how little they cared for their feudal titles as compared with the restoration of their native Celtic lifestyle. Many old Norman families came to be known by typical Gaelic names; and although they remained proud of being English, they were more a blend of Norman and Celt. Between the Anglo-Norman conquest of 1172 and the year 1330, they fought a failing war for independence, but they recovered most of their lands and much of their native pride.

The first half of the fourteenth century witnessed a turning point in England's control of Ireland. The native Irish as well as the Anglo-Irish were frustrated by government through absentee lordship, exercised by edicts through viceroys. At this early date, there was a

\textsuperscript{47} Curtis, p. 104.
demand by numerous great Anglo-Irish landlords that the affairs of Ireland be managed by an Irish Parliament and that disputes be settled in Irish courts subject to royal English supremacy. This would seem to be another indication of a home rule movement. In the year 1341, Edward III ordered that only "English-born" men could hold high office in Ireland, thereby excluding the prominent Anglo-Irish as well as the native Irish from responsible public positions. This was resisted by an increasingly offended patriot group of old-English, now become Anglo-Irish leaders, who notified the English King that Ireland was already a third part lost to the Irish. They protested that English-born officials knew nothing about Ireland and ignored the people's rights for their own enrichment. They complained that disputes which should have been settled in Ireland were improperly being sent to England, and that all this was in violation of their Magna Carta rights.48

About three years later, in apparent response to this early suggestion of a home rule movement, the edict excluding Anglo-Irishmen from public office was rescinded and its opponents pardoned. It was done, however, in such a way as to arouse the Anglo-Irish even further into

a defense of native Irish rights. English paternalism had a way of creating Celtic heroes. By 1356, Anglo-Irish leaders ruled Ireland as governors and judges under royal statutes which were intended to appease the "English-by-blood" (often old-English or Anglo-Irish) by declaring that: 49

The affairs of the land of Ireland shall be referred to our Council here but shall be determined in our Parliament there.

and

All Englishmen born in Ireland shall be taken to be true Englishmen like those born in England, bound by the same laws, rights and customs:

In response to frequent requests by Anglo-Irish leaders that the English King Edward III or some member of the royal family come to Ireland to strengthen England's tarnished image as a legitimate ruler, the King's second son Lionel, Duke of Clarence, came to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant in 1361. As husband of Elizabeth, the only descendant of the late of Earl of Ulster, Lionel also claimed that vast earldom as his own. He arrived with a small army attended by sixty-four absentee English lords of Irish lands but could not enlist the support of the Anglo-Irish lords to wage war

49 Curtis, p. 111.
on their native Irish neighbors. After a few years of campaigning against the Irish and recapturing some of the land they had repossessed for themselves, he despaired of asserting any personal rights of his own to Ulster and convened a Parliament at Kilkenny in February of 1366. Here, in the Norman French legal language of the day, he issued the thirty-five Statutes of Kilkenny which divided and estranged the English and Irish people of Ireland for almost three hundred years. These statues, in which the Irish people were called "enemies of England", were declared to be necessary because the English masters of Ireland were forsaking their English language and customs in favor of Irish ways of living. For this reason, the English were forbidden by severe penalties from making alliances with the Irish by marriage or parenthood, observing Irish laws, patronizing Irish culture, selling arms to the Irish or providing food to the Irish during wartime. The English and also the Irish among the English were required to speak only the English language, follow English customs, fashions, dress, style of horsemanship and use English names. Failure to observe these rules would cause the forfeiture of their lands. As if to punish the Irish for being attractive to the English, they were excluded from Christian churches in
English areas. Also, all Irish were excluded from the protection of English law except for those living among the English and accepting English traditions and customs. Since the reign of King John, the legal status of the Irish people in English society in Ireland had been a matter of question which was finally answered, but in a fatal way.

The body of legislation known as the Statutes of Kilkenny was a 1366 codification of various laws passed since 1297, a period of sixty-nine years since a group of Irish barons first met as an Irish Parliament at the call of the English king. These statutes have been described as "outlawing the Irish race" because they proscribed the English use or acceptance of the Irish lifestyle. The Irish were correspondingly denigrated as "enemies of the English". Actually, these statutes were defensive measures intended to make sure that English settlers and English land in Ireland remained English. Aside from their restraint upon the ecclesiastical duties of Irish priests in English churches, they tended to ignore the Irish or to treat them as foreigners or serfs without rights or privileges in their own land under English law. Ironically, one of the statutes prevented Irish laborers

from leaving Ireland while another made their continued stay easier by holding down the price of imported manufactured goods. These restrictive and humiliating measures were confirmed with minor amendments on later occasions when English officials in Ireland came under criticism for being too friendly with the Irish. 51

The Statutes of Kilkenny would obviously be difficult to enforce anywhere except in the pro-English areas, and therefore there was a nine-county zone designated for their application, six of them lying within the Pale surrounding Dublin. The entire area, roughly one-third of the island stretching southward along the coast from Dublin to Waterford, was called "the land of peace" and was chosen to be the stronghold of English law and culture. The rest of Ireland was ignored except that five or six great English families which showed signs of becoming Anglo-Irish were charged with the duty of policing their rural areas to enforce compliance with the new laws. Confiscation of their property was the prescribed penalty for willful failure. England did not renounce sovereignty by these self-imposed restraints, but it did tacitly admit the defeat

of its efforts to conquer Ireland. The Irish had contributed to this division of land, people and culture by hanging onto their own language, culture and law in the face of English threats, and they were now declared to be "the King's Irish enemies." The statutes by which they gained this distinction were not only signed by the royal Duke of Clarence but were also dignified by sentences of excommunication to be imposed upon all who might be tempted to disobey. The native Irish church did not protest. The law permitted the eviction of an Irishman from land claimed by an Englishman, but failure by an Englishman or Anglo-Irishman to adhere to the law merely made him a "degenerate" English. This did not result in the forfeiture of property or loss of access to the protection of English law. Thus, there always remained the legal difference between any Englishman and almost any Irishman. Language and other cultural requirements eventually gave way in favor of local Celtic customs, but the presumption of English ownership of land continued well into the seventeenth century, and any Irishman could easily be dispossessed of any land he might have.

Despite what was done at Kilkenny, the native Irish chiefs continued their reconquest of tribal lands,
carving Ulster into new lordships, reducing the Pale to little more than Leinster, and leaving the rest of the island to the local Anglo-Irish barons. Within a year after the Parliament at Kilkenny, the English King ordered absentee English landlords to return and stay in Ireland or provide for the defense of their lands on pain of losing them. This absentee order in 1367 was repeated in 1380 because absenteeism favored Irish recovery as Anglo-Norman families disappeared and their lands passed to the Irish. As the English of the Pale dwindled and the English outside the Pale became Irish in language, culture and law, the greater became the strength of native families.

Seemingly in recognition of the prospects of the English dilemma, the Irish chiefs forsook the old dream of restoring the High Kingship and concentrated on rebuilding their local powers. They imitated Norman military tactics, English heraldry and rules of primogeniture that gave stability to the feudal ruling class. In 1394, King Richard II, while spending Christmas at Dublin, declared a great plan for Ireland, dividing it into "the wild Irish--our enemies," "English rebels" and "obedient English". Ignoring the obedient

52 Curtis, pp. 123-124.
ones, who required no further consideration, he promised
to do justice to the Irish and recognized that the
English rebels "have become disobedient through injustice
practiced upon them." He then announced a new policy by
which the Irish chiefs would surrender their lands and
then be confirmed as their feudal lords, the "rebel
English" would be pardoned and restored to full
authority, and the English "land of peace" would be
reduced to a smaller Pale. Four Irish Kings were
knighted, but nothing was done to amend the Statutes of
Kilkenny, and it is doubtful that England gained any land
or prestige by the effort. This was England's final
attempt to establish itself in Ireland before the Tudor
conquest. England was already involved in the endless
expenditures of the Hundred Years War in France and soon
would become engaged in thirty years of dynastic civil
war, colorfully known as the Wars of the Roses. Ireland
was strong again, its native people had regained all but
a third of their land, and in the pocket of English
survival known as the Pale the French-speaking feudal
class was turning to Irish rather than English. Even the
Pale, now reduced in size and destined to shrink further,
was losing some of its reason for existence as an exodus
of Englishmen took place despite the forfeiture penalties of the 1380 Absentee Act.

During the fifteenth century, Ireland contained a variety of ruling groups. There were the great earls and other feudal English lords, who still constituted a bond between England and the native Irish but were growing increasingly allied with the Irish through marriage. Their adoption of Celtic language and culture followed. There also was a large class of Anglo-Irish lords known "chieftains of lineage" or "degenerate English" who aspired to local lordships and ruled independently in the outlying areas in defiance of English law and policy. Also, there were Gaelic and Norman lords who were virtually indistinguishable in their use of the Gaelic language and Brehon law. Ireland was a composite of all who had come to conquer but had been absorbed by it, a mosaic of interdependent principalities which controlled all the island except the English enclave in and around Dublin. The course of events rather than any central Irish political strength had produced this state of affairs in Ireland by the middle of the fifteenth century. It was also at about this time that dissatisfaction with the results of the long war in France was turning leaders of the two rival English
political groups at the English court, the houses of York and Lancaster, into bitter contestants for the throne itself.

In 1447, Duke Richard of York, a strong contender for the English throne was sent by his Lancastrian rivals to Ireland as Lieutenant in order to get him out of England. Richard, however, used the assignment as an opportunity to enlist Ireland as an ally of his Yorkist political faction in the foreseeable dynastic struggle that finally erupted in 1455 and lasted for thirty years. Richard, a descendant of the noble Anglo-Irish de Burgo, Lacy and Mortimer families, distantly related to Brian Boru, soon became a great favorite of the Anglo-Irish lords, whose Patriot Party took control of Ireland. During his thirteen years of power, Richard helped this aristocratic Anglo-Irish group to establish a one hundred year ascendancy and he brought Ireland firmly within the Yorkist party.

The cross currents of dynastic hopes and political events which marked the course of English history during the fifteenth century made Ireland a refuge for the embattled Duke Richard of York. Although attainted in England, he was welcome as if sovereign in Ireland. The English colony in Ireland asserted a legislative
independence from England in 1460, while acknowledging its personal link to the crown, declaring:\(^{53}\)

The land of Ireland is, and at all times hath been corporate of itself by the ancient laws and customs used in the same, freed of the burden of any special law of the realm of England, save only such laws as by the lords spiritual and temporal and the commons of the said land had been in great council or Parliament; there held admitted, accepted, affirmed and proclaimed.

As well as a refuge for the Yorkist duke, Ireland was used as a staging area from which attacks were made on England. In one of these in 1460, Richard of York captured King Henry VI at the battle of Northampton and received from him royal approval of Richard's claim of succession to the throne. During that same year, however, Richard was killed at the battle of Wakefield on December 30th and was succeeded by his son, who became King Edward IV in 1461. Aside from the merger of Duke Richard's vast Irish holdings into the English crown, the Anglo-Irish-English duke's lasting achievement was to give Ireland the legal opportunity and public forum to declare its rights to determine its own laws at home in Ireland. During the next twenty-four years of Yorkist rule in England, Edward IV and then his brother Richard III virtually abandoned Ireland, entrusting it to the

\(^{53}\) Curtis, pp. 139-140.
three great Anglo-Irish Earls of Ormond, Desmond and Kildare.

These powerful lords had been friends of their father, Richard of York, and now were the trusted advisors of their brother George, the Duke of Clarence, who held the nominal office of Lieutenant in Ireland. These earls personally ignored the Statutes of Kilkenny and even maintained their own armies. As the Pale shrank, their power grew. Norman and Celtic aristocracy were now a blend, and they were the lords of Ireland. In 1468, however, Edward IV, whose reign was one of constant intrigue, sought to restore English rule in Ireland and arranged to have Desmond executed for supposed treason and Kildare attainted. Kildare secured a pardon, but the judicial murder of Desmond was strong warning to the home-rule aristocracy that the Statutes of Kilkenny were still in force. Unexpected and unnecessarily severe, this surprising attack on the Anglo-Irish lords of Ireland by a supposedly friendly King of England was as ill-timed as it was ill-considered, and the devious young King was forced to flee to the Continent.

After a year's absence, during which these same lords of Ireland regained control of Ireland, Edward IV returned to England in 1471 to find the Earl of Kildare
in personal control of Ireland. He served as Deputy to the Lord Lieutenant under an Irish statute of 1468 which declared: "English statutes, to be valid in Ireland, must be ratified by an Irish Parliament." The Earls of Kildare were the real rulers of all Ireland until 1534, a period of more than sixty years that bridged the transition from Yorkist to Tudor rule and from Catholic uniformity throughout the British Isles to England's breach with Rome. The political differences between Ireland and England which had given rise to the Irish demand for self-government had already divided the Irish and the Anglo-Irish from the English in matters of secular government and caused serious rifts with bitter memories.

Irish self-government was a political goal which had its origin within the Patriot Party of the new landed class of "English in Ireland" people. These were people who objected to English discrimination against them in favor of "English by birth" as violation of their Magna Carta rights. The drive to achieve self-government began in about 1331 and had gathered strength during the time of England's troubles in the Hundred Years War and the Wars of Roses. It was defiantly declared as Irish policy.

---

54 Curtis, pp.146.
by Duke Richard of York in 1460 and was brought to its first high point under the Kildare supremacy from 1477 to 1540, which witnessed the final Yorkist defeat in 1485 and then the early Tudor efforts to establish a firm hold on the English throne. The new king of England was Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond and a leader of the Lancastrian partisans. He had defeated the hopes of the Yorkist partisans with his victory at Bosworth Field. He was now King Henry VII of England and Lord of Ireland, but Ireland was a Yorkist place.

On the eve of the Tudor conquest, the three hundred year English occupation of Ireland had produced no more than a nominal lordship over Ireland. Its accomplishments were few, and Celtic Ireland remained about the way it had been at the time of the Anglo-Norman invasion. Irish Catholicism underwent some initial reform late in the twelfth century according to Papal instructions implemented by Henry II, and Irish monasticism lost some of its old initiative, but the English conquest was not complete, thus leaving all but the Pale free of Roman Catholic orthodoxy. During the thirteenth century, there was a revival of religious fervor with the arrival of the mendicants, but the economic and social turmoil of the plague years during
the following century distracted the people and damaged their monasteries.\textsuperscript{55} The language of Ireland remained Gaelic, but with the introduction and expansion of towns there arose a linguistic diversity between the urban Anglo-Normans and the rural Irish. Some new words were adopted by the Celts from the French speaking newcomers and some old terms were altered. Gaelic, however, remained the language of the people as was dramatically emphasized in 1366 by the Statutes of Kilkenny's proscription of its use by Englishmen in the Pale and other "friendly" areas. Despite this effort to restrain the English use of the Irish language, Gaelic was dominant at the end of the fifteenth century in communities which previously had been or were expected to be mostly English speaking.\textsuperscript{56} The Brehon law remained in force except within the Pale where English control was confined to a narrow eastern coastal strip with Dublin as its center. Celtic society outside the Pale remained as it had been because there were not enough Englishmen to conquer it, and those Englishmen who had ventured outside the Pale were soon absorbed and became indistinguishable


\textsuperscript{56} O'Murchu, p. 23.
from the native Irishmen who lived there. The Pale belonged to the English—an area small enough to protect with a ditch which the English ordered to be dug around it in 1494 to protect against cattle raids. All the rest was Irish.
CHAPTER 4
CONQUEST, COLONIZATION AND RECONQUEST
(1485 TO 1714)

For about ten years after Henry Tudor became King of England, even though he married Yorkist Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth as a gesture of goodwill to heal old rivalries, Ireland was a nest of conspiracy for Yorkist insurgency. First, in early 1487, there was the imposter Lambert Simmel, who posed as the Earl of Warwick's heir and was crowned Edward VI in Dublin and supported by an army of German mercenaries. He and his army invaded England where they were defeated in Lincolnshire. He was exposed as a fraud, but for almost a year, the Irish Patriot Party even had its own king of England. A second such imposter, Perkin Warbeck, appeared in 1491 with the support of most of Ireland's Anglo-Irish population, the German Emperor Maximillian and the kings of France and Scotland, claiming to be King Edward's son Richard who had been imprisoned as a young boy and was presumed dead. The continuing threat of such spurious claims upon the uneasy Tudor throne finally caused Henry VII to put a halt to the Patriot Party's self-government movement. In 1494, he sent Sir Edward Poynings to Ireland as Viceroy,
with instructions to crush the movement and to restore
English authority. His purpose was to make sure that no
Irish Parliament would ever again be used to thwart
English interests.

After attainting the Earl of Kildare and sending
him to the Tower of London, Poynings secured legislation
in the Irish Parliament which made all English statutes
applicable to Ireland and provided that the Irish
Parliament would meet only when and if authorized to do
so by the King of England after English approval of bills
to be introduced. This deprived the Irish Parliament of
any initiative, rendering it useless. Having subjected
Irish legislative power to prior English approval,
Poynings proceeded to restore England's exclusive power
to make political appointments and forbade any military
organizations except for the king's purposes and declared
it treason to oppose the king's orders. In a more
specific way, the proceedings of the Irish Parliament of
1460, declaring Ireland's right to self-government, were
annulled. All English royal writs were declared sacred
as they were in England.

Thus ended Ireland's first experiment in home rule.
Poynings' Law of 1494 provided the constitutional
limitations for Irish legislation until its repeal in
1783. After reducing the Irish legislature to obedience to England, Poynings turned his attention to the protection of the Pale by ordering that a double ditch be dug around its four counties to protect against cattle raids. He also ordered that all English subjects in Ireland must be available for military service whenever requested by the king. Poynings left Ireland in January of 1496 after thirteen months on the island, but the self-government movement was soon resumed under the House of Kildare. The "degenerate" English resumed their customary ways, and more English-speaking people learned to speak Irish. This repetition of the hated Statutes of Kilkenny was as futile as the prior one and had been to reconcile nationalist differences. Once again, an unsympathetic, high-handed and arbitrary mandate from an absentee government aggravated discord within the troubled population of Ireland. The Pale reacted with special confidence to its official recognition and prerogatives. Poynings' Law, while reminiscent of Kilkenny, is a forecast of the 1800 Act of Union in its purpose—to subordinate the legislative powers of Ireland to English rule and thus link their steps and destinies. It sought to bring Irish hopes of self-government to an end, but it failed in this purpose. In
this failure, King Henry VII recognized the strength of the House of Kildare in Ireland and restored the Earl of Kildare to power in about 1500 as his own deputy. He even gave Kildare his own cousin Elizabeth as a new wife. Henceforth, successive Earls of Kildare ruled Ireland at will, with a bridled Irish Parliament but a liberated Anglo-Irish class in control.

A new age had arrived with the Tudor ascendancy. A new and powerful monarchy had taken hold in England, and with the end of medieval isolation, Ireland was seen as a potential center of intrigue or even aggression against England. This became increasingly apparent during the reign of Henry VIII when the secular political rift was complicated by England's growing tension with Rome and its allies. As the Pale grew increasingly Irish, Kildare's opponents in Ireland sought greater English presence in that endangered enclave, complaining more about "the old English Irelandized" than the Irish themselves, whom they now called industrious, law abiding people. Rejecting their recommendations of conquest and plantation of English loyalists, Henry VIII allowed Kildare power to continue, although greatly reduced by

---

57 Curtis, p. 160.
the presence of political opponents including the family of Anne Boleyn, who already was the king's favorite.

In 1537, however, the semi-royal House of Kildare fell with the capture and delayed execution of Thomas Fitzgerald, the tenth Earl of Kildare, who is best known in Irish history as "Silken Thomas." In 1534 Thomas had ignited a brief but violent uprising when he learned of his father's treacherous imprisonment in London. He was thereupon promptly excommunicated by Henry VIII's newly appointed Archbishop of Dublin, and then the Archbishop was murdered for the punishment he had imposed upon the fiery young earl. Within short order, the Irish leaders in the Pale as well as the native parts of Ireland were drawn into a coalition in support of the last member of the Fitzgerald family, who was a boy of just twelve years of age. Irish friends protected the Fitzgerald cause until about 1540, thus providing a measure of credibility to the fear of Spanish military intervention during and after Henry's prolonged divorce proceedings with Catherine of Aragon. This confusing episode, stemming from the fact of Henry's reported excommunication, merely emphasized the truth that most native Irish and Anglo-Irish leaders still regarded Ireland to be a Papal fiefdom of the English crown by virtue of Pope Adrian's
order of 1155.\textsuperscript{58} England's authority in Ireland had never been secure even as a Papal overlordship, but upon King Henry's reported excommunication in 1533 and the English Parliament's rejection of papal supremacy in 1534, English authority in Ireland could depend only on its own secular powers to police the island.

Despite the Catholic solidarity of Ireland, the fall of Kildare so increased England's strength in the Pale that it could put its new church and newly centralized civil government into place in Ireland. The Butler family, a longtime rival of the Kildare dynasty, was given control over vast tracts of southern land, within which it would oppose the "usurped jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome" and an English prelate became Bishop of Dublin in 1536 without Papal sanction. In 1537 Thomas Cromwell's new religious program was proposed to a Reformation Parliament at Dublin. Numerous secular measures strongly reminiscent of the Statutes of Kilkenny and Poyning's Law were adopted, and extensive stretches of land held by absentee English lords were forfeited to the crown for royal disposal. The religious program itself, however, was stubbornly opposed by Anglo-Irish

leaders, Irish bishops and clergy among the common people of Ireland. Unlike the Reformation in England, where widespread disillusionment with the clergy, growing interest in the new Protestant literature emanating from the Continent and the English government's grave concern over King Henry's own problem of orderly succession provided a strong political foundation for Parliamentary church reform, the Reformation in Ireland was a matter of sheer force. It was imposed through coercion upon an unwilling, unsympathetic but defenseless people.

The dissolution of about four hundred Christian monasteries and abbeys, the expropriation of church property for royal political purposes and the substitution of the English king for the Catholic Pope were the visible signs of the Reformation in Ireland. The Act of Supremacy, transferring spiritual sovereignty from the Pope to a secular prince, was seen as a radical new doctrine imposed by an opportunistic English king upon an orthodox Christian Ireland. There were virtually no Irish or Anglo-Irish people of any sort who had a substantive quarrel with the Church of Rome. No change was made in the Latin worship service during Henry VIII's reign, and English officials in Ireland had little power to alter religious practices except within the Pale. To
the vast majority of people in Ireland, the Reformation meant merely the destruction of Irish abbeys and the trashing of ancient relics, time-honored centers of learning, art and religion—the principal sources of pride to a small country which had no large urban centers or other places of cultural identity. There also was the burning of precious relics at public displays ordered by Thomas Cromwell and his unsanctioned Bishop of Dublin—gratuitous insults that soon were to ignite a Celtic reaction.59

The brief outburst of Kildare fury in 1534 and the three ensuing years of futile struggle that ended in the mass execution of the Kildare family generated an anti-Tudor union of Irish and Anglo-Irish leaders with pro-Papal sympathies. Even as early as 1534, there were rumors of an impending invasion of Ireland by King Charles V of Spain to assist the Fitzgerald family of Kildare, and by 1539 the "Geraldine Confederacy" was strong. Its purpose was to restore the House of Kildare to power under Silken Thomas's younger half-brother Gerald Fitzgerald. The intended uprising of the confederation, however, was betrayed by one of young Kildare's servants and members of the pro-Tudor Butler

59 Curtis, p. 166.
family, who thereby caused the unexpected downfall of King Henry's Irish deputy, Lord Leonard Gray, who was suspected of pro-Kildare sympathies. Gray was a brilliant military commander and able civil servant, but he also was the uncle of the Kildare heir at a time when the Tudor effort to establish strong monarchial control under English viceroys could not afford the risks of family or religious distraction. The Geraldine Confederacy never constituted a military threat to England, but it did reach the point where O'Neill, Lord of Ulster, was to be crowned King of Ireland at Tara. O'Neill, however, was defeated in battle in 1539 as he attempted to invade the Pale. When the young Fitzgerald was sent off for safety in Florence in 1541, the conspiracy fell apart. Lord Gray was recalled, charged with treason and executed. This left Ireland in the grip of Thomas Cromwell's increasingly efficient bureaucracy in London where a newly reorganized Court of Star Chamber was displaying its fact-finding skills.60

King Henry VIII had inherited the title Lord of Ireland, but in 1541 a Parliament was convened in Dublin at which he took the title of King of Ireland on the

advice of his advisers that the Irish had the foolish opinion that the Bishop of Rome was the King of Ireland. At this Parliament, where the assembled lords of Ireland required a translator to understand the proclamation made in English, the kingdom of Ireland came into being for the first time since Brian Boru proclaimed himself monarch over the Celtic people in the year 1002. This new kingdom lasted until 1800, when Ireland was united with and became a part of England. As established in 1541, Ireland was another kingdom of the king of England personally. 61

Henry VIII's six-year reign as King of Ireland from 1541 until his death in 1547 was an exercise in strong, personal but absentee monarchial rule under English viceroys. The Irish nobility made this possible by their acquiescence which Henry purchased through grants of lands and English titles. He failed, however, to grasp the chance to convert this Irish willingness into Irish goodwill and in the process increased the Irish distrust of him. He had learned to rely upon his closest advisors only. Henry had personally restored the Anglo-Irish House of Kildare and then found it necessary to liquidate it. He had witnessed the rise and fall of the rebellious

61 Curtis, p. 169.
Geraldine Confederation and had felt the sting of duplicity in the conduct of his personal representative Anglo-Irish Lord Gray. As King of Ireland, he now thought it necessary to rule through Englishmen only. At the same time that he concentrated Irish power in English hands, however, he was careful to satisfy the ambitions of Irish nobles by granting lands and titles to a large number of them. Even some lesser Irish families who were positioned to molest the Pale were honored in return for their acceptance of Henry and their renunciation of Papal supremacy.

Most of the prominent Irish leaders and some of the "degenerate" English took English titles, agreeing to hold their rights for so long as they obeyed King Henry. Three old feudal English earldoms were bestowed upon Gaelic kings: O'Neill became Earl of Tyrone; O'Donnell, Earl of Tyrconnell; and O'Brien, Earl of Thormond. Henry's exclusive use of English-born members of his London bureaucracy in positions of high Irish power was, therefore, not only a constant threat to the Anglo-Irish leaders of the English Pale, but also a disparaging neglect of his new Irish nobility whose loyalty could have been used to form a strong political union.
Henry imposed English reforms on the Irish church. He made his royal will supreme through English deputies, asserted the use of the English language and the observance of other English customs over Irish, and was content to accept the mere formal pledge of Irish loyalty in return for the new nobility's continued tenure of their lands. Of the new earldoms created, many had only a questionable right to surrender anything they held. Others, such as the O'Neill family of Tyrone, however, were different. Tudor rulers continued to think that Irish loyalty could be won by educating the young Irish noblemen at the English court. During Henry's reign as king of Ireland, revenues collected in Ireland did not pay for its administration. Until his death in 1547, however, Irish lords were satisfied to enjoy their privileges, observe Irish laws and customs and ignore what the English deputies tried to impose upon other Irishmen.

This condition continued during the six-year reign of Henry's son, Edward VI (1547-1553) before the restoration of more conventional Roman Catholic traditions and alliances began under Henry's older daughter Mary. During Edward's reign, however, the hostile Irish reaction to the English church's breach
with Rome gained enough strength to cause Ireland's English officials to seek the presence of a larger colony of loyal English people in Ireland. In 1548, two midland areas in Leix and Offaly counties, close to the Pale, were confiscated for future plantation purposes and were populated in 1553, shortly after Mary Tudor became queen.62

In addition to threatening further distortion of the religious, legal and ethnic differences which formed a destabilizing racial barrier between the English and Irish peoples, the prospect of Catholic Mary Tudor's ascension to the English throne introduced the disturbing risk of international complications. Mary was the only child of the Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon, her father's first wife. Catherine was the aunt of King Charles I of Spain, who was also Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500-1558), and she remained a devout Roman Catholic until her death in seclusion in 1536. Despite the many efforts of her half brother Edward VI's ministers to persuade her to abandon her mother's church, Mary retained both her deep Catholic convictions and her personal popularity in England, thereby threatening her

62 Curtis, pp. 174, 176-177.
boy-king brother's ardently Protestant circle of advisors.

Mary's strength in the face of insult and danger as she was about to ascend the English throne reinforced her reputation for Tudor courage, but she lacked her family's customary charm:63

For Mary, politics were an aspect of religion and morality. Principle came first, and she could see no virtue in compromise. The simplicity of her approach, combined with her natural stubbornness, explains why this kindly, well intentioned woman became a symbol of intolerance and cruelty.

The restoration of Roman Catholicism in the British Isles was initially peaceful. As anticipated, the new queen of England and Ireland began a process of rescinding some of the changes made by her father and brother. In neither England nor Ireland, however, did she relinquish the right of Supremacy or restore the lands and other properties taken from the church. Comparatively uneventful replacement of Protestant bishops by Catholic bishops took place in both England and Ireland through use of her supremacy powers, but further progress would require the stronger authority of public acceptance.

---

This came easily in Ireland where popular approval of Protestant ways had been limited to the Pale. The seemingly unreasonable brutality toward recalcitrant Protestants that gave Mary the name "Bloody Mary" in England was not to be found in Ireland. In this overwhelmingly Catholic place, she merely used her father's powers to permit the Irish church to resume most of its old ways. Although Mary retained the English right to nominate Irish bishops, she did not exercise this prerogative after reconciliation with the Pope. In June of 1555, Pope Pius IV recognized Ireland as a kingdom and Mary as its queen. Thereupon, Mary instructed her viceroy in Ireland to restore the entire Roman Catholic ecclesiastical system. Old lands and titles were returned to the heirs of old Anglo-Irish families, and in 1557 all Ireland was absolved from heresy by Papal Bull. Thus it was that Ireland learned that Protestantism was reversible, its first lesson in the politics of religion.\textsuperscript{64} Also, as Ireland regained Papal recognition, it became the object of Catholic missionaries, intent upon its Catholic reconstruction. The revitalized Catholic church in Ireland was fostering a national sentiment with loyalty to the Pope, indicating

\textsuperscript{64} MacCurtain, p. 66.
for Ireland an association of national identity with the popular religion of the land.

In England, however, there was a different reaction to Queen Mary's effort to restore her form of Catholicism. The eventual result was to bring England and Ireland into armed conflict again. Instead of attracting immigrant missionaries to strengthen the country, England experienced the loss of almost a thousand voluntary exiles, who sought to preserve English Protestantism in the safety of continental Europe. The restoration of Catholic doctrine and alliances came close to being complete through Parliament's enactment of two Statutes of Repeal by which Protestant liturgical change and sacramental practices were abolished and all statutes against Papal authority except royal supremacy and in support of the sale of monastic properties were rescinded. Heresy laws were revived and abused as an aid to enforcing public acceptance of the restored faith. Queen Mary's desire for personal gratification as a Catholic queen was briefly but tragically satisfied by marriage to her first cousin Philip, the son of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who would become Philip II of Spain. This unfortunate alliance not only precipitated a rebellion intended to prevent the marriage but also
involved England in an ill-fated Spanish war with France
that cost England its last European stronghold at Calais
in 1558. Mary and her church were stained in England
with a reputation for excessive religious persecution,
foreign domination by Spain and humiliating military
defeat in France. Her marriage was a personal failure.
Her husband cared nothing for her, and she died without a
child of her own to continue her Catholic program. The
real tragedy of her five-year reign, which included Sir
Thomas Wyatt's month-long rebellion of thousands of
protestors against her foreign marriage, the execution of
her cousin, Lady Jane Grey and the imprisonment of her
half sister, Princess Elizabeth may be summarized in J.
E. Neale's statement: "To be mere English and to be
Protestant began to seem to be one and the same thing."65

By the end of Mary's short reign in 1558, it was
becoming clear that Henry VIII's policy of governing
Ireland in absentia through English viceroys was failing.
The old Celtic traditions and Brehon laws retained
widespread influence over the native Irish people and all
those who had intermarried and become part of them.
Native customs were kept alive by poets and bards who

65 Neale, J.E., Queen Elizabeth (London, Jonathan
Cape, Ltd., 1934), p. 41.
told of the pride and warlike spirit of departed heros, while thousands of mercenary soldiers were kept by local chieftains to preserve this independence.

In conflict with this long established native attitude was the "surrender and regrant" program by which Henry VIII had recruited some of the Irish nobility to serve as a willing buffer between his English deputies and the people of Ireland. Being indebted to Henry for their personal privileges so long as they served him well, these Irish nobles were expected to be willing and able to control not only the people of Ireland but also their own ambitions for power. The problem was that these Irish nobles and their several levels of subordinates were, by virtue of their own Brehon law and culture, incapable of understanding the meaning of English feudal law. People who lived according to Brehon law and society could not understand how Henry or any other king, English or otherwise, could own all the land and have the right to remove its inhabitants at will. The Tudor government had already subordinated Irish language and customs to English and converted Irish rights to English dependency. This so conflicted with their ancient Celtic traditions that the newly created Irish nobles enjoyed little credibility among the Irish
and therefore were of little use to the English. The legal status of the Irish lords made them so vulnerable to the personal whims of the English monarchy that the existence of all subordinate Irish landowners was threatened. In Irish law:

It was the people who gave the land to the chief, while in the feudal state the chief gave the land to the people. The imposition of a great local tyrant, called an Earl or Baron, deriving his title and authority from an English king and intended to serve him, was resisted by an overwhelming mass of opinion.

Even before 1367, when the first of two Absentee Statutes was enacted in hope of persuading English landlords to shoulder the burden of responsible land ownership, English officials in Ireland had recognized the need for more reliable and loyal Englishmen in Ireland. There was a constant shortage of such people to help legitimize English rule and stabilize the unsettled country. On several occasions before the reign of the Tudors, efforts had been made to increase the English population of the Pale to offset the growing "Irelandizing" of the English people there. Henry VIII had been urged to establish strategic plantations of English loyalists in Ireland. He had refused and,

66 Curtis, p. 179.
instead, relied upon the less expensive method of recruiting willing Irish surrogates to provide security and stability whenever necessary.

Subsequently, however, with the declining effectiveness of Henry's "surrender and regrant" program that depended upon the acquiescence of privileged Irishmen rather than the reliability of loyal Englishmen, an initial plan was developed for the plantation of Englishmen in parts of midland Leix and Offaly. This was frontier land, bordering upon the Pale, dangerous area that resisted military control and served as lairs for intruders upon the Pale. The purpose of this first English plantation in Ireland was pacification. Religion was not a consideration.

The plan was to divide the area into shires like those of England, with townships, manors, churches and other reminders of England. In 1553, the designated areas of Leix and Offaly, now renamed Queens County and King's County, were opened for plantation under Queen Mary. The native landowners were allowed to keep only the western one-third of their land and the balance was sold in small parcels to Englishmen to hold under English law, using English tenants only. The new owners were to pay an annual tithe to the Crown, and they agreed to
provide military service. This experiment suffered from two basic faults which contributed greatly to its failure. There was a need to subjugate or to expel stubborn Irish natives, and there was a chronic shortage of suitable English settlers. The treatment of the native Irish people in this new form of society was so unjust that whole Irish families revolted, causing necessary revisions of the original agreement and, more importantly, producing a Celtic wrath so bitter that it erupted under Elizabeth's stringent rule into forty years of warfare.67

The plantations of Ireland were creatures of distorted English law. Under English law, the forfeiture of estates was readily available upon a judicial finding of treason, for which a verdict was not difficult to obtain from jurors who could legally be intimidated or severely punished for not granting the royal prosecutor's request. Thus, any feudal estate in the land was vulnerable if the Crown wanted to take it. Attainder and confiscation would soon follow a finding of treason despite a lack of evidence. In England, this procedure was used to confiscate individual or small areas, but in Ireland it was common practice for more than a hundred

67 Curtis, pp. 176-177.
years to confiscate entire areas or counties after their native owners had been attainted collectively as a group.

It was a potentially dangerous situation that Elizabeth inherited with the throne in 1558. Within a period of less than twelve years since the death of her father, Henry VIII, excesses caused by the shifting fortunes of state religions, the Reformation and Counter Reformation, and disastrous foreign entanglements had further weakened England's uncertain control of Ireland. This instability provided an opening for Elizabeth's personal enemies and the foes of the Protestant Reformation to menace the young queen and required England to defend its position in Ireland. Ireland had never been fully conquered. Even in England the Tudor reign was short of money, divided by religion, weakened by internal intrigue and faced by a hostile Spain and its allies. For lack of sufficient funds to finance a proper military force in Ireland, Henry VIII and Edward VI had relied upon a "surrender and regrant" program but with poor results. Elizabeth now found it necessary to keep an army in Ireland to engage in international hostilities for almost forty years. She was motivated in this effort by a determination to keep her authority in that land but mostly in order to prevent Ireland from being used by
Spain or its allies as a base for attack upon England itself. Memories of Richard of York, Lambert Simmel and Perkin Warbeck may still have been fresh.

In this costly and destructive effort to complete the conquest of Ireland, which had eluded England since the year 1172, it was necessary to defeat and subdue the great Celtic leaders. This new English policy of military conquest followed by confiscation and colonization of Irish lands was pursued with an unfamiliar aggressiveness, which the English justified on grounds of Irish cultural and religious inferiority. Its effect was to cause the Old English to see themselves as being more Irish than English and to resist further English intrusion. They also saw English success as being of greater benefit to the newly arrived English administrators and soldiers than to themselves. Most of the Anglo-Irish were Catholics who, although willing to acknowledge the Queen's supremacy, could find no particular fault with the Pope. The Old English were considered Gaelicized by the English who began to consider them disloyal subjects, poisoned by the Irish, whose lives and property were free for the taking like anything else in Ireland. In joint response to the English aggression, Gaelic leaders and Old English
lawyers developed a new sort of comprehensive Irish national attitude that continued to grow despite the eventual collapse of Gaelic Ireland in 1603.\textsuperscript{68}

From about 1560 until 1603, there were four major Celtic and Old English revolts which required an English army to crush. The first of these erupted in Ulster under Irish Shane O'Neill, the second and third were led by the Anglo-Irish Earl of Desmond in Munster, and the fourth spread throughout the island under the leadership of the two Ulster earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell. The final native Irish revolt ended in 1603 with the surrender of all remaining Irish forces, concluding a period of about thirty-five years of hostilities between Ireland and England. Each of the four revolts involved Irish hope for foreign intervention and English fear of Spanish influence in Ireland.

The union of Celtic and Old English forces on a common religious basis increased Elizabeth's determination to continue the frustrating and costly wars in Ireland because she and her advisors were convinced that being Catholic and supporting Spanish influence in Ireland amounted to the same threat to England. Spanish troops, however, landed in Ireland only twice. In 1579

\textsuperscript{68} Miller, p. 18.
during the Munster rebellion, an army of seven hundred Spaniards and Italians landed on the Dingle Peninsula on the southwestern coast, where they were promptly defeated but not without further confusing Irish motives with Papal ambitions. The invading forces had been financed jointly by Philip II of Spain and Pope Gregory XIII, who also gave the Irish rebels temporal jurisdiction over the city of Limerick. More importantly, the Pope granted plenary indulgence to all people who took up arms against Elizabeth, thereby converting the struggle to a religious crusade and confusing religion with the rebellion's largely economic cause. The papal effort to encourage the Irish merely strengthened English resolve to defeat them. The invaders were massacred. 

The only other Spanish invasion came in 1601 at Kinsale on the southern shore near Cork where four thousand Spaniards arrived too late to be helpful. 

Judging by the strength and deployment of these Spanish reinforcements, Spain must have shared England's disdain for the Irish people and their native aspirations. The King of Spain at the time of the Dingle landing was Philip II (1527-1598), the late Queen Mary's extremely

---

69 MacCurtain, pp. 78-79.
70 MacCurtain, pp. 85-86; Curtis, pp. 216-218.
unpopular husband and titular King of England from 1554 to 1558, whose principal interest in Ireland was to menace England. The Spanish troops which invaded Ireland at Kinsale in 1601 were dispatched by his son, Philip III, whose preoccupation with court festivities left little time for other matters. These futile intrusions within England's sphere of influence, however, did much to confirm England's fear of Ireland as a place of foreign intrigue and possible invasion. Therefore, English control of Ireland was a national necessity, and this control could not be entrusted to the Anglo-Irish. The prolonged rebellion in Munster had shown the native Irish and the Anglo-Irish to be partners in Catholicism, and this limited the usefulness of all Irish Catholics. Elizabeth required an orderly government in Ireland with her as the monarch, but all Catholics appeared to her to be in league with England's enemies.

Shortly after Elizabeth took the throne, she let it be known that the English monarch was the head of both church and state in Ireland as well as in England, and that conformity with English laws and edicts regarding both temporal and spiritual matters was the duty of all loyal citizens. At a Parliament at Dublin in 1560 where the Elizabethan settlement was established by law,
including the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity with fines to punish non-conformity, there were few supporters. It was clear that the Old English were as Catholic as the Irish.  

For the first time in history, a common resentment against the new Establishment and the official policy on religion began to unite the two races, Gaelic and Old English, who were to become the Irish nation.

For at least ten years after the Reformation Parliament of 1560, the English treatment of the Irish Catholic Church was more negative than outwardly hostile. Irish cathedrals were converted to Protestant services, and although both schismatic and heretical the Anglican Church in Ireland was tolerated by Rome as a political necessity. Not until 1570, when Pope Pius V, who cared little for secular rulers, summarily excommunicated Queen Elizabeth without power to give meaning to his judgment, did Rome release the Catholic population of Ireland from the duty of obedience to the English crown. Although the English government was careful to proceed slowly with its program to establish a Protestant state religion in Ireland, Jesuit missionaries and Papal emissaries preached orthodox Catholicism. The religious atmosphere became charged. Ireland gradually became a microcosm of

71 Curtis, p. 184.
the Reformation-Counter Reformation struggle which had
ensnared the Continent. The religious conflict in
Ireland soon became embittered by Irish reaction to
methods used by England to resettle confiscated Irish
lands in Munster.

Following the attainder of the Anglo Irish Earl of
Desmond, who had led the Munster revolt in 1583, a large
portion of his lands in that southern region had been
confiscated and sold to encourage English residence in
the area. Fraud and trickery in the administration of
this project, however, were rampant, swindles were
common, and the Munster plantation was a failure. The
effort created new English landlords, among whom were
some of the Queen's favorites, but in the process it
further alienated the Old English as well as the Irish
landlords. 72 The land of Munster had been devastated by
war, and its plantation was intended as a way to
repopulate and to Anglicize the area, thus distinguishing
it from Mary's earlier Leix and Offaly plantations where
pacification was paramount. The new settlers in Munster
were to be English but not necessarily Protestant. Sir
Walter Raleigh came to hold forty thousand acres, despite
the far smaller area any one person was authorized to

72 Curtis, p. 199-200.
own. It was this sort of abuse that helped to destroy the credibility of English colonization efforts. The land was measured and divided according to common knowledge taken as the testimony of local residents without benefit of reliable records or protection against coercion. William F. T. Butler claims that about two hundred thousand acres were confiscated in Munster, and that of approximately thirty undertakers (principal grantees) from England only thirteen actually came to live on their land. Also, a large percentage of the undertakers were Catholic. One major problem was doubt over the ownership of land to be confiscated because Brehon rules of ownership and descent conflicted with English law. Another problem was that the Catholic Old English in Ireland were smarting under the constant erosion of their political influence to the new English Protestants. The confiscation of large stretches of land in Munster was further evidence of their losing battle against the encroachment of Elizabeth's colonial project. As many as twenty-five thousand English "civil, loyal and dutiful subjects were required in Munster" to "live in the service of Almighty God", but only about fifteen

---

thousand English had come by 1598 when the plantation was destroyed in 1598 during the final Gaelic rebellion.  

At the time of Elizabeth's death in 1603, the confiscation and plantation of Irish land was confined to areas outside Ulster. In addition to the midland plantations in Leix and Offaly, there had been others scattered in parts of four of the six counties of Munster and a few elsewhere in the west and south. There were none in the area now known as Northern Ireland.

The ultimate surrender of all Irish forces six days after Elizabeth's death in 1603 brought her conquest of Ireland to a successful conclusion. An English army of twenty thousand soldiers had prevented the effective use of a Spanish army on Ireland's southern coast. The Spaniards were permitted to return to Spain, Hugh O'Neill and his Irish lords were allowed to keep their lands in return for pledges of loyalty to England, and Ireland entered upon a period of colonization. C.C. O'Brien looks upon this turning point in Irish history:

A pattern had now established itself that was to prove enduring: Catholic Ireland dominated by the superior force of Protestant England. Religion hardened, sharpened and


75 O'Brien, p. 61.
preserved national animosities. Among the Irish, a persecuted church fanned the resentment of a conquered people: The English were heretics, their power was illegitimate, rebellion against them was lawful, their enemies were the friends of Ireland and of the Faith.

Ireland's military collapse in 1603 soon opened the last Celtic stronghold on the island. Ulster, which had always been protected from invasion from the south by a barrier of hills, lakes, rivers and swamps was now conquered along with the rest of Ireland. Although the Ulster Earls O'Neill and O'Donnell were pardoned and their vast lands restored to them by the new English King James I, they were no longer great Celtic kings but just ruling English feudal lords. Preferring voluntary exile to the imposition of English law and customs upon them in their own Celtic land, they fled to the Continent in 1607, accompanied by almost a hundred other Irish lords, thus leaving all of Ulster to escheat to the English crown.

The voluntary departure of Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, and Rory O'Donnell, Earl of Tyrconnell, is known in Irish history as the "flight of the earls". More than a gesture of frustration with the loss of personal power, this voluntary exile is strong evidence of the depth of difference between the Celtic-Brehon and the English-
feudal societies. O'Neill was one of the young Irish noblemen whose loyalty the early Tudor monarchs sought to win through education and favorable treatment at the English court. He had lived in England during the 1560's and even served the English government in Ireland in the 1580's, but he never lost his Celtic zeal. In 1594, he led the last of the four Irish revolts against England and was successful until 1601 when he attempted to join his Irish army with the Spanish forces at Kinsale. Following his surrender and pardon in 1603, he found it personally offensive as a former Celtic king to exercise the necessary powers of an English Earl in his own traditional Irish homeland where communal Brehon law still survived and conflicted with his new feudal rights and duties. O'Neill understood what King Henry II did not—that Brehon and English law were mutually exclusive.

From the time Henry II first laid claim to Ireland in 1171 to the time of Elizabeth's final conquest of the island in 1603, Ireland was partially occupied but never fully controlled by England—more captive than subject. For four hundred and thirty-two years, considerably longer than the Roman occupation of England from 43 A.D. to 410 A.D., Ireland was a restless, troublesome and often rebellious object of English possessiveness.
Whether a papal fiefdom from 1171 to 1541 or a kingdom after that until 1800, Ireland was within England's domain but not responsive to England's government. During this long captivity, Irish creativity and learning, which had reached great heights at home and achieved distinction abroad before the English came, were either restrained by English edict or distracted by the need to preserve a national identity. Until about the end of the fifteenth century, when the Middle Ages gave way to the renaissance and the reign of the Tudors, England's occasional efforts to rule Ireland had been largely negative. Edward Turner provides a tolerant view of the times: 76

What England had accomplished in Ireland was mostly an evil thing. She had not really conquered it, but she had been able to retard its own development, keep its people from their heritage, whatever that might have been, and she had sowed evil seeds for the future. As one peers far back into this old time, he is oppressed with sadness more than with anger, for here was the result of circumstance, ignorance, and incapacity rather than malevolent intention.

The early Tudor years, like the prior centuries of desultory English activity, prevented Ireland from benefitting in the cultural expansion of the Renaissance

but introduced it to a bewildering display of religious political maneuvers. The Elizabethan wars, however, may be seen as a contradiction of her father's will. Margaret McCurtain writes: 77

Increasingly, the Elizabethan Irish wars have been interpreted by historians over the last twenty years in the context of two confronting civilizations: the one, a renaissance state, centralized and superior in terms of technology, articulate, literary, creative; the other, fragmented, backward anachronistically Celtic.

England managed to establish its own form of state Protestantism in Ireland, but only at the cost of estranging the population even further and converting the majority of Irishmen from uncooperative subjects to suspected traitors who deserved stern discipline. The ruthlessness which characterized the English military campaigns was seen by the English as a civilizing operation which was necessary in order to condition the Irish people to accept proper government.

By the end of the sixteenth century, there had developed a deep and mutual distrust between the Irish and English. The Irish felt that they had been abused by the English for the benefit of the English, who had given

---

no thought to providing for the welfare of the Irish. The Irish also were Catholics who were expected to accept England's new state religion, even though the Protestant Book of Common Prayer was written in English and distributed for their compulsory use in Ireland neither in Latin nor Irish translation which they could use. With the establishment of Trinity College at Dublin in 1592, Elizabeth approved the study of the Irish language there and ordered the Bible and a catechism to be published in the Irish language. This effort was halted when it was seen to be in conflict with the continuing English policy of preventing the use of Gaelic in English speaking areas. Here was an unexpected result of the Statutes of Kilkenny. 78 Never had the English taken into consideration the Irish systems of society and law when mandating Irish conformance with English regulations. In fairness, it must be conceded that the concept of government "with the consent of the governed" was still more than a century in the future, but Ireland's grievances were deep, and they grew more poignant as their last desperate rebellious efforts to retain Celtic identity met with defeat.

78 MacCurtain, Tudor and Stuart Ireland, p. 141.
England, for its part, had become more than callous toward the Irish. In addition to the fact that most Irishmen remained Catholic and therefore probably treasonous, centuries of abrasive relations between England and Ireland since 1170 had produced an English hostility toward Ireland and contempt for Irish civilization. Englishmen came to consider the Irish an inferior people. The Irish were seen as uncouth, savage, indolent and in need of English correction. Patrick O'Farrell suggests that English settlers developed their superior attitude toward the Irish as a means of justifying their own aggressiveness and firmly believed that the Irish were uncivilized pagans whose island constituted a threat to the safety of England. Any effort, therefore, by the Irish to resist English demands was proof of their barbarism and justified whatever harshness or brutality was required to suppress it. There was no need for the English to try to understand the Irish because the English were only trying to rescue the Irish from racial squalor and immorality.\(^{79}\) Nicholas Canny attributes the English use of aggressive brutality upon the Irish to a moral zeal to destroy what they

considered an uncivilized society which prevented the Irish people from becoming Christians. Thus in 1607, when victorious English officials faced the task of governing Ireland, the objects of their government appeared to be an inferior group of undisciplined, immoral and probably treasonous ruffians who occupied an island whose very existence was a threat to the safety of England.

Newly conquered Ireland's fate at the hands of war-weary and contemptuous England was further complicated by a division of official English opinion on both the method and the purpose of restoring order to the Celtic island. One theory was that Irish society should be forced to conform to English standards and that Ireland should be preserved as a haven of primitive simplicity and natural beauty. These thoughts were best expressed by the Elizabethan court poet Edmund Spenser and were supported by the courtier Sir Walter Raleigh both of whom were Protestant landowners in the Munster colony. The other theory, effectively promoted by Sir John Davies and Sir

---


Francis Bacon, was that English common law should be strictly enforced upon Ireland to the exclusion of all Brehon laws and customs so as to complete the conquest with the legal reconstruction of Ireland along English lines. Ireland could then join England and Scotland as part of a major European power.\footnote{MacCurtain, Roots, p. 377.} Both of these theories were advanced by Protestant newcomers to Ireland who attributed much of Ireland's problem to the failure of the Old Catholic Anglo-Irish population there to civilize the island.

Another view of the bitterness that befell early seventeenth century Ireland is presented by Nicholas Canny in his survey of the evolution of the Anglo-Irish people from an ethnically divided group into a distinct but ambivalent people. The faults which Spenser and other English-brown Elizabethans found with sixteenth century Ireland were carried by Davies and others into seventeenth century Ireland. The new English administrators and settlers blamed the old English residents of Ireland for their failure to civilize Ireland. The old English were Anglo-Irish Catholics, and the new Protestant English branded them as traitors to England who deserved punishment rather than honor. In
response to the old English plea for treatment as loyal subjects of England whose land should not be confiscated, the new English officials blamed them for being Catholic degenerates whose barbarity had prevented them from making Ireland the rich and bountiful land it could have been. Consequently, the new Protestant English conquerors were doing God's work by driving the old Catholic English from their lands and privileges.  

With no prior experience in governing any area outside England other than the two short-lived plantation experiments in Leix and Offaly and the colony in Munster, but quickened by the knowledge of Ireland's bitter resentment and its own danger from foreign invasion from that island, England chose to uproot the hostile native population of Ireland and replace Irishmen with English and Scottish Protestants. The abandoned area of Ulster, which promptly reverted to the English crown in 1607, the same year as the first English settlement of Jamestown in Virginia, provided ample room for easy colonization of the type long before recommended by Machiavelli for the security of conquered lands. In his prescription for

success in reconstructing conquered territory, this Renaissance tactician said:

Another good plan is to send colonies into one or two key places in the new province; indeed, it is necessary either to do this or maintain in such places large bodies of armed men. The prince will not spend much on colonies and can send them out and maintain them at little or no expense. With them, he injures only those whose fields and houses he takes away to give to the colonists, and these are a very small minority of his new state.

The dispossessed people in Ireland, however, constituted a majority, and their distress was a major problem for England. Another more humane and probably more likely reason for using colonies to civilize Ireland was the challenge of the new age of discovery to bring order to the remote areas of Europe as well as the lands across the seas. Just as England sought to civilize Virginia, it would civilize Ireland. The primitive areas of the New World were similar to the outer perimeter areas of Europe when it came to the need for civilizing as well as the anticipation of rewards to be won by successful planters of people.

The military victory of 1603, soon followed by the flight of the former Gaelic kings who were now mere

---

English Earls of Ulster, was the first step toward English dominion over Ireland. The next equally essential step was the political consolidation of the island by judicial means in order to permit a durable supremacy. The military victory enabled the English jurists and administrators to destroy the native forms of political organization as well as rules of land tenure and descent which were fundamental to Celtic society. The consolidation of Tudor conquests under the first Stuart King, James I, provided the foundation for the eighteenth century English ascendancy. Sir John Davies, lawyer-poet and attorney general in Ireland from 1603 to 1619, was the principal architect of Ireland's judicial reorganization. Realizing that military conquest alone could not provide an adequate basis for the economic and social exploitation of newly conquered Ireland, Davies used English common law to alter the framework and institutions of Irish society and to reduce the influence of the Anglo-Irish communities to less disproportionate and more governable levels. Law was used as an agency of colonialism, with the English army close at hand to maintain internal security.

Experience gained during and since the Renaissance with new and different groups of people had changed the
thinking of many Europeans in favor of an anthropological view of social development. Reliance upon the unchanging nature of people had given way to the evaluation of new groups as comparatively primitive or civilized. On such a scale, the English believed the native Irish to be inferior people, at a lower stage of social evolution than the English, who were thus absolved from all normal ethical restraints when dealing with Irish. With this justification for his actions, Davies used England's new position to dismiss Irish law as mere barbarian custom and to replace it with English law. With regard to title and tenure of land, he relied upon the theory that property rights come from the sovereign who alone can enforce them, and in Ireland therefore, from the English crown because former owners had fled into exile. In light of England's absolute title to all Irish lands by right of conquest, supplemented by the sovereign's right to confer title to individual estates, Davies constructed a legal theory of title which effectively erased any lingering Gaelic rights. Thus Brehon community land rights gave way to English common law emphasis upon individual rights in land, leaving Gaelic society bereft of one of its principal foundations. The Davies formula
for Ireland was to give English laws to a conquered people, thus making the conquest complete.  

Ulster, the final fortress of the Celtic world and the most Irish of the four provinces of Ireland, was to be the initial testing grounds for systematic English colonization of Ireland, just as it was later destined to become the flash point for English confiscation and resettlement of all Ireland. The first colonial efforts in Ulster came from Scotland rather than England. Ever since the days of the Irish missions to England prior to the rebuff of Celtic Christianity at Whitby in 664, there had been constant migrations of people from lowland Scotland across the narrow North Channel to the Ards Peninsula of Ulster's east coast. Scots had been coming there for centuries, intermarrying with the Irish and becoming indistinguishable from the Gaelic Irish.

In 1603, however, with the grant of lands in nearby Antrim and Down by James I to Scottish Protestants James Hamilton and Hugh Montgomery who made accommodations with the local Celtic chief, two small privately organized Scottish Protestant settlements were established. They were soon filled with Scottish Presbyterians who were

ethnically and linguistically different from the English and hostile to both Catholicism and the English establishment's Church of Ireland. These Scots were small farmers like their Irish hosts, and they were willing to have Irish tenants help work the farms. These colonies soon spread across adjacent areas to cover the entire northeast corner of Ireland, including the Belfast area.86 The Scottish community flourished despite its private nature because of the zeal of its people who came in large numbers from Scotland. By 1630, as many as four thousand families lived in the Antrim Down colony. They were to suffer seriously by mid-century but eventually received massive reinforcements from lowland Scotland, England, Wales and Huguenot France at the end of the seventeenth century. Bottigheimer suggests that the character of modern Ulster may be due more to the efforts of these early Scotsmen than to all the money sent from London to support the area.87

In 1603, after the pardon and restoration of all Irish survivors of the Elizabethan wars, serfdom was officially abolished, and all inhabitants of Ireland were for the first time admitted to the protection of English

86 Miller, pp. 19-20.
87 Bottigheimer. p. 23.
law with no distinction between English or Irish heritage. A royal commission was established in 1606 to review defective titles and to validate them where justified. The "flight of the earls" in 1607 halted this process by leaving most of Ulster's nine counties politically vacant. Two counties were already a Scottish area while a third, Monaghan, was a loyal Irish area, leaving only six to be considered. Five of these were found to be held in fee by five of the departed earls, and the sole remaining county presented such a confusing array of Brehon complications that Davies merely declared all titles void. Thus, all landlords holding property under the departed earls had nothing in their own right and were mere tenants at will, whose claims, like those clouded with Brehon custom, could be dismissed. All could be deprived of their land. 88

Almost two and a half million acres of good land from a total of about four million within the six-county area were confiscated. About one and a half million unprofitable acres were restored to the native Irish, large grants were made to the established church, royal schools and military posts. The rest was settled with a mixture of new settlers, old soldiers and old Irish, a

88 Butler, pp. 40-45.
complete rearrangement of property rights within the six-county area rather than only in the area of the new English settlers.

The shuffled residents of this planned community were classified as undertakers, who were English or Scottish and entitled to larger estates at low rent; servitors, who were government administrators or military men entitled to smaller estates at higher rent; or high ranking native Irish, who could hold small estates at high rent. The undertakers could have English or Scottish tenants only and were required to subscribe to the Oath of Supremacy. The servitors were not required to take the oath but could have Irish tenants if they were willing to pay increased rent. The native Irish were relieved of the oath and could use Irish tenants. The vast majority of the Irish people, regardless of past rights of tenancy, were deprived of any land rights and, at best, could be no more than tenants at will.89 Thus, the entire native Irish population of these six Ulster counties was to be concentrated on lands assigned to government administrators, soldiers and a few prominent Old Irish. A few more were allowed to be kept by

Protestant bishops. Lands granted to Londoners in the county of Coleraine, renamed Londonderry, were to be cleared of all Irish people to make it an exclusively English settlement. This segregation failed wherever attempted because the new landlords needed Irish labor, and many Irishmen were willing to pay higher rents as tenants.

A new feature of the Ulster Plantation was its close association with the merchants of the City of London, who helped to finance the project through the London Common Council. Earlier plantations had drawn their support from similar agricultural societies and interests in England, but Ulster's impetus came from people who dealt in trade and commerce even though none could be expected from distant and agricultural Ulster. The City claimed that it had been coerced into a major investment in Ulster to help a cash-starved English government, which already was in its debt for large loans to finance the repression of the fourth and last Irish rebellion. To protect its "Tyrone Rebellion" loan, the London Common Council took over financial obligations for managing the plantation in the county of Coleraine and tried in vain to reconcile its escalating costs with

90 Butler, pp. 46-47.
members' need for profits. The problem was that Parliament had imposed financial responsibility upon the most capable institution rather than the most willing one. The Council sought to minimize its losses, failed to plant its county with English Protestants and consequently lost its charter and was sentenced by Star Chamber in 1635 to pay a £70,000 fine. Plantations in the other five counties proceeded as planned, with the aid of six thousand resident English militiamen.  

The Ulster Plantation was a resettlement of a large area containing many sorts of law and people. C. C. O'Brien suggests that if the policy of its architects had been consistently followed in all parts of the plantation, the problems of insecurity and instability which England sought to solve might have been brought under control. But the plantation received only intermittent attention and very little help except in time of trouble. England was at peace for the first time in many years, and English officials in Ireland were instructed to avoid trouble with the Catholic hierarchy. Consequently, although the Catholic Church suffered from neglect and passive hostility, the Anglo-Irish throughout Ireland and the Old English in the Pale openly practiced
Catholicism. Ulster itself was not a truly Protestant area but one containing antagonistic Protestant and Catholic populations, the Protestants being the minority with the feeling of insecurity which caused them to demand stern treatment of the majority Catholic population. The native Irish, however, were depressed both economically and socially, and this made the English even more contemptuous of them.

There were two Irelands, one Catholic and Gaelic-speaking, and the other the Protestant settlers. The Ulster Plantation produced ironic results because instead of creating a loyal united Protestant population that would overcome Irish social traditions by weight of sheer numbers, it further divided an already-split population. Where there had been the Scots in Antrim and Down and the Irish elsewhere, there were now also the English. The Scots were Presbyterians who had no use for Catholicism but spoke a Gaelic dialect and, like the Irish, preferred rural living to any form of commercial urban life style. Except for religion the Scots were like the Irish. Both were of Celtic origin, there was some intermarriage, and both differed from the English. Gradually, there evolved separate Irish, Scottish and English communities. In

---
92 O'Brien, pp. 61-62.
Antrim and Down, the Scots were the dominant group, but elsewhere in Ulster the Irish Catholics remained the majority, living in the poor areas and resentful. The misery of the expelled Irishmen was further embittered toward the new English landlords because the English government had broken its king's word, given by his Deputy Chichester shortly after the "flight of the earls", that their land titles were good and not revocable.

In Leinster, there was a large area which had been settled by the Anglo-Norman invaders where the Irish nobles had submitted to Henry VIII and again to Elizabeth and James I and as recently as 1607 had been assured by the King's Deputy Chichester that their land titles were secure. In 1611, however, Sir John Davies summarily dismissed any claim of title in an Irishman of any sort based upon mere duration of occupancy. He also refused to recognize any title which had come by way of the Brehon rules of descent. Such descent was now unreasonable as a matter of law because it could not be reconciled with English common law. Thus it was that Old Irish and Anglo-Irish landlords, whose families had owned the land for as many as three or four hundred years, were

93 Miller, pp. 19-20.
94 Butler, p. 41.
declared mere squatters on their own ancestral estates. They were not expelled to make room for English tenants because Englishmen were few and the new landlords were allowed to retain Irish tenants at will on a yearly basis. A few Irish landlords were permitted to keep their land but could grant leases to Irish tenants for no longer than forty years. This confiscation and colony exasperated the Irish even more than if it had followed a rebellion like the earlier one in Munster because of the unscrupulous methods used by the English officials. There were vast tracts of land and only a few people to populate it. Other lands could have been taken. To confiscate the land in time of peace was worse than in time of war, especially from large numbers of small landlords while leaving some of the larger ones with at least part of theirs. By this seemingly needless and discriminatory conduct, the English caused Irish landlords everywhere to fear for their lands at any time and to despair of honest treatment from the English administrators who already enjoyed privileged status in the colonies.

95 Butler, pp. 56-58.
96 Butler, pp. 73-76.
Connacht, the large western province of Ireland, was to have been colonized, but growing discontent with Charles I's authoritarian style of government prevented its finalization. Connacht had a Celtic and Old English population which had been historically loyal to England. Land titles in Connacht had been reconfirmed by Henry VIII and also by an agreement known as the Composition of Connacht in 1585, when every landowner in the area, regardless of rank, had been given legal title to his land in his own name by the Crown. This crown title was not based on any surrender by the Irishmen but upon known facts. Further, there was no element of conflicting Brehon law involved. There appeared to be no flaws in the titles or irregularities to invalidate the Composition. Early in 1634, however, the English declared that the Composition was only an arrangement regarding revenue and not a grant of legal titles. Despite what had been understood to be the clear meaning of the certificates held by the Connacht landowners, the area was declared forfeit to the Crown. This was old English land, and these people could now feel the heavy hand of confiscation for reason of some supposed defect in their ownership. The colonization did not take place, but it was attempted. The significance of the aborted
effort lay in the fear which it created. Regardless of the ancestry or loyalty of a landowner, and regardless of the basis or longevity of his title, no land could any longer be considered secure.\(^{97}\) Colonization was halted as the conflict between King Charles and his Parliament grew more threatening, and the King began to see more value in the nobles of Connacht as friends than as dispossessed landlords.

These early Stuart years were ones of relative religious tolerance as a matter of state policy. There was no lessening of the animosity between Protestants and Catholics, and the aggressive plantation policy helped maintain the ill feeling. Somehow, religion became identified as a desire to hold or to regain land—Protestant, if to hold—Catholic, if to get the land back.

Between the first plantations in Leix and Offaly and the last one in Connacht, the nature of the Irish plantations changed completely. The first colony was an outgrowth of rebellion and was confined to the confiscated property of the rebels, its purpose being to introduce a group of loyal people to maintain security. The Munster Plantation was similar except that its

\(^{97}\) Bottigheimer, p. 26.
purpose was to Anglicize and bring civilization to the area. The Ulster plantation was an overall plan to reorganize the population of a large area of confiscated property by introducing English and Scottish settlers and transplanting thousands of dispossessed Irishmen to lesser property with inferior status rather than leaving them landless. These were the differences, but there also were common aspects shared by all plantations in Ireland.

All the plantations emphasized Protestantism, the quality of being English, and a religious excuse for confiscating the Irish land. The plantations failed in this purpose, however, because the victims of the action were merely dispossessed and likely to remain on their property as resentful tenants. If they didn't lose their land, they became afraid that they would and soon became suspicious of English policy and the new English landlords. The new English came to be seen as potential instigators of future aggression and then as the vanguard of a group of Puritanical zealots in the English Parliament. The new English, now feeling alone and vastly outnumbered, openly sought more English aid and English settlements. This call for help from a privileged minority brings to mind the pleas for
colonization that Henry VIII received but rejected and the frightened appeal from the Pale which brought King Edward III's son, Lionel, to Ireland and resulted in the Statutes of Kilkenny in 1366.

It is in this context that the intrinsic and fatal flaw of the English colonization of Ireland may be seen. Whether through fear or perhaps greed, there had developed a drive for colonization that the English could not maintain and support. England just did not have enough suitable people who were willing to leave their homes and migrate to the Irish colonies. There were not enough Englishmen to displace the Irishmen. The Irish, therefore, stayed where they had always been. The plantations, however, undermined Irish land tenure, thereby causing rebellion which, in turn, justified further confiscation and plantations, which needed additional but unavailable English settlers. The enthusiasm in England was never sufficient, nor was the supply of necessary people in England great enough to prevent incomplete colonization. As a result, some of the new English settlers in Ireland were actually pleased with the bloody events of 1641, which increased the prospects of English military intervention to defend
their position. Soldiers could do what confiscation could never accomplish.98

When Charles I became king in 1625, Protestant England was in combat with Catholic Spain and other nations on the Continent in the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) thus emphasizing once again Ireland's geographic importance as a possible site for the invasion of England. Traditional ties between the native Irish population and Spain remained strong, rumors of plots were commonplace, and maintenance of an effective and trustworthy army in Ireland was important. Armies, however, cost money, and enough of it was not available. In search of funds for defense purposes, King Charles offered to grant concessions from his "royal grace and bounty" to those of his Anglo-Irish subjects, all of them Catholics, who were willing to pay for relief from some of their Catholic disabilities. In return for about £120,000, which he collected from this group, Charles promised to halt their payment of recusancy fees and to waive anti-Catholic tests for the inheritance of their estates as well as rules against holding public office and practicing law. These were special considerations granted to the Old English as a privileged class within a

98 Bottigheimer, p. 28.
Catholic population and had the side effect of making these select people feel important in Ireland as well as toward the English king. The English Parliament, however, declined to ratify these "graces", but King Charles kept the money he had collected. This denial added insult to injury, causing the Anglo Irish to turn even more against the new English of the Ulster and other plantations. They did not blame the English king, but they did find even greater reasons to hate his colonists, whose presence demeaned them.

The old Anglo-Irish had become a recognized group in their own right, bound together by personal relationships and common interests and identified geographically with the Pale. Dublin, not London, was their capitol city, and they were politically conscious of their position as a senior group of English people. They were sure they deserved more royal consideration than the Protestant newcomers from England who now enjoyed the fruits of most public offices in Ireland. Too much political power, they thought, had been removed from them and given to London administrators or plantation colonists. The humiliation they suffered by the denial of the "graces" they had purchased merely emphasized their weakness and the contempt the English
Parliament had for them. The worst, however, was that the English could not even be trusted to honor their own ransom agreement.

On October 24, 1641, just one year after the Long Parliament (1640-1660) convened and proceeded to dismantle King Charles I's personal government, rebellion erupted in Ireland and immediately engulfed the Ulster plantation. It was wholly unanticipated in Ireland or England—apparently a spontaneous outburst against old grievances generally and against Parliament itself for its success in destroying the authority of King Charles who seemed to promise a measure of relief to Ireland. The revolt was certainly not directed at the king, and the Irish did not repudiate the English monarchy. Their grievance—the confiscations and the favoritism shown to the new English colonists, the denial of civil rights on religious grounds and unjust treatment of Catholics generally—would be appeased only be restoring Ireland to its former status as a Catholic kingdom. The rebel leaders also demanded a native Irish Parliament free of the humiliating restrictions of Poynings' Law. The Irish yearning for home rule was still alive.

This rebellion of dispossessed Irish landlords against the new English settlers in Ulster soon escalated into a full-blown national conflict which continued for ten years until crushed by Oliver Cromwell in 1652. It became politically complex, involving four principal groups with shifting relations between themselves and with opponents in the concurrent English Civil War (1642-1649). There were the Native Irish, the Old English, the English Protestants, and the Ulster Scots. The Old English were Catholic but royalists, while the Native Irish were Catholic but distrustful of the English king. They looked to Spain or the Pope for help. The Native Irish sought the restoration of the Catholic Church and regardless of religion did not trust any Royalist enough to join a Royalist effort to obtain Parliamentary tolerance for Irish Catholics. The Royalists could offer only toleration, and that was not enough.\textsuperscript{100} The impact of the rebellion was dramatic and immediate because of the lurid reports of Catholic atrocities against Protestants. The most widely circulated story, and by all known evidence a true one, was of the drowning of a hundred or so men, women and children at Portadown, a village between Belfast and Armagh in November of 1641.

\textsuperscript{100} O'Brien, p. 66.
There is ample evidence that the outbreak of this uprising was marked by many incidents of outrageous brutality, and greatly exaggerated reports of them were circulated in England.

In England the cause of the uprising was not understood, nor was there a full realization of what was happening in Ulster. This was a fight between people in Ireland with clear religious overtones and, although Parliament was Protestant, it could not restore the peace in that distant place. Parliament's ability to raise money through the taxation of English people was not to be used to pacify people in Ulster. Also, of equal importance, the opportunity for profits from the confiscation and colonization of rebel land in Ulster had already been exhausted. Two months after the Catholic Irish of Ulster ignited the rebellion, they were joined by the Catholic Anglo-Irish landowners of the Pale—many of them still bitter from the denial of the "graces" they had purchased. In that same month of December, 1641, Parliament presented its manifesto, the Grand Remonstrance, to King Charles, demanding a long list of additional political and ecclesiastical reforms to augment Parliament's authority.
With the Irish rebellion spreading through midland Ireland as the Anglo-Irish joined it, there now were attractive new opportunities for profits from new confiscations and colonies which enterprising London merchants soon took to Parliament as reason for measures to protect the Protestants of Ireland. Because public money was not available to finance a military campaign against the rebel Irish Catholics, "divers worthy and well affected citizens of London" offered to underwrite the cost of suppressing the rebellion, providing Parliament would furnish the supplies. These merchants also wanted to direct the military operations and upon victory, to be compensated from rebel Irish Catholic lands.

This plan, codified on March 19, 1642 as the Act for Adventurers, specified that the hypothecated land would be taken equally from all four provinces of Ireland and would include at least two and one half million acres of good land, approximately eighteen percent of the best farm land in Ireland. No longer was Ulster alone to be the object of Protestant reprisal, for the other three provinces would pay equally with their land. A price list was published for general circulation, advertising

101 Bottigheimer, pp. 40-41.
the comparative costs of Irish land, and the entire operation was organized like a joint stock company with the source of all profit for the investors to be the Irish land itself. King Charles regretted this Parliamentary action because it was directed against his principal Irish supporters. Parliament's political reluctance to become involved in a war caused it to vent its frustration in verbal abuse and horror stories at the same time that the London merchant adventurers were promoting the sale of participating shares in their scheme.

Thus it became a compromise between king and Parliament which allowed a nominally non-partisan independent group to restore order in Ireland by selling Irish land. Although the adventure was a money-making scheme, the self-interested colonialism of the investors was diluted with feelings of charity for the Protestants and quickened by fear of Catholic resurgence. Little was actually known about events in Ireland. Participating shares were sold to members of Parliament and were made generally available to speculative investors throughout England, both individual and institutional, and in Holland. The sale of these shares was not spirited and

102 Bottigheimer, p. 43.
required the extension of time to raise the necessary initial amount. This delay led to a related "sea adventure" against Ireland in which the adventurers purchased shares in loot to be recovered from pirate raids upon Irish seaports and shipping.

With the adoption of the Adventurers Act, the unconditional surrender of all Irish military forces and the confiscation and resettlement of all Irish land became the necessary goal of any English effort to quell the Irish rebellion. The financial obligations it generated could be satisfied only through large tracts of Ireland's best land in all four provinces of the island. Therefore, Ireland had to be conquered, but exactly how much land had to be confiscated in order to pay the investors depended not upon English or Irish requirements but upon the monetary cost of suppressing the Catholic uprising. Ireland was for sale to anybody in England with money to invest in a highly speculative venture, but the amount of land to be taken would necessarily await the conquest. Not until total unconditional victory had been achieved could the cost of suppression and therefore the amount of land to pay off the London merchants be determined.\textsuperscript{103} The sale of shares in the Adventure,\textsuperscript{103} Bottigheimer, p. 53.
especially since the start of the "sea adventure", produced enough money to enlist the support of the City of London, thereby helping to create a London merchant emphasis in the tradition of the Ulster Plantation. Again, just as in the plantation venture, there was an entrepreneurial cast to the operations. The investors had little desire to live upon or develop any land which they might acquire, but they could get it cheap and with a little luck sell it at a profit. Bottigheimer suggests:

It is at least arguable that many of the adventurers were investing not in land but in "futures", that is to say, in claims upon a commodity which they would never enjoy in their own names but which they hoped to dispose of profitably to others.

In 1652, when the uprising lay crushed and Ireland yielded to the Cromwellian Settlement, the Adventure was shown to have furnished £3,000,000, but the initial impetus given the suppression was provided by the Adventurers whose claims upon Irish land were given highest priority in the Settlement. Altogether there were fifteen hundred and thirty-three adventurers, one hundred nineteen of whom were members of Parliament.105

104 Bottigheimer, p. 68.
105 Bottigheimer, pp. 54-56, 63-64, 70, 73.
Although the Adventure nudged Parliament into the suppression of the Rebellion and dictated the nature of the settlement that followed victory, it did not generate any English enthusiasm for moving to Ireland as colonists. It was nothing but a highly speculative land-grab scheme involving fifteen hundred and thirty three people in an effort to exploit Ireland's distress at a time when Parliament's need was great but its finances strained.

A seven-year hiatus existed between the inception of the Adventure in 1642 and Oliver Cromwell's invasion in 1649. During these seven years, the adventurers were involved in Parliament's handling of the Irish situation both as members of that body and as members of various independent committees, which supervised certain aspects of England's operations in Ireland. The English civil War was Parliament's principal concern from 1642 to 1649, and as King Charles I sought to protect his political base in Ireland, Parliament sought to prevent much help from reaching him from that source. As late as 1648, when King Charles was Parliament's prisoner in England, he continued to threaten a royalist invasion from Ireland if the Puritans should seriously threaten his life. Until Dublin surrendered, Charles maintained secret
communications with his royalist commander in the Irish capital, James Butler, the Anglo-Irish Marquis de Ormonde, urging him to continue his efforts and promising to repudiate any agreement he might be forced to make with his Parliamentary captors.106

Parliament did very little to put down the Irish rebellion and even spent some of the adventurer's money for unrelated English necessities despite the success of joint Irish and Anglo-Irish operations within the Catholic Confederacy. The Confederacy was an administrative body established at Kilkenny in 1642 to coordinate all Irish Catholic efforts against the new English colonists and their English reinforcements. It contained both native Irish and Anglo Irish leaders, and it was essentially a royalist group. It had, however, an intrinsic and fatal weakness in its lack of a united policy. Despite its public declaration of intent to procure liberty of conscience, government by officials who should be Catholics, restitution of lands confiscated for religion, liberty of trade in the Empire and the independence of the Irish Parliament by the repeal of Poynings' Law, the Native Irish were more concerned with

the recovery of their estates and the maintenance of the old Gaelic language and traditions. The development of this Irish rebellion, a belated outburst of Catholic grievances, may very well have been the result of an "unprecedented conjunction of discontents", as Bottigheimer suggests. The Ulster rebels would have been defeated within a few months had they not been joined by the Old English, and the Anglo-Irish of the Pale. Their coalition converted a local insurrection into a major challenge to the rule of Protestant England, but their leadership was divided.

A dispute between the native Irish Catholics and the Anglo-Irish Catholics over the significance of an uneasy truce in 1646 between the Confederation and the Royalist English army at Dublin caused an irreparable rift within the Confederation. One group, led by Papal Nuncio Rinuccinni, was intent upon winning the full restoration of the Catholic Church in Ireland. The other group, persuaded by King Charles' military commander in Ireland, sought a moderate accommodation with the English King as a means to avoid the predictably severe measures of England's puritanical Parliament. The rivalry of these two groups for the loyalty of Catholic Ireland

107 Curtis, p. 246.
destroyed a united front which might have produced effective action.108

At least until Cromwell's defeat of the Royalist forces at Naseby on June 14, 1645, adventurer money was slow to arrive in Ireland in support of Parliament's lagging efforts. It was often lost among those entrusted with its management, and Parliament was content to let its army live off the land, giving it only enough money and supplies to exist until Irish land became available to pay the soldiers' wages. Ireland should pay for its war, and enough land would be confiscated to pay both the adventurers who helped to finance it and the English soldiers who fought it. Now frustrated by Parliament's preoccupation with the Civil War against King Charles and its own consequent shortage of money and zeal to subdue Ireland, the adventurers refused to supply additional financing. Cooperation between the speculative land adventurers and Parliament virtually ceased.

Later in 1645, however, Papal Nuncio Rinuccini arrived in Ireland with money from Rome and from Cardinal Mazarin, the first minister of France. This evidence of Papal and foreign intervention spurred the English puritans into a firmer determination to conquer Ireland.

At about the same time, leaders of the victorious New Model Army recognized the problem faced by the adventurers, of whom their own Oliver Cromwell was one and concluded that this new professional army was England's best hope for success in Ireland. Further delay, however, followed until 1647 when Cromwell became the leader of Parliament at a time when the royalist cause was finally almost defeated. Also, the city of Dublin, long held as a royalist fortress by King Charles's military Commander, Ormonde, had finally surrendered to a Parliamentary army, thus giving a safe port of entry to Cromwell, who arrived with his army as Lord Lieutenant and General for the Parliament of England on August 15, 1649. 109

For almost two years, the conduct of the war had been desultory. Opportunity for a negotiated settlement had twice been lost because of the statutory needs of the adventurers, for whom the confiscation of Irish land was a necessity. Parliamentary Independents insisted that the war be won rather than merely ended. There was still a lack of sufficient funds to support a full-fledged military campaign, but Parliament would not increase tax rates in England, and the adventurers would not

109 Curtis, pp. 248-249.
contribute any more. Finally in 1648, Parliament initiated a politically acceptable special assessment which would provide additional tax revenue, but Cromwell still delayed his invasion until he actually had money in hand from large loans raised against the new tax assessment and secured by the anticipated tax revenue. Bottigheimer comments: 110

If there was any one lesson above all others which Irish affairs had taught, it was the absolute necessity for supplies of money as well as of men and war materials.

Cromwell's purpose was to conquer Ireland for the newly proclaimed English Commonwealth (1649-1653), to punish all Irish people for having killed and mutilated English settlers, and to enforce the Adventurers Act. Upon arrival at Dublin, he turned south to Drogheda, then to Wexford, and finally into Munster. Wherever he went, his army was victorious, but they engaged in brutality which Cromwell justified as vengeance for innocent blood. In an effort to explain his army's wanton destruction of civilian as well as military personnel, women as well as men, priests and other noncombatants, he publicly charged

110 Bottigheimer, p. 113.
the Catholic clergy with responsibility for the war, declaring:111

I meddle not with any man's conscience, but as for liberty to exercise the mass I must tell you that where the Parliament of England has power, that will not be allowed.

Like most Englishmen, and certainly all Puritans, Cromwell had been shocked to hear of the Irish atrocities against Ulster Protestants in 1641. Protestants had been massacred. Innocent people as well as others who might expect retaliation from Catholics had been murdered, but neither side could claim innocence. Cromwell's ferocity was typical of seventeenth century warfare. In addition, however, he felt justified in treating all Irish who opposed or conspired to oppose him as villainous creatures deserving of no mercy. Their destruction would make room for his English soldiers who could settle in Ireland and bring stability and the true religion to the area. Cromwell is remembered for his massacres, like the one at Drogheda, where more than twenty-five hundred English and Irish royalists were killed after having surrendered. But it is likely that the true basis for his bloody reputation comes not from his cruelty but from his methodical efficiency as a soldier and his

111 Curtis, p. 250.
puritanical zeal in rooting out Catholicism. Today in Ireland, the most vengeful call for help from the spirit world is the curse of Cromwell "to bring death, destruction and loss of property" upon the object of one's malevolence, as Oliver Cromwell had done to so many innocent people.  

Because of the crucial significance of the Cromwell conquest and settlement to Ireland in the late seventeenth century and again in the twentieth century, some explanation of the barbarity of Cromwell's actions is necessary in order to avoid the influence of misleading emphasis. The eighteenth century English poet Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774), an Irishman born at Roscommon in the province of Connacht where the "innocent" Irish were herded, described Cromwell's conduct:

But in these conquests, as in all the rest of his actions, there appeared a brutal ferocity that would tarnish the most heroic valor. In order to intimidate the natives from defending their towns, he with a barbarous policy put every garrison that made any resistance to the sword.


113 Goldsmith, O., *The History of England* (Baltimore, MD, Pomeroy and Toy, 1816), p. 183. (This book was written in about 1770 and continued to 1802 by another author.)
C.C. O'Brien comments that Cromwell's ferocity, and that of his successors in Ireland, was not extraordinary for the times, and that his massacre of the Drogheda garrison was no less ferocious than the sack of Cashel by the Irish commander, the Earl of Inchiquin.\textsuperscript{114} Also, as Robert Kee points out, the garrison at Drogheda was commanded by an English Catholic, and that he and all his officers were royalists still fighting Parliament in the final states of the English Civil War.\textsuperscript{115} With reference to Cromwell's puritanical zeal, Christopher Hill writes that seventeenth century international politics played a considerable part:\textsuperscript{116}

> For this, the reasons were largely political. Papists were regarded as agents of a foreign power. Many of them had supported Charles in the Civil War, and after the capture of the King's papers at Naseby he was known to have planned Irish intervention on a large scale. This helps to explain, though not to excuse, the Commonwealth's savagely repressive policy in Ireland which only Levellers opposed. Hostility to papists was not a monopoly of the Puritans.

\textsuperscript{114} O'Brien, p. 68.


Also, regardless of the ruthlessness which justifiably disfigures Cromwell's image in Ireland, it is doubtless true that he honestly believed not only in his cause but also in the economics of the London adventurers for whom he sought Irish land. Cromwell came from East Anglia, studied at Cambridge, where he became a Puritan, and which he subsequently represented in Parliament. Puritanism took strongest root among the London merchants, the East Anglia rural townsfolk, and at Cambridge.\(^{117}\) It was the adventurers who selected Cromwell as the commander of the English army, and he was one of the original members of the adventurers, having invested sizeable amounts in the original venture, the "sea adventure" and all the supplementary optional offerings. From these, Cromwell eventually received 1,275 acres of land in King's county.\(^{118}\)

Cromwell remained in Ireland little more than eight months, leaving on May 9, 1650, but his army of about 35,000 men stayed on to defeat a number of smaller Irish armies until all Ireland was subjugated in 1652. In prompt order, almost all of Ireland's remaining thirty


\(^{118}\) Bottigheimer, pp. 70, 179.
thousand soldiers left Ireland for service in Spain or France, thousands of ordinary Irish people were shipped off to the West Indies as laborers, and a special court in Dublin sought to avenge the Ulster massacre of 1641 by ordering the execution of almost fifty leaders of the rebellion. In 1653, one year after Ireland's defeat and depopulation, Cromwell became the Lord Protector of England and Ireland, and so he remained until his death five years later.

Irish resistance to Cromwell's superior army had gradually disintegrated during 1652 and then collapsed at about the same time that the English Parliament, now a mere forum for New Model Army debate, enacted Cromwell's Act of Settlement. During ten years of Catholic rebellion, Ireland's strength had been reduced by the death of about 600,000 men, women and children, many of them victims of a severe bubonic plague, the departure of about 30,000 Irish soldiers to the continent, and by the impoverishment of about 850,000 survivors with no place to go to escape their misery. The execution of King Charles I in 1649 had helped to confirm Ireland's monarchist loyalties, but until 1658 all of England, Scotland and Ireland were to remain under the military rule of an invincible Puritan army commanded by the Lord
Protector Cromwell. Ireland was both Catholic and royalist, and the Cromwellian Settlement seemed to take special note of the fact in the way it punished the Irish people.

In August of 1652, the English Parliament divided the Catholic people of Ireland, both Irish and English, into several classes according to their guilt. The great amorphic mass of ordinary people with no more than £10 in personal possessions were given a general pardon. All others were either condemned to death and full confiscation of property or allowed to live on a reduced scale in specially designated areas of the province of Connacht west of the Shannon River. The more fortunate ones were to be given the equivalent of two thirds of their former eastern lands in areas cleared for them in the west, but only if they could show that they were "innocent" of the crimes specified in the settlement. All Irishmen who had actively promoted or borne arms in the rebellion, including clergymen and purveyors of supplies to the rebels, all persons who had killed an Englishman, and one hundred and five specified individuals were to be executed and their lands forfeited. Banishment and loss of property were ordered for others of lesser guilt. All Catholics who were not
among those to be executed or banished were to be reassigned to land in Connacht unless they could show continuous good will to the English Parliament during the decade of the uprising. Almost nobody except little children or people in Dublin under the control of the late King's Protestant commander could be expected to show such good will. The final records of the official hearings on Catholic petitions for mercy indicate that in all of Ireland there were only twenty-six Catholic landowners, together accounting for a total of about 40,000 acres of land, who were able to qualify as having had "constant good affection" so as to remain on their ancestral lands.¹¹⁹ There were to be two Irelands, one for the English east of the Shannon where the new colony would not be poisoned by native or other Catholics, and the other for the native Irish, Catholics who spoke Gaelic. This large number of people who spoke the language of Ireland and knew its traditions were to live in special settlement areas in Connacht no closer than four miles from the Shannon or from the sea and were forbidden on any of the offshore islands. They were to be kept together in designated places lest they

¹¹⁹ Butler, p. 132.
communicate with others in Ireland.\textsuperscript{120} Although the transplanting of these people was originally scheduled to be completed by May of 1654, the unanticipated task of ruling on thousands of Irish petitions for leniency consumed years of time—years when the new English landlords needed the Irish to stay and work on the land. Finally, the transplantation of Catholics was limited to those who had not actually borne arms in the rebellion. Room was obtained for them in Connacht through confiscation of land in that province by exchange for comparable lands in the eastern English section of Ireland. About six thousand Irish landowners, although not threatened with execution, lost everything they owned and were given the option of remaining in Ireland as mere tenants at will or migrating to some other country. The Cromwellian Settlement caused the departure of virtually all Irish landowners from the area east of the Shannon, but most of the Irish population remained in place—despised laborers for the newcomers, dispossessed and impoverished native Irish, Old English and even relatively new English—but all Catholic.

The lands which were cleared of their former Catholic owners were divided among the adventurers whose

\textsuperscript{120} Butler, pp. 134-135.
investment had made the confiscation both possible and necessary and the soldiers who had overcome Ireland's defense of these lands. The adventurers had contributed a total of £360,000. There were thirteen hundred and sixty of them, and they took about one-half the confiscated land. The other half of the confiscated land was allocated among the English soldiers and their suppliers by lot. Of the twenty million acres of land in Ireland, approximately nine million were retained by Protestants and others who could prove their loyalty, and the remaining eleven million acres were confiscated. Of this amount, about three and a half million acres were unfit for farming, leaving about seven and one-half million acres of good land, approximately 37 percent of all Ireland, to be cleared of its Catholic owners and redistributed as booty among the English land speculators and soldiers.

The dispossessed Irish Catholic and Anglo-Catholic landlords from these choice lands were relocated on about one million acres set aside for them in Connacht. Most of the 35,000 English soldiers sold the land they received as back wages, but perhaps as many as 10,000 of them stayed in Ireland in accordance with Cromwell's plan that they provide security when necessary. Only six or
seven of the thirteen hundred and sixty adventurers who received Irish land actually came to Ireland to occupy their winnings.

The principal result of the Cromwellian settlement was the greatly increased number of Protestant landlords and Catholic tenants. One feature of this change was the almost total shift of urban property from Catholic to Protestant ownership. All cities and towns which had been held by the Catholic Confederation during the rebellion were confiscated, and city government became and remained, except under James II, a Protestant monopoly.\(^{121}\) The Irish were considered incorrigibly uncivilized and had to be cleaned out of all the good land of Ireland. Only those who could prove their innocence of something that came as naturally to Irishmen of that time as a feeling of superiority came to Englishmen, could even hope to be transplanted to a smaller area of poor soil. The others, stripped of all property rights, could work where they had previously hired others to work, or they could go somewhere else. The important result was the change of Irishmen from landowners to landworkers. The new landlords were

\(^{121}\) Edwards, p. 177.
Protestant Englishmen, a dominating minority within a Gaelic-speaking Catholic majority.

The Restoration in 1660 made no important change in the Cromwellian disposition of Ireland. Charles II (1660-1685) restored the estates of a few hundred dispossessed Irish landlords but confirmed most of the new English holdings. With the completion of the Restoration Settlement in 1665, Catholic ownership of Irish land amounted to only 20 percent of the island, as contrasted with 60 percent in 1641 when the Catholics revolted. Furthermore, most Catholic land in 1665 was in Connacht, where people could not participate in the economic growth taking place near Dublin and along the east coast. In the west, Catholics lived at subsistence levels, growing potatoes and hoping for things to improve. Catholics outnumbered Protestants about eight to one in Ireland, but King Charles II, who had promised them relief, had a Protestant Parliament and was deeply indebted to the Protestant leaders who recalled him to the throne.

He did not have enough Irish land to satisfy everybody he sought to please. Ireland had been loyal to his father, Charles I, and with the Restoration of the

122 Butler, pp. 167-170.
Stuart family, Irishmen expected favorable treatment. At first, these hopes were realized in a few royal efforts to restore the estates of Irish landlords which had not actually been occupied by Cromwellian owners. Then in November of 1660, Charles II published a Declaration for Settlement of Ireland in which he promised that the Cromwellian settlers could keep what they had and that all lands taken from Irishmen for religious reasons would be restored. This public statement was self-contradictory and impossible to fulfill. Ireland simply did not contain enough land to satisfy all such claims.

To dispel confusion, the English Parliament passed the Settlement of Ireland Act in 1662, which declared in its preamble that any Cromwellian occupation of Irish land was proof of the former owner's guilt as a rebel, which justly caused the reversion of the land to the Crown. Furthermore, the "innocent" Irish who had accepted lands in the west could not return to the east but were confirmed in their new western lands. The overall effect of these promises and legislation was to keep Cromwellian landowners in place, to restore the lands of "innocents" only if Cromwellians had not occupied them, and to keep Catholics of any sort from owning urban property. Towns would always be strongholds
of Protestant English influence. Of the approximate eight thousand former Catholic landowners in Ireland, the very few who did regain some of their land were the politically or socially powerful. The small Irish gentry simply perished. The old Irish peasant proprietorship was ruined. As a special favor to the Irish soldiers who had left Ireland for France in 1652 and then returned to Ireland with Charles II in 1660, some good Irish land was reserved as a reward for their loyalty, but they were lucky to get enough for their graves.  

123

The three year reign of Catholic King James II (1685-1688) did little to ease tensions between Catholics and Protestants or to remedy the distress caused by the Cromwellian reorganization of the land and people of Ireland. James had not attempted to support the Irish until late in the reign of his brother Charles II, when he came to recognize them as a source of security against aggressive Protestants in Ireland. He appointed the Catholic Earl of Tyrconnell commander of the Irish army and later made him his viceroy. But acts of apparent Catholic favoritism offended English Protestants without significantly strengthening Irish Catholics. His new deputy failed to put Irishmen in charge of Ulster so that

123 Butler, pp. 197-205.
when James fled England in 1688 the cities of Derry and Enniskillen were Protestant strongholds, ready and willing to support the new English King William III against James when he returned from France in 1689.

The viceroy, however, did fill public offices with Catholics while James sought to uphold the Act of Settlement, which denied land rights to Catholics. Confusion among the Protestants in Ireland resulted from administrative and judicial rulings by newly appointed Catholic officials when Cromwellian settlers found that they were no longer above the law. Protestants in ever-increasing numbers fled from Ireland back to England upon discovery that Catholics now felt free to commit criminal acts because Catholic judges would not punish them. They learned quickly that their unpopular minority rule depended upon their control of law enforcement agencies. Rumors of an impending revolt, perhaps a repetition of the 1641 uprising, began to circulate early in December of 1688, and Derry shut its gates on December 7th. A Dutch army had already been landed in England, and portions of Ulster had defied James's authority before he fled England for France late in the same month.¹²⁴

When the Stuart princess and her Dutch husband were crowned joint sovereigns William III and Mary in February of 1689, most Irish Protestants acquiesced, but many Protestants and all Catholics remained loyal to James II, whose loss of England did not include Ireland. In seventeenth century custom, the kingdom of England and the kingdom of Ireland were separate. Just as the execution of King Charles I had not voided his son Charles II's claim to Irish allegiance, the arrival of William III did not relieve the Irish people of loyalty to the fugitive James II. When James returned to Ireland from France in March of 1689, he was greeted as sovereign by most people in the greater part of the island. With him, he brought officers, munitions and money from King Louis XIV of France, but there was no papal influence this time. James was supported by Louis, but Pope Alexander VIII was at odds with Louis over his treatment of the French church. Although the French king could spare some money to help James, he could afford him no soldiers because France was still at war with Protestant forces in Europe.

With the help of his Catholic viceroy and Irish army, King James of Ireland defeated all opponents in the southern areas, using French money to obtain supplies and
recruits, and sent forces up into Ulster where they took
the area except for the fortified Protestant cities of
Derry and Enniskillen. Early in May of 1689, James
proceeded northward from his invasion landing point at
Kinsale to Dublin, where he assembled an Irish
Parliament. Here on May 7, 1689, James and his Irish
Catholic Parliament passed two laws of frightening impact
upon Ulster Protestants. Cromwell's Settlement Act of
1652 was repealed thereby restoring to all Catholics the
lands which Cromwell had taken from them, and any
Protestant who refused to obey this act of Repeal was
attainted. The legislation was intended to reverse the
forty-year-old grants of about eight million acres of
land, some of which had found its way into the hands of a
series of new owners. Proceeding from Dublin up into
Ulster, James' army besieged Derry for fifteen weeks,
until an English fleet arrived to break the deadlock,
admitting the new King William III of England. King
James of Ireland was defeated at the Battle of the Boyne
on July 1, 1690, and within a few days he returned to
France never to return to the British Isles. His support
in Ireland had come from England's enemies, and England
had won. Some Irish troops with French assistance fought
on in the Irish midlands for more than a year against the
English army under the command of General John Churchill, until a surrender was negotiated with the Dutch General Godert de Ginkel who commanded all English forces. A final treaty was signed at Limerick in October of 1691.

The Treaty of Limerick is of singular importance to the Celtic nature of Ireland because its military articles gave Irish officers and soldiers the option of remaining in Ireland as soldiers of England or taking exile in France. If they remained in Ireland they would lose no property, but they would be required to swear an oath of loyalty to England. Eleven thousand of Ireland's fourteen thousand remaining military men, including most of its officers, left Ireland. Curtis comments upon the exodus, which Irishmen call "the flight of the wild geese." 125

Seldom in history have a few thousand men, departing into exile, represented, as these did, almost the whole aristocracy, the fighting force and hope of the nation.

Until the time of this treaty, inhabitants of a conquered territory had become subjects of the conqueror. The Treaty of Limerick was the first document of its kind to give a defeated group the choice of remaining with the

125 Curtis, p. 273.
conqueror or departing the country at the conqueror's expense. 126

The Treaty of Limerick is also notable for the leniency of its thirteen civil articles, which granted amnesty to all Irish officers and soldiers as well as to all civilians at garrisons under their military control. No property was to be confiscated, no professional or business disabilities were to be imposed, and the victorious general Godert de Ginkel, promised to reduce the use of attainders and to provide security for Catholics. The treaty generally guaranteed the restoration of the privileges which Irishmen had known under King Charles II. All of these would come to Irish military forces and to Irish civilian personnel under military control in return for their mere oath of allegiance to the English Crown. This was the same oath which the English Parliament had prescribed in 1688 when William and Mary had come to England at Parliament's request.

The leniency of these civil articles of the treaty, however, so offended Protestant leaders in both England and Ireland that the treaty was never enforced. Too much

generosity, they thought, was offered the native Irish and Anglo Irish forces in return for a simple oath that did not include the Oath of Supremacy or any repudiation of papal spiritual power. The Treaty, when brought to King William for approval, did not include the civilian protection clause, but the king personally restored the missing words in order to keep his general's promise to protect the civilian population of the six western counties. The Irish commanders there had agreed to a negotiated surrender without a fight, and without this protective clause the treaty applied only to the Catholic officers and soldiers of Ireland. Nevertheless, by a majority of one vote, Parliament ratified the treaty without the controversial civilian protection. Curtis comments on the English breach of its treaty obligations, emphasizing King William's unfamiliarity with this prejudice of the English Parliament toward Ireland:

But while Ginkle could speak for William, both were foreigners who could not understand the place of the King in the new constitutional England, and it was soon shown that the English Parliament meant to interpret the Treaty both in letter and spirit in the most narrow and ungenerous way.

---

127 Butler, pp. 223-225.
128 Curtis, p. 274.
As the Prince of Orange, William had waged both military and diplomatic war against Catholic France and now was not anxious to encourage further emigration of Catholic Irishmen to strengthen France. Catholic Ireland's ability to assert itself or even defend itself was now crushed.

After the departure of James II in 1691, English authorities did not launch into immediate confiscation of Irish land as they had done after Cromwell's victory. The Catholics were allowed to try to prove their rights, if any remained, at confiscation hearings, which continued from 1691 to 1697. This procedure eventually reported almost four thousand people in Ireland and fifty-seven in England to be attainted, accounting for the confiscation of one million and sixty thousand acres of plantation land in Ireland. Many of these people came within the exemptions of the Treaty of Limerick and its companion Articles of Galway, together known as The Articles, but their rights remained in confusion for many years. Some of the confiscated land was used by William as gifts to his favorites, including some in the Netherlands, but in such an unbecoming manner that Parliament was one again offended. In 1700 an Act of Resumption revoked the gifts and placed the land for sale
at public auction. Once again, Irish land was opened to English bargaining.

The events and reversals of the two-year period from 1689 to 1691, marked by the two Irish statutes of King James and followed by the English Articles of Treaty and Act of Resumption, left Ireland in desperate condition. At the most, the Catholics of Ireland—the Irish Establishment of native or Anglo-Irish stock—retained no more than a million acres of profitable land. Others—alien Protestant newcomers or absentee—controlled the rest. Of equal importance the confiscations which followed Limerick destroyed the major Anglo-Irish landlords who could trace their Irish origins back as far as Strongbow in the twelfth century and who had since become as Irish as the natives. They had survived the interregnum of Cromwell and regained their leadership role with the restoration of the Stuarts. They were the old Catholic Anglo-Irish landlords, a patrician class of people, and a source of abiding Irish national strength. More than eighty percent of the people in Ireland were Catholic, but a hostile minority owned the island.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{129} Edwards, p. 132.
Within a period of about one hundred and fifty years starting with Henry VIII's break with Rome, Ireland, which had been and remained staunchly Catholic in its own way since St. Patrick's fifth century, had become a Protestant English conquest. Without benefit of any social, intellectual or religious reformation, without support of public pressure or popular opinion, but merely through forces of legal innovations, military strength and confiscation of private property, an openly hostile non-Catholic group took control. During the Tudor sixteenth century, about two thirds of the land of Ireland belonged to the Irish despite Elizabeth's efforts to force them to abandon their Celtic civilization. During the Stuart seventeenth century, a time of bitter experiment in Ireland, confiscations forced upon the Irish reduced Catholic land ownership to about ten percent. Despite some improvement in Celtic proprietorship after the Restoration, there was little more than five percent of the land in Celtic hands by the year 1700. The penal code was thereupon introduced to keep it that way. Mindful of the events of 1641 and 1689, the victorious non-Catholic minority was determined to treat the Catholic majority of Ireland as a class of defeated enemies.
The English Parliament felt no urgency about ratifying the Treaty of Limerick and delayed doing so until 1697, about five years after the confiscations had begun. This was two years after an Irish Parliament at Dublin, dominated by Protestants and subordinated by Poynings Law, had passed the first penal laws in 1695, which gradually proliferated into a comprehensive penal code of government. The treatment of Ireland under the penal laws was a violation of both the letter and intent of the Treaty of Limerick, but the military people who were supposed to benefit by it as ratified were either in voluntary exile or disarmed and helpless. The civilian population had been left without protection. The penal code, a curious mixture of social and economic proscriptions, was developed during the next thirty years in open violation of King William's word.

The penal code, enacted mostly by the Dublin Parliament under Poynings' Law during the first quarter of the eighteenth century, defined the relationship between the Irish Catholic people and the newly arrived non-Catholic people in Ireland. It was clear that English anti-Catholicism was anti-Celtic and, therefore, anti-Irish. Minority Protestant political rule was delineated and enforced by laws which lasted about
seventy years until repealed in 1829. The penal laws may be divided into two principal classes. Some of them were truly penal measures calculated to punish people for being Catholic, while others were disabling measures intended to guarantee Protestant control by preventing Catholics from holding public office, military commissions or engaging in the licensed profession of law.

The Catholic church in Ireland—perhaps the most distinguished of the island's national institutions—was denied its bishops, thus preventing the continuity of its priesthood. The Irish church was also denied the right to educate children of Irish families who ironically were required to pay tithes to support the English Protestant church of Ireland which did little to make itself attractive. The Church of Ireland showed no interest in reaching the Irish people. It offered neither bible nor prayer book in the Irish language, and services were held in English. Bishops were appointed for political reasons and were often more concerned with self enrichment than the furthering of the cause of religion. Parish priests of the Church of Ireland were often ignorant and careless
in their responsibilities. By the end of the seventeenth century, one hundred and fifty years of English effort to impose an alien Protestant religion upon Ireland were seen to have been a failure. The English effort to extinguish the Irish form of Roman Catholicism as the religion of the island was apparently a lost cause, and England's Protestant Church of Ireland had to content itself with being the minority religious institution. Reminiscent of the way England had tacitly acknowledged defeat in its effort to control Ireland back in 1366, when its Statutes of Kilkenny abandoned all but about one-third of the island to the Irish whom they branded "enemies of England", the penal code of the early eighteenth century tacitly admitted England's failure to convert Catholic Ireland to English Protestantism.

The English parliament, however, could control the civil rights of Irish Catholics. The penal code denied to the overwhelming majority of Irishmen the fundamental rights of citizenship which the new minority group of Protestant immigrants enjoyed under English protection. The penal code excluded Irish Catholics from the ownership of land, military service, the electorate, and

---

public office, commerce and the practice of law. In addition to the restraints upon religious and occupational liberties, the penal code proscribed Catholic ownership of land by inheritance or purchase from any source, limited the possible term of lease to thirty-one years to Irish tenants, and legitimized otherwise unlawful transfers of land titles so as to encourage conversions from Catholicism to Protestantism. One of the most successful of these was the Gavelkind Act by which a Catholic landowner's estate which normally would be divided equally upon his death among all his sons would go entirely to his oldest son according to England's law of primogeniture if that son became a Protestant. This law greatly reduced the number of Catholic landowners by encouraging them to conform in order to keep their lands intact. Many of the great Anglo-Irish families abandoned the Irish Catholic church for the legal privileges of England's Church of Ireland, but the majority of the Irish nobility and gentry, both native and Old English, remained true to their Celtic heritage.

132 Butler, pp. 237-238.
On the political front, Catholics were denied the right to vote or otherwise participate in the legislative process which had organized their distress and might be used to relieve it. In an abundance of caution, all Irish Catholics except those very few under protection of the Treaty of Limerick were disarmed. None could carry the customary self-defensive sidearms, none could own a horse worth more than £5, and no gunsmith could engage a Catholic apprentice. The Irish people, who had initiated military revolt three times in one century, were disarmed for the next hundred years until the French-supported revolt of 1798 brought Ireland to the crisis of Vinegar Hill.

The great majority of Irish people, the customary amorphic mass of the nation, were beset with economic problems—taxes to the English state, tithes to the English church, and high rents to the English landlords for the potato patches where they lived. The lot of the Irish peasantry—all Catholic—was one of the worst in Europe, but these people had no source of relief or avenue of escape from virtual serfdom. Emigration to England or the British colonies in America was not an option during most of the eighteenth century. Although Irishmen were to be found as vagrants or seasonal workers
in England or serving in the British military forces at
distant outposts as early as 1700, mass emigration to
England was not known until after 1800 when the demands
of heavy industry and mining called them to England as a
cheap labor force. In the American colonies, a few Irish
Presbyterians answered the call from New England for help
to repel the Indians or from the South to help control
the negro slave population, but poverty-stricken and
disease-ridden Irish Catholics were not welcome.\textsuperscript{133}
Prior to the American Revolution, less than five hundred
thousand Irish emigrants came to the North American
colonies of which about one-quarter were from outside
Ulster and only one-third were Catholic. Most of them
were indentured servants who agreed to years of work as
payment for their passage, but a few dispossessed Gaelic
or old English Catholic gentry paid their own way to seek
new lives in the southern colonies. Not only were the
prospects of survival uncertain before 1776, but also the
ocean voyage was risky because British navy press gangs
often operated in sight of American shores. Before 1800,
America was seen by Irishmen as less desireable than
Ireland.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{133} Edwards, pp. 150-156.

\textsuperscript{134} Miller, K.A., pp. 137, 139, 141, 168-169.
As Ireland ended the Stuart seventeenth century and entered the Hanovarian eighteenth century, it lay prostrate—its leaders gone, the gentry looking for jobs, and the masses confused in their misery. Even the ruling Protestant minority was divided between England's Church of Ireland and Scottish Presbyterian or dissenting groups.

As between Ireland and England, commerce had been restrained by protective laws which prevented Irish exports to English colonies and even restrained Irish exports to England through high taxes that severely reduced their acceptance. Irish commerce with other nations was crushed and would not be revived until the middle of the eighteenth century. With the death of King William III in 1702 and then the reign of his wife's sister, Anne, there came no significant changes in Ireland except the abandonment of the long-lingering hope for a Stuart restoration under the "old pretender", James Edward Stuart. Irish hopes for a measure of Catholic acceptance came to an end with the death of the childless Queen Anne and the accession of the Hanovarian George I in the year 1714.

During the late sixteenth century, scholars in both Ireland and England began to collect and study old
national artifacts, manuscripts and records of historical interest. In England, King James I suppressed this interest in antiquarianism for being conducive to suspicion of government and therefore possibly treasonous. Despite the restoration of its respectability after the excesses of the interregnum, the zeal for antiquarianism was lost in England but not in Ireland where an ancient Celtic civilization was being forced aside. As Ireland moved into the eighteenth century, antiquarianism became increasingly important to a people who felt the need to preserve their identity. Irish scholars persisted in their efforts to understand their own culture.

Irish mentality, as expressed in its native poetry and music, encouraged fatalism. There was a sense of increasing helplessness and a loss of hope, but this despair of a once proud people produced its own antidote in a popular as well as scholastic interest in their own Celtic heritage. Taking refuge in the memory of past glories and accomplishment, the Irish could face the bleak future. Celtic antiquarianism, with particular focus upon Celtic mythology, religion, language and literature—all of them interwoven within the fabric of

135 MacCurtain, *Roots*, pp. 379-380
Celtic consciousness—helped to sustain the people in their confusion. As Ireland suffered, its scholars collected Gaelic manuscripts and records, which eventually led to the founding of the Royal Irish Academy in 1785. The Celtic antiquarianism that emerged from Ireland's national despair produced the literature and memorabilia for which the Academy became the archive and was a bridge which spanned the ruinous eighteenth century, preserving Celtic culture and traditions for revival in the separatist movements of the nineteenth century and the Gaelic Revival of the twentieth.\textsuperscript{136} Gaelic poetry flourished, and through this native Irish language the national identity survived. Although it was a slow process of recovery, Celtic rejection of foreign ways and alien government increased in strength while necessarily held in abeyance.

A review of the two hundred and thirty years of Tudor conquest and Stuart colonization and reconquest starts with the disablement of the Irish Parliament under Poynings' Law and ends with the imposition of the penal laws upon the Irish people. There were the frightened but futile English efforts to force Ireland's religion into conformity with English Protestantism. These were

\textsuperscript{136} MacCurtain, pp. 380-381.
the years when Ireland's Brehon law was summarily dismissed, its land confiscated and sold to foreigners, its people dispossessed and relocated according to religion, and its ability to defend itself destroyed. The Gaelic language survived in the countryside where it remained inviolate among the Irish people. Irish Catholicism was denied its churches, its priests and their right to hold public worship services or teach the children. Membership within the Catholic community was enough to cause a landowner to lose his property and be relocated as a laborer elsewhere. It was enough to lose all civil rights and be excluded from employment by the government or in the licensed professions. But despite those punishments of the Irish church and its communicants, Irish Catholicism survived the seventeenth century and became one of the pillars of eighteenth century Irish resistance. The Brehon law was merely set aside and ignored by the Stuart colonizers as being incompatible with English common law. It did not survive as the framework of society or the instrument of its Celtic leaders, for by the end of the Stuart era in 1714 the cumulative effect of the Cromwellian and Williamite measures had destroyed the political institutions of Irish civilization. English common law, which had been
developing for little more than five hundred years, replaced the Brehon legal system of fifteen hundred years. Irish society had been torn by depopulation and repopulation and was bitter in defeat and humiliated by scornful religious oppression. The society was in chaos, the only law and order coming from an alien army. English common law was not accepted by the Irish people as being in their public interest and therefore England lacked sovereignty in Ireland, for it is "sheer illusion to imagine that the authority of the State has any other safeguard than the wills of its members".\textsuperscript{137} The land of Ireland had been changed from Irish Catholic to English Protestant ownership in just one century. Ninety percent of Irish land was Catholic at the end of the Tudor conquest in 1603, but in 1703 only about fifteen percent remained in the hands of the Catholic majority of the island's population. The Gaelic language remained to sustain the Irish and what was left of their Irish style of the Christian religion. The seventeenth century produced a divided society for the eighteenth century, and while English became the language of government,\hfill

commerce and education, the Irish people clung to their own language wherever they were.
CHAPTER 5

SUBJUGATION, REACTION AND
UNION WITH ENGLAND

1714 TO 1800

The Hanovarian eighteenth century was a painful aftermath to the events of the preceding Stuart seventeenth century. It was a time of futile adjustments to escape the natural results of the arbitrary suppression of the Catholic majority. It was also a time of efforts to lessen the economic plight of members of the non-Catholic minority whose welfare was being undermined by economic restrictions imposed upon Ireland by their own English benefactor. It became a three-cornered problem which was resolved in 1800 by the most radical error England had yet made in Ireland. Irish leadership had been extinguished, and the nation had no government of its own. A small group of Protestant leaders was authorized by the English government to convene a Parliament at Dublin once every two years to handle routine internal business under the direction of a lord lieutenant who came from England at such times. Actual control over Ireland came directly from the Privy
Council in London, and under the new rules of limited monarchy even the English king could not intervene.

Despite the demeaning results of the penal laws, the occasional conversion of a Catholic family, intermarriage across social or ethnic lines, or any of the cross currents of political thought in a troubled age, the people and the traditions of Irish nationality were firmly in place and so would remain.\footnote{138} Under the penal laws which excluded most Irishmen from the accustomed use of their land, leadership positions in business and society and an acceptable practice of religion, Catholics of previously different social strata fused a defensive solidarity which assumed an aristocratic attitude against the "clownish boors" who now controlled Ireland. There emerged an ideological unity that strengthened Catholic rejection of "the rabble that rules." National unity developed, as it so often does, in adversity.

The Protestants, who owed their ascendancy to England, had good reason to find fault with England because of the sluggish behavior of the Irish economy. Despite the changes made in Irish agricultural communities to satisfy the English demand for more

\footnote{138} Curtis, E., p. 292.
livestock, Irish farm prices remained low, international trade was stagnant and the island produced little more than it needed for its own use. Protestant urbanites and rural landowners saw this as the result of self-serving English legislation which forbade Irish exports to English colonies and the use of Irish ships in trade except with England. This frustrating condition continued till about mid-century when England became embroiled in foreign wars and needed Irish food and clothing to help support its growing industrial populations.139

During the eighteenth century, three-quarters of all Irish land belonged to English or new Anglo-Irish Protestants, and by mid-century £750,000 of Irish money was leaving Ireland annually as rent to absentee English landlords. This constant drain of Irish capital kept interest rates high in Ireland, and credit transactions were further complicated by the lack of any national Irish banking system. Most credit was handled by small private firms, many of which were unreliable, and their unrestricted authority to issue banknotes severely compromised the value of paper money throughout Ireland. Although England and Scotland had national banks with

139 Miller, K.A., p. 29.
control over credit instruments and currency in the 1690's, Ireland had none until 1783.\textsuperscript{140}

In addition to the limits imposed upon the Irish economy by its inherent lack of capital, further restrictions were legislated against it by the English Parliament. Ireland was not a colony like those which England had in America and elsewhere that could prosper in their own way despite restrictive English navigation acts without competing with English interests. Ireland was more like England itself and, if allowed to develop normally, would compete with English production and shipping firms. Both had textile mills, breweries, glass works and shipyards, and England prohibited Irish production whenever it would rival England's. England forbade the importation of hops into Ireland in 1710, thereby destroying its brewing industry. In 1746, England forbade Irish export of glassware, thereby causing another Irish industry to wither away. Ireland was prohibited from exporting raw wool except to England which had its own woolen mills, and Ireland was denied the right to export woolen fabric to any country which competed with the English mills. In England itself, Irish woolen goods were taxed so as to drive them out of

\textsuperscript{140} Beckett, p. 172.
the market. Irish ships were not allowed to engage in trade with any of the English colonies although Ireland's developing linen industry was dependent for bleaching products upon flax sent and potash from England's American colonies. Linen was the only product that England allowed Ireland to manufacture because England could not make its own. Linen weaving became a profitable cottage industry, concentrated in Ulster, which provided an auxiliary income for farm families and did not affect the landlords. By the end of the eighteenth century, the linen industry produced almost £2,000,000 in exports, but it provided little employment or income outside Ulster.141

Because of these anticompetitive trade restraints imposed by England, Ireland's only way to earn enough money to pay for necessary imported products was to emphasize agricultural production that England would permit. Irish exports of animal products were encouraged in 1759 by England's repeal of a century old import tax on Irish cattle products. Consequently, large areas of Ireland were devoted to cattle and sheep, and enclosures for animal grazing replaced entire villages and farms. Butter, cheese, beef, lamb, wool, tallow and hides were

141 Beckett, 169.
produced for English consumption while Irish tenant farmers moved onto potato patches which became their homes as well as their source of food. The export shipping of animal products was concentrated in Cork and other southern ports and was more profitable than the linen trade in Ulster. It became the principal source of income in the South, but any prosperity from animal production and export came at a high price for Ireland.¹⁴² The animal grazing areas which replaced conventional farms depopulated the land at a time when the population almost doubled. Approximately four million people were relegated to the worst poverty in Europe.¹⁴³

The eighteenth century saw little in the way of social improvements. Public education for Catholic children was attempted in the 1730's but the instructors were Protestant and the administration so corrupt that the schools failed. In the area of public health, a network of county infirmaries was developed for the Catholic population, but a lack of adequate transportation made them inaccessible. The failure of


the public schools and infirmaries was due to a lack of cooperation by the county gentry who showed little interest in the poor Catholic population.

In Dublin, there was a resurgence of cultural activity, but it was essentially English. The theater, Trinity College and the Philosophical Society were prominent but not Irish. Gaelic culture was kept alive by the Catholic poor, its poets repeating their stories of ancient Celtic heroes and hoping for a rebirth of vanished Irish glory.¹⁴⁴

During the eighteenth century, Ireland's development was determined by England's needs. Ireland was subject to English legislative restraints, and England was more interested in the subjugation of Ireland than in its prosperity. More than two hundred years of English distrust of Ireland as a likely invasion point for counter reformation seemed to justify England's commercial exploitation of the smaller island.

Because the Irish economy required strict subordination to England's in order to prevent further repetition of the rebellions which Ireland had initiated, England entrusted the management of Ireland exclusively to a Protestant minority and directed its religious

activities through an English church. J. H. Plumb suggests that this repressive government actually worked rather well until about mid-century but with a deceptive calm which allowed the development of a united Catholic-Protestant front: 145

Yet the calm was deceptive. The years of peace had allowed a culture to develop which gave to those who owned and ruled Ireland, Protestant and Catholic alike, a sense of common destiny, akin almost to a national consciousness.... Dublin became a real capital with buildings of beauty and magnificence, a social setting for leaders of Irish opinion.... These leaders...did not wish to reform Irish institutions; they wished to free the Irish economy from foreign control and to win legislative independence.

Another aspect of English dominance the Irish leaders doubtless wanted to remove was the English army of twelve thousand men stationed in Ireland and financed by Irish tax revenue. Its presence was a humiliating show of excessive English force similar to Poynings' law, which made a mockery of Irish legislative efforts and was akin to the actually punitive portions of the penal acts which reasonable people considered indefensible. The disabling statutes were still considered necessary by the Protestant ascendancy because it was upon these denials

145 Plumb, p. 182.
of civil liberties that their minority rule depended. In
the words of Edmund Burke:146

The Protestant ascendancy is nothing more or
less than the resolution of one set of people
to consider themselves as the sole citizens
of the Commonwealth and to keep a dominion
over the rest by reducing them to slavery
under a military power.

C. C. O'Brien suggests that the penal code was in fact a
necessary consequence of the form which the English
conquest of Ireland had taken. The native Irish were not
exterminated because their labor was needed, and English
settlers did not have to worry about a resurgence of
Irish power to repossess the land or threaten land
settlement. For so long as Catholicism seemed to be a
menace, Protestant opinion supported Parliament's
repressive measures. Furthermore, enforcement of the
penal code was not uniform—sometimes fierce, but often
half-hearted, and increasingly distasteful to intelligent
Protestants, who occasionally helped the Catholics to
evade the laws.147

The pressure of England's unfair punitive measures
upon the Catholics and Protestant frustration with
England's damaging trade restraints combined to create a

146 Curtis, p. 300.
147 O'Brien, pp. 78-80.
widespread popular resentment toward England that found expression in some of Anglo-Irish Jonathan Swift's essays.\textsuperscript{148} In one of these, Swift wrote that the fact that England and Ireland were under the same government did not make Ireland dependent on England or England superior to Ireland. In another, he wrote, "All government without the consent of the governed is the very essence of slavery." The now familiar ring of these excerpts from Swift's Drapier Letters of 1724, for which a £300 reward for the anonymous author was offered until Swift revealed his authorship and the reward withdrawn for fear of public protest, was an early indication of the Irish nationalist movement that was developing.\textsuperscript{149}

Just as there was a large amorphous urban mass of lower-class Protestants who had no political voice, there was a huge Catholic population everywhere whose political isolation rendered them helpless but eagerly supportive of the revival of the Irish nationalism which came in the 1760's. There was a feeling that the people of Ireland, regardless of religion, were entitled to the same rights as the people of the sister kingdom of England.

\textsuperscript{148} O'Brien, p. 83.

A dispute between the Parliaments in Dublin and London over the way to spend a surplus of Irish tax revenue led in the early 1750's to the recognition by the Dublin Protestant ascendancy of its political power to assert itself successfully. There was a group of middle class Catholics who were prevented from engaging in the professions or holding public office and had turned to financial endeavors. They had money to lend if allowed to do so. Herein lay a new bond between the Protestant ascendancy and the Catholics, but successful Catholic money men were reluctant to finance the mercantile efforts of the Protestant intruders until a Catholic committee was founded in 1756. It was the intent of this upper level Catholic group to help recover Catholic civil rights under a Protestant constitution.150

With the accession of the English-born George III in 1760, the prospects of the Tory party seemed to improve with the king's outspoken attacks on the Whig party's oligarchic rule by "family connections". The Whigs had reduced the power of the monarchy and punished Ireland for its allegiance to the Stuart kings. With this encouragement, and with English preoccupation with its colonists in America, the Dublin Parliament pressed

150 Curtis, pp. 302-303.
its demand for constitutional reform. Discontent in southwestern Munster, fueled by high tithes, high rents and expulsions under enclosure laws, gave rise to a revolutionary group called "the White-Boys" while law-abiding Scots Presbyterians in Ulster complained of intolerable taxes, tithes and rents. Their common grievances joined in a single voice to support the Parliamentary ferment in Dublin, and these diverse groups helped to produce a new Patriot Party, intent upon winning for Ireland a true Parliament and a free constitution such as England had won for itself in 1688.\textsuperscript{151} The political rise of Henry Grattan as leader of the Patriot Party in 1775 found support among the Protestant middle class and Catholics generally. These people professed loyalty to the English Crown but demanded greater autonomy for Ireland and concessions to its Catholic population.

Once again, as in the fourteenth century, the rejection of any supposed inferiority of the "English by blood" to the "English by birth" helped establish a national consciousness between the Anglo-Irish and the native Irish, but in the eighteenth century it was the

\textsuperscript{151} Curtis, pp. 305-308.
Protestants who necessarily took the leading role in pressing for reform for all Ireland.

Minor concessions to Catholics began in 1750 with admission to the lower ranks of the army. In 1771, Catholics were permitted to sign longer leases on land. In 1775, with England at war with its American colonies, a need for better relations with Ireland led to the relaxation of English restraints upon the use of Irish shops and support of Irish fishing fleets. Some other minor concessions were also made to Catholics in an effort to prevent their full-scale support of Grattan's Patriot Movement.

The outbreak of the American Revolution, at a time when Ireland was wholly undefended against invasion from pro-American France, Spain, and Holland, created an opportunity for the Patriot Party to gain permission to organize a Protestant army. It was called the Irish Volunteers, and by 1783 it had reached the strength of 100,000 men. Its ostensible purpose was to defend Ireland against attack, but it functioned in reality as a means to gain concessions from England. It had some Catholic support, and it gained more economic relief for Ireland as England's American colonial troubles increased. Among these were the repeal of statutes
proscribing the export of woolen and other Irish manufactured goods to English colonies, thereby contributing favorably to the Irish economy.¹⁵²

In 1778, Catholics were permitted to inherit and lease land like Protestants, and the Gavelkind Act was repealed. The success of the American colonists at Yorktown in 1781 made England willing to agree to nationalist Irish demands in 1782 when the Patriot Party openly declared its opposition to the penal laws, Poynings' Law, and the closure of Irish ports to friendly nations. Poynings' law fell in 1782, removing Irish legislation from the bonds of prior English Parliamentary approval, and shortly afterwards the Declaratory Act of 1719 was repealed abolishing the power of the English Privy Council to control Ireland. These concessions gave meaning to Grattan's famous declaration that: "No power on earth but the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland is competent to bind Ireland."¹⁵³ When Grattan recommended that Catholics be restored their full rights, he was opposed, but 1782 marks the end of the purely punitive portions of the penal code and the start of an eighteen year period of Irish Parliamentary authority in Ireland.

¹⁵² Curtis, p. 311.
¹⁵³ Curtis, pp. 313, 315.
England had lost its American colonies and had become a lesser military power in Europe. For the next few years, Ireland was treated honorably as a part of the king's realm, under the routine administration of an English-appointed Lord Lieutenant.

From the start of Grattan's limited home rule Parliament in 1782 until union with England in 1800, Celtic Ireland was a Protestant nation. It was a time of prosperity, marked by a positive national attitude which included the participation of a few prominent Catholic families who could own land and enjoy most of the rights of citizenship. Emancipation, however, was not to be had, and in Celtic Ireland the right of a man to vote and to help govern the nation was fundamental. This right, however, was denied the great Catholic majority of the people in Ireland because the governing junta in Dublin felt that the importance of preserving amicable relations with England far outweighed the need for preserving Old-English or Celtic traditions. Even the Catholic Committee, now an aristocratic group, looked askance at the mass of Irish tradesmen and peasants and did not support their effort to regain full political rights. Within the junta, the Dublin-born Protestant barrister Henry Grattan was perhaps alone in urging full
emancipation to all Catholics in the hope of winning Catholic support for his essentially Protestant government.154

Grattan's Parliament was an aristocratic body which was faced with Protestant demands for reform and Catholic demands for final and total repeal of the penal laws. It was an independent legislature, but it was easily swayed by the English Lord-Lieutenant, who owed his position to the English government and was its spokesman. It was likely to be venal and more corruptible because it was composed of members of a privileged social class who were not inclined to dispense equality without a price and had no rivals to replace them if seen to be dishonorable. Patriotism was more a matter of romantic tradition than political practice. Grattan and a few others realized that Irish Parliamentary reform was necessary if problems of religious liberty, absentee landlordship, a depressed peasantry and Irish trade within the empire were to be solved. Grattan was a staunch loyalist and imperialist, willing to help England at any time, but he also was an aristocrat who would open the vote and all public offices to those respectable and aristocratic members of society who could resist the temptations and public power

154 Curtis, p. 318.
blandishments of the English. He was a Whig who believed that his upper class was born to rule.155

A decade of harmonious but uneventful collaboration between Dublin and London was ended in 1791 with a more vigorous effort to reform the Irish government.

Irish separatist nationalism became a popular political movement late in the eighteenth century after more than fifty years of Irish resentment, Catholic and Protestant alike, toward English subjugation. During the first half of the century, a subversive tradition spread throughout the land, keeping alive the Irish hatred for the loss of their land and the replacement of the Irish by the English. Spread in Gaelic by an amorphous underground society which the English merely dismissed as crude, a message of Celtic hope for national resurgence was clearly understood by the Catholics. The Protestants were resentful because of the poor economy and the English restraints upon it to keep it that way. Fifty years or more of animosity toward a common oppressor had produced a common Irish attitude and demand for basic reforms. Increasing troubles in the cities and in the farmlands soon led to agitation.

155 Curtis, p. 325; Plumb, J. H., p. 183.
In Dublin and Belfast, the need for protective legislation to defend Irish textile mills against privileged English competition led to the formation of societies to maintain wages and standards of entry into the trade. Under the influence of ideas emanating from France, these groups were attracted to radical political schemes, and by 1790 republicanism was making headway in Irish cities.156

At the same time, other groups were developing in the rural areas to protect endangered land rights. Throughout all Ireland but especially in Munster, it was the protection of villages and farms against encroaching cattle enclosures that gave rise to the "Whiteboys".157 In Ulster, non-sectarian grievances against offending landlords gave way to sectarian rivalry for available land.158 The density of population was so high in Ulster that competition between Protestants and Catholics assumed ethnic proportions as the enforcement of penal laws weakened. These agrarian groups usually were

157 Garvin, pp. 25-27.
organized as secret, armed and aggressive societies prepared to enforce their decisions as if they were local governmental units.

The French Revolution, coming on the heels of the American Revolution which had already helped to relax England's strict regulation of Ireland, changed the nature of Irish nationalist ferment. Principles of democratic political freedom spread rapidly among the Presbyterians in Ulster, and in Dublin the underprivileged class of people was awakened to the possibility of revolution as a substitute for slow evolution. In Dublin, there was a democratic leader named James Napper Tandy, and in adjacent county Kildare an obscure young barrister named Theobald Wolfe Tone was showing unusual talent as a political pamphleteer against what he considered a corrupt Irish coalition government and its English sponsor. He was also a skillful political organizer among both urban and rural workingmen. Tone, Tandy and others organized the Society of United Irishmen which soon brought together the many urban and rural groups which demanded fundamental reforms in the government of Ireland.

The Society of United Irishmen began in 1791 as a group of small reformist clubs in Belfast—a rather
secret but non-separatist, non-sectarian and non-military group of Presbyterian merchants and professional people. No common laborers were involved. Its purpose was to abolish all unnatural religious distinctions, to unite all Irishmen against the unjust influence of England, and to secure true representation for all Irishmen in an Irish national Parliament. This was a union of Catholics, Protestants and Dissenters and its organization spread throughout Ireland. Moving out to other cities and into the rural areas to spread its reformist theories, the original society formed additional societies in Dublin and other urban areas and in the farm lands where it joined forces with the ubiquitous whiteboys and the sectarian Catholic Defenders and Protestant Peep O'Day Boys from Ulster. This gathering of urban and rural as well as Catholic and Protestant people brought together many who favored the radical ideas of the French Revolution, and the movement gradually developed an overall revolutionary character. It could not, however, rid itself of the sectarian nature of its agrarian component groups. Each local society reflected the sentiment of its principal

159 Garvin, pp. 22-23.
members—Catholic or Protestant—rather than the peasant population of the area. Because of the group's bipartisan constituency and demands for religious, economic and social reforms which most Irishmen considered necessary, the United Irishmen obtained a number of welcome reforms in the Catholic Relief Act of 1793, but a general reform of the Irish government was beyond their reach. The opportunity for the true Parliamentary reform and religious emancipation which they sought was foreclosed in 1794 because of English fear of French republicanism following the execution of French King Louis XVI in 1793.

In Ireland, both the Catholic and the Protestant churches expressed horror at the French excesses and the Irish Catholic church was a powerful monarchist force against revolution and atheism as it emerged in France. The Irish Catholic peasants, however were inspired by the radical teachings of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen. Grattan was among the first to pledge Irish military support to England in its war against France, but in 1794 he also sought full Catholic emancipation in hopes of obtaining Catholic support for his Parliamentary reform effort. England's stiffening resistance brought these
reforms to a halt, leaving Tone and his radical reformers no option other than revolution.

The defeat of Grattan's reform movement in 1794 was followed by the suppression of the Dublin United Irish Society, the arrest of Wolfe Tone and then his departure from Ireland for exile in America. From that time forward, he devoted himself to promoting a French invasion of Ireland, and in Ireland the United Irishmen recovered from their reversals and prepared for an uprising.\textsuperscript{161} After a year's residence in Philadelphia with fellow Irish exiles, Tone proceeded to France with a letter of introduction to the Committee of Public Safety in Paris. Meanwhile, the divisive sectarian nature of the United Irishmen broke into the open in September of 1795 when an armed conflict between Ulster's Catholic Defenders and Protestant Peep O'Day Boys ended in a Protestant victory at the Battle of the Diamond. This event was celebrated by establishing the Orange Society, later known as the Orange Order, to maintain Protestant control and to protect the English king so long as England protected the Protestant ascendancy.\textsuperscript{162} Early in 1796, the Dublin Parliament passed an emergency

\textsuperscript{161} Beckett, p. 258.

\textsuperscript{162} Curtis, pp. 336-337.
Insurrection Act to facilitate the use of martial law, suspended habeas corpus throughout Ireland and disarmed Ulster in such an ugly way that it was condemned in the English Parliament. The Orange Society continued to grow in size and strength as the United Irishmen became openly revolutionary and attracted ever increasing Catholic membership especially from the Defenders. Protestants who had formerly avoided the Orange Society now saw it was a necessary protection against a revolutionary native Catholic group that might destroy the privileged Protestant ascendancy, and they took refuge in it as sectarian troubles increased in the late 1790's.163

In 1796, Tone was commissioned an Adjutant General in the French army by Lazare Carnot, a military member of the Revolutionary Committee of Public Safety, and later that year he sailed for Ireland with a fleet of forty three French ships carrying fifteen thousand fully equipped soldiers. Bad weather prevented the invasion landing, but the attempt encouraged the United Irishmen and caused the English to increase their repression of Irish outbursts both in Ulster where they were Protestant and in southeastern Wexford where they were Catholic. In 1798, a second French invasion was made in which Tone was

163 Moody, p. 12.
captured aboard a French ship. After a dramatic trial, he was condemned to be hanged like a common criminal, but while awaiting execution he robbed the gallows by taking his own life in August of 1798.

Although the United Irishmen which Wolfe Tone helped to start were non-separatist, Tone probably always sought Irish separation from England. His mistake was in failing to understand the Irish people whom he led. He was personally so devoted to Irish freedom that he thought his countrymen were willing to abandon their old religious differences. His plans were upset not so much by the strength of England or the hesitation of France as by the deep-rooted division among the Irish people that converted a national campaign into a sectarian squabble. The final battle in 1797 was not a struggle between Irishmen and Englishmen, but between Protestants and Catholics—all of them Irish. 

The final Dublin Parliament of the Kingdom of Ireland was convened in January of 1798, six months prior to Tone's last dramatic effort to bring French republicanism to Ireland. As usual, it as not a representative group and the revolt that erupted that year showed the public contempt for its corrupt conduct,

164 Beckett, p. 258.
thus assuring its demise as an instrument of Irish government.

The revolt was not crushed, but it became disorganized, and its leaders could not rely upon French aid. In numerous isolated areas, violence began under both Catholic and Protestant leaders, Catholics even joining Presbyterian farmers in heavily Scottish Antrim. In county Wexford, where the old English population from Strongbow's days still spoke an old Saxon dialect, the United Irishmen were sturdy peasants who sympathized with the Catholic Defenders from Ulster and were outraged by earlier acts of English brutality against them. Weeks of fighting against the English eventually degenerated into individual battles between Protestants and Catholics until the disorganized United Irishmen were finally defeated on June 21, 1798 at Vinegar Hill. Two months later, Tone was captured, and the rebellion was over.  

It was now necessary to restore order to the distraught country and to reconsider its form of government.

Ireland had been a kingdom since 1541 when King Henry VIII had changed his title from "Lord" to "King" but the Irish people had never been satisfied with their nation's subordinate status. Following the imposition of

165 Curtis, pp. 341-345.
the English form of Reformation upon it in the sixteenth
century and the wars and confiscations which followed
during the balance of the Tudor and Stuart centuries,
Ireland had been torn and resettled, depopulated and
repopulated, but it never lost its need to be free to
govern itself. The unsatisfied demand for Catholic
emancipation and self rule, equally important ingredients
in the Celtic way of life, had survived more than three
hundred years of oppression and were the principal
obstacles to the form of government that England offered
Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century. English
efforts to maintain its supremacy had prevailed but at
the cost of reviving its old reputation for brutality.

At the end of the eighteenth century, when England
lay under the threat of revolutionary France, Prime
Minister William Pitt saw the union of Ireland with
England as an imperial necessity. No longer could
England afford separate governments, despite Grattan's
call for conciliation or the jingoist Protestant claim
that Irish loyalists had just destroyed a major threat to
English rule. A huge English army was needed to police
Ireland, and Catholics as well as Protestants were
terrified into a state of mind which required the close
control that only unity could bring. Most members of the
ruling junta in Dublin were convinced that union with England was the only way to protect their privileges under English rule, and the English Parliament agreed. Also, union with Scotland in 1707 had proved successful. Pitt determined to create a legislative union between England and Ireland by promising full emancipation to the Irish Catholic majority for its support and purchasing Irish Parliamentary approval of its own self destruction with patronage. Restoration of religious freedom was the reward Pitt offered the Catholics for acceptance of English rule. They accepted and the ruling Dublin junta was rewarded with forty-eight peerages, £1,260,000 for the purchase of pocket boroughs and other money to compensate for lost jobs.

The only obstacle to union was the Protestant ascendancy's base of private power at Dublin, and Pitt bought it. Wolfe Tone might well have viewed the sale as a confirmation of his charge that the Irish Parliament was corrupt and needed to be reformed.\textsuperscript{166} It died hard, however, stiffened by objections such as the one from a young barrister named Daniel O'Connell that he would prefer the return of the penal laws to the loss of the national Parliament, but on the third reading it passed

\textsuperscript{166} Curtis, p. 346-350.
and received royal assent on August 1, 1800. Celtic Ireland became the Catholic part of the Protestant United Kingdom.

The Union, which technically was born on New Year's Day in 1801 abolished the Irish Parliament, introduced twenty-eight Irish lay peers and four Irish bishops to the British House of Lords and one hundred Irish representatives into Commons. Irish judicial independence was extinguished, and the House of Lords became the supreme appellate tribunal from all Irish Courts.\(^{167}\)

Early in 1801, Pitt proposed the removal of all remaining restraints and disabilities upon Catholics and the practice of Catholicism in Ireland--the emancipation he had promised Ireland for its peaceful acceptance of union with England. George III, however, was persuaded that such a concession would constitute a breach of his coronation oath as head of the English church, and he refused Pitt's proposal. Pitt found it necessary to acquiesce and promised to drop the matter.\(^{168}\)


\(^{168}\) Curtis, p. 351.
Once again, England broke its pledge. It is no wonder that distrust of English promises became a final ingredient in the Celtic tradition—added at the very moment Ireland was merged with England and lost its national identity.

It took almost one hundred and twenty-five years to undo what Pitt did and King George III spoiled in 1800. The world will never know how fruitful the union of England and Ireland might have been if Catholic emancipation had been granted swiftly and peacefully as Pitt had promised. The wrenching agitation and violence of the nineteenth century and the frustrated zeal of the home rule movement, which converted nineteenth century constitutional policy into twentieth century rebellion, might have been avoided if England had kept its word. However, as it was, the union was crippled at birth and never had a chance of success. Also because it was a matter of formal legislation similar to that which had annexed contiguous Wales in 1536 and Scotland in 1707, the terms of the union were fixed and could not be changed to meet unforeseen necessities without the approval of the normally imperialist House of Lords. Thus until 1914, the home rule freedom of Dominion status that Canada received in 1867 and other major colonies
were awarded early in the twentieth century was not available for Ireland. Unlike the three nearby components of England's Celtic fringe, those distant bastions of British imperial power had been colonial possessions of the British crown. When granted semi-autonomous dominion status, they continued to derive their governmental authority from the crown which was represented by a Governor General. Monarchical authority remained unaltered. 169 To grant similar autonomy to Ireland would require that Great Britain itself be dismembered, and the time for that was far in the future.

The union of England and Ireland was a result of Irish nationalism ignited by American and French republicanism. It was born of understandable English fear of French invasion from Ireland and the terrifying social consequences of the French Revolution which Edmund Burke had denounced in 1790 as reckless destruction of living institutions by self-interested fanatics as a prelude to the rise of a single tyrant. 170


A good deal of support for the union came from the Irish Catholic hierarchy which was horrified by the attraction many Irishmen at that time had for revolution. Some Irish Bishops looked to England as a possible source of reform for such people. The rural Irish population appeared to care little about the union, but many people of all religions and classes opposed it as a evidence of the decay of Dublin and Ireland's loss of status. Many Protestants opposed it because Catholic emancipation had been promised.  

The union must also be seen as a result of England's frustrating experience with Ireland's rejection of absentee English rule. Ireland had been an English papal fiefdom for about three hundred and seventy years, then a second kingdom of the English king for three hundred and fifty years, but despite the infusion of English settlers and administrators, imposition of English law and the crushing force of English armies the Irish people had never been conquered or even fully subdued. English political leaders and most Irish Protestants agreed with Pitt that, "Ireland is like a ship on fire, it must either be extinguished or cut

171 Garvin, p. 32.
adrift." The best way to control Ireland was to smother the fire, and for this reason Celtic Ireland was made the Catholic part of Protestant England. About halfway through the nineteenth century, Benjamin Disraeli described Ireland as a sorely aggrieved land, governed by the weakest possible sort of executive power where a poverty-stricken people endured a church which was not their's and a landed aristocracy which lived elsewhere. In an 1886 analysis of Gladstone's recently defeated Irish Home Rule bill, the English jurist A. V. Dicey gave his opinion of the 1800 Treaty of Union which the proposed Home Rule measure was intended to relieve:

An act meant by its authors to be the source of the prosperity and concord which though slowly followed upon the union with Scotland, has not made Ireland rich, has not put an end to Irish lawlessness, has not terminated the feud between Protestants and Catholics, has not raised the position of Irish tenants, has not taken away the cause of Irish discontent, and has therefore not removed Irish disloyalty. This is the indictment which can fairly be brought against the Act of Union.

173 Maurois, A., p. 149.
Ireland was no longer a nation in its own right. For the first time in two thousand years, Ireland was part of another nation and was not free to develop its own culture and be itself.

In the year 1800, the land of Ireland was owned by England, only five percent of it remaining in Catholic hands. Much of it had been depopulated for cattle enclosures and was supporting English landlords with rent and English markets with food rather than Irish people with the needs of life. For the most part, Brehon law was just a relic for Irish nationalists like Robert Emmett to lament, but it survived for a while in remote pockets of Celtic society in northern Connacht or southern Ulster. The Celtic social and political institutions which the Brehon law had built and through which it had directed the course of Ireland's two thousand years of growth, accompanied the law into oblivion. Only the native Irish Catholic religion and the Gaelic language remained from among the major components of the Celtic tradition. Irish Catholicism, tempered by centuries of humiliating servility, had finally burst its bonds in quest of republican style government only to meet determined Protestant opposition and to be ultimately defeated by the political corruption
of an English-sponsored Protestant government in Dublin. The Gaelic language remained the language of the Irish peasants everywhere, and until 1750 the vast majority of all rural Irishmen as well as many others spoke little or no English. As late as 1775, Gaelic was used by most Irish people.

These were the principal ingredients of the Celtic tradition which went along with Ireland when it became part of the United Kingdom on January 1, 1801. There was, however, still another intangible but powerful part of the tradition which had grown in Ireland and come to typify it. For two hundred years, ever since Ireland had been forcibly deprived of its land and its Celtic way of life, Irish Catholic people had grown to distrust Englishmen, often with a bitter hatred. Protestant England had a reputation in Ireland for not being trustworthy, and at the very start of union of the two nations England broke its word again. Regardless of the reason it had or professed, England broke its pledge to restore Irish Christianity to Ireland and thus confirmed the Irish belief that England could not be trusted. This Irish distrust of England reinforced Irish dreams of Celtic resurgence and helped to sustain the Celtic consciousness.
The Celtic nation came to an end in 1800 as a matter of law, but the turmoil of the next one hundred and thirty seven years attests to the irrepressible nature of its Celtic tradition, the wellspring of Ireland's resolve to regain autonomy--perhaps independence.
REFERENCES


