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Edward Thomas O'Dwyer - Bishop Of Limerick Church And State In Revolutionary Ireland

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EDWARD THOMAS O'DWYER-BISHOP OF LIMERICK
CHURCH AND STATE IN REVOLUTIONARY IRELAND

by
William R. Harvey

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Helena, Montana
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This thesis fulfills the requirements for the Department of History.

This thesis is dedicated to Mr. S. R. Bruce Cook, formerly of Carroll College, who first inspired me to take an interest in history, the Reverend William O'Flaherty, also of Carroll, and, most certainly, the pupils of Ireland.

[Signature of Reader]

Fr. Joseph P. Sullivan

[Signature of Reader]

April 11, 1972

(Date)
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This thesis is dedicated to Mr. S. R. Bruce Cook, formerly of Carroll College, who first inspired me to take an interest in history, the Reverend William Greytak, also of Carroll, and, most certainly, to the great Gaels of Ireland.

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As long as grass grows or water runs, men and women will be found ready to dare and give their lives in the cause of Irish freedom, and will deem the sacrifice virtue, and not sin.

Edward Thomas O'Dwyer,
Bishop of Limerick—1916

This is the story of an Irish man of God. He loved his Church and he loved his native land... and he lived in a time when Irishmen were forced to choose between the two. The specifics of Edward Thomas O'Dwyer's decision and the place it holds in the annals of the Catholic Church in Ireland make up the essence of this thesis. My goal is to enter into detail the particulars of an often forgotten chapter of Irish History, as well as to impart to the reader some understanding of the religious question in Ireland today. In that Clio unrolls her scroll primarily in order to teach, my brief analysis of what Dr. O'Dwyer did, or failed to do, or should have done will, hopefully, allow us to espy what the Irish people and their Church must do today if both are to survive the rigours of this century.

The format is not complicated. In that my paper concerns itself with the interaction between nationalism and religion, it must, by extension, also treat the host of par-
adoxes which make up that emotional morass commonly recognized as the Irish national character. A second major section will consist of a brief history of Irish Church-State relations, viewed against the backdrop of three rebellions: the 1798, the 1848 and the 1916 Easter Rising. Following that will be our story of the Bishop of Limerick. My study of this remarkable cleric's career will revolve around an appraisal of his involvement in the following public issues: local level politics in the Limerick area, education and the anti-conscription campaign of the Great War. These smaller controversies will serve to lead us towards the Bishop of Limerick's shattering confrontation with General Sir John Maxwell, commander of British forces in Ireland after the Easter Rising, a show of defiance which was the highlight of the former's long life. In addition to all of the above, I have also set aside a limited amount of space for a scrutiny of the bishop's theology and philosophy. Throughout the thesis, the overall goal has been to view the attitudes of both the Irish people and the Irish clergy towards nationalism by following the career of a man who was both a great Irishman and a great Irish cleric.

Having noticed that only about half of the thesis actually deals with Dr. O'Dwyer, the reader may well protest that sections One and Two are too lengthy, particularly the first chapter. In lieu of an elaborate explanation, let me for a moment place the reader in the midst of the activities of Easter Week, 1916. A small group of Irishmen had barri-
caded themselves in several strategic points throughout the city of Dublin in an attempt to overthrow British rule in Ireland. At the same time, 150,000 of their countrymen were voluntarily serving in His Majesty's armed forces. And, after the insurrection had been crushed and the surviving Sinn Féiners were being led through the streets and into captivity, the citizens of Dublin greeted them with a fusilade of garbage and verbal abuse. The reader who is not familiar with Irish History will no doubt express shock upon reading these facts, and there are numerous others available with which to horrify him more. In other words, the simple truth is that too many people and, more specifically, too many Irishmen, have an overly romanticized notion of what Irish History is all about. It is for this very reason that it is necessary to examine the Irish personality in the hope that we may expose to daylight those factors which have contributed to the yawning canyon which separates myth from reality in Ireland's history. What has happened in Ireland is not what we usually imagine, and I for one believe we are justified in expending a considerable amount of effort and time to find out why this is so. Whatever else remains to be said about the basic format of this thesis can be said rapidly. For the reader's convenience, I have supplemented the text with photographs of the Bishop of Limerick and General Maxwell, political and ecclesiastical maps of Ireland, reproductions of the correspondence between the two aforementioned individuals, a simi-
lar reproduction of the congratulatory letter Dr. O'Dwyer received from Pope Pius in 1908 which lauded the former's criticism of Modernism and, finally, a select bibliography which will, I hope, assist the reader in the event that he wishes to pursue the topics raised here further.

Several problems emerged in the preparation of this work, some of which became apparent only after my research was well along. For one thing, I did not know how acquainted my readers would be with Irish History. I did not wish to presuppose too much and thereby run the risk of discussing the unfamiliar. Nor did I wish to presuppose too little and waste valuable time dwelling upon collateral material as a consequence. I have decided to approach this problem by making extensive use of content footnotes which will contain most of the necessary elementary data. I hope this policy will permit the introduction of important background information without disrupting the flow of the text itself.

Another problem which emerged has been alluded to earlier. Dr. O'Dwyer was deeply involved with purely theological matters during his religious life, and much of the fame he achieved in Europe was due more to his dissertations on theology than to his involvement in political affairs. A lengthy assessment of his many accomplishments in this field of endeavor would, I believe, contribute much to the sketch of him presented here. Unfortunately, time and space do not permit such an extensive analysis, and information concerning the bishop's theology and philosophy must regrettably
appear in capsule form. It is to be hoped, however, that this brief presentation of the Bishop of Limerick's stand vis-à-vis theology will somehow contribute to a better understanding of his political views and activities.

Now, a word about the sources; the primary references consist mainly of materials which are available only in the Irish National Library (Dublin) or, in some cases, the British Museum. Irish newspapers, pamphlets and the surviving correspondence of Dr. O'Dwyer fit into this category, as do selected state papers of the British Government which I have utilized. An all-important factor in the preparation of the paper was that no biography of the Bishop of Limerick is to be found under a single cover. Consequently, the portrait of him presented here is the result of an extensive scrutiny of widely scattered references.

As for secondary sources, I have tried to use as many Irish and British titles as possible. Most of these works are in my possession and may be consulted upon request. I have examined all of the works listed in the bibliography, if for no other purpose than to shed light on relatively minor points. The reader should realize, however, that the sources cited in this thesis make up but a minute portion of the documentation which is available. I have not, for example, dipped into the vast reservoir of data ready at hand in modern Irish periodicals.

I made use of a third category of references during my research which can not be readily inserted into the bib-
liography. Included within this third strata are, firstly, numerous personal interviews, both formal and informal, which I staged while conducting research in Ireland. As a matter of fact, this thesis most probably never could have been begun, let alone completed, without the help and understanding of the Irish themselves. A second sub-division here is composed of my own observations and opinions of the Irish panorama. In the final analysis these are, of course, prejudiced impressions and little else, and I apologize in advance if they become overly prevalent during the course of my commentary. Finally, to borrow a familiar cliche, this thesis has been a genuine work of love. I have always found the Irish to be the most fascinating of people, even when they are maddeningly set in their ways or incomprehensible in their thoughts and actions. I have wanted for a long time to write something which would do them justice, and I hope this thesis will fill the order. Being non-Catholic, objectivity was easy to maintain as long as I was writing about Dr. O'Dwyer or the Church as a whole. Being Irish by heritage, I found the going to be somewhat rougher while I was commenting upon the nature of the Gaels. I can only hope that personal emotions have not prevented me from reaching my goal, which was to resurrect the memory of a great Irishman while at the same time seeking some explanation to the national character and mood of his countrymen.
CHAPTER ONE
FIRST THOUGHTS

For the great Gaels of Ireland
Are the people God made mad.
All their wars were merry
And all their songs are sad.

Toast to the Gaels
Chesterson

A fair appraisal, Mr. Chesterson! Like all caricatures, yours bears a certain resemblance to the truth. We beg to make a few corrections, however. In the first place, Ireland's wars (we assume you are here referring to rebellions) were usually none too merry, although some of them, like 'the 48', had a certain farcical tinge. Secondly, while Irish music is somewhat limited in that it deals almost exclusively with the four categories of whisky, war, work and women, not all of it is melancholy. The music of the great Gaels is pleasingly laden with lighthearted, witty airs, some of which were actually inspired by the merry wars. Perhaps it was songs such as the traditional ditty, The Man from Mullingar which gave you the idea that the wars themselves were merry:

The "Peelers" chased him out of Connemara
For blowing up the barracks down in Clara.
When Patrick got to Ballymote, he stole the parson's car
And he sold it to the bishop in the town of Castlebar.
By and large though, your disquisition is sound, Mr. Chesterson, especially the part about the Irish being mad. Surely they must be so; come to the land of "Cead Mille Failte"—"One hundred thousand welcomes!", and "Croppies lay down!". Come to the land of leas and loughs of peerless beauty and slums of unmentionable ugliness. In short:

Come over the sea
To the land where legends remain;
Where glories of old stir the heart
And may yet call again.
Where the past has been lost
And the future is still to be won
And dreams of tomorrow must wait
Till this day is done.

This question of the national madness of the great Gaels is one which we frequently find ourselves asking as we survey the latest headlines from Ulster. We may at least comfort ourselves somewhat with the knowledge that our darkness has been shared by many others down through the ages, and many of those were natives of the British Isles. The plain truth of the matter is that the enigmatic Irish character has bedeviled both Ireland's oppressors as well as those who would break her fetters. Cromwell did not understand the Irish; neither did Connolly. None but a handful of politicians on either side of the Irish Sea have really comprehended the intricacies of the Gaelic mind and the emotions which govern its functions; Collins, Pitt, Sarsfield, and William of Orange among them.

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1 Buachaill on Eirne—Traditional. This is rare among Irish folk songs in that both the Gaelic original and later English versions are traditional.
The English have never understood where Ireland got all her patriots and martyrs. And, for their part, the patriots have never understood why they usually have been so ill treated by the people they fancied they were liberating. For, contrary to what they would have you believe, the Irish have all too frequently treated their patriots rather shabbily. We have already alluded to how the navvy sharks and shawlies poured out of the Coombe and Monto districts to hoot and jeer the fallen rebels of the Dublin Rising. Yet, when the executions began at Kilmainham and Mount Joy, those same raucous Dubliners came to believe that a "terrible beauty" had been born in their city that fateful Easter Week.

What happened in Dublin in 1916 was a repeat performance of a recurrent Irish drama. The great Gaels despise their patriots, but they love their martyrs. This is an important fact which, fortunately for the cause of Irish independence, has rarely been clearly understood by either the patriots or their English foes. Perhaps the martyr is so well loved because he is, essentially, a loser. The Irish have always had more use for the loser than for the winner, be the former a victim of war, or love, or the fickleness of the highstepping cobs at the local track. England's greatest mistake as far as her Irish policy goes is that she has constantly allowed the Irish to ascend to a superior moral plane by giving them far, far too many losers and martyrs. By so doing, Britannia guaranteed the continuance of the sad
songs and, by extension, underwrote the merry wars:

'Here words are lightly spoken,'
Said Pearse to Connolly.
'Perhaps a breath of politic words
Has withered our Rose Tree,
Or maby twas but a wind that blew
Across the bitter sea.'

'It needs to be but watered,'
James Connolly replied,
'To make the Green come out again
And spread on every side
And shake the blossom from the bud
To be the garden's pride.'

'But where can we draw water,'
Said Pearse to Connolly,
'When all the wells are parched away?
'Why, plain as plain can be,
There's nothing but our own red blood
Can make a right Rose Tree!' &

Attempts to explain the national madness of the Irish have been numerous and varied. Patrick Pearse believed that fifty percent of the Irish people had been bought off by the English and the balance had been browbeaten into submission. (He failed to indicate which group he hoped to enlist beneath the banner of his own particular brand of Sinn Feinism.) The British for their part alternated between policies of harsh suppression and shameless paternalism:

...a quiet, patient people, who pass lives of much self-denial. But they are easily led, and it is therefore the more incumbent on Government to nip lawlessness in the bud. Neglect in this respect has invariably led to things getting out of hand, with the result that strong repressive measures become necessary, and much hardship was imposed upon misled, but perhaps comparatively inoffensive people. 

2 The Rose Tree—William Butler Yeats.
3 Minutes of Evidence and Appendix of Documents
And again: there is always a danger to the safety of the Realm when so many of the Irish people, whose temperament makes them easy to lead or mislead, are in possession of firearms.

In other words, the Irish are, in the opinion of these writers at any rate, small children whose every activity must be closely supervised, lest they bring harm upon themselves and others. Some of the sad songs sarcastically agree:

When we were savage, fierce and wild
She came like a mother to her child;
She raised us gently from the slime
And kept our hands from hellish crime
And then she sent us all to heaven
In her own good time.

There is nothing about the foregoing statements which is completely out of touch with the truth. The Irish have, at times, displayed a tendency to knuckle under, to co-operate, which has simply appalled the patriots. Historian Frank O'Connor has termed this malignancy the triumph of Lilliputia; the domination of Irish thought and morals by trivia and the lowest available denominator. Speaking of the unsavory behavior of the Dubliners during the Easter Rising, O'Connor states that the predominance of British manna in...
the capitol was a primary factor:

The sitter's on the broad stone steps sprang into unwashed activity, surprise and rage mingling in them. Their sons, husbands, brothers, were at the front, fighting the Germans; the separation money flowed like water through the streets, and now the dirty pro-Germans were attacking it. Attacking the blessed separation money!

But rather than continue to seek an understanding of the Irish character by examining the words of more dated writers, I determined to consult the most recent and, if necessary, the most controversial, scholarship at hand. I found what I was looking for when I happened upon the works of Robert Ardrey, a well-known exponent of the so-called "New Biology". I found his book, The Territorial Imperative to be most interesting and particularly well-suited to the course of my research.

Having read Ardrey, I have become convinced that, some day, an enterprising historian of a determinist bent will no doubt attempt to analyze the whole vast canvas of man's affairs on this earth down through the ages in terms of the mandates of the New Biology. Let us here merely scratch the surface by testing Ardrey's theories in but one small corner of the laboratory. Let us, in other words, investigate the possibility that Ireland may be a perfect example of certain biologically determined behavior patterns.

What makes Ardrey's work so very interesting is the

fact that he distinguishes between two types of organized human societies; the biological nation and the noyau. The first of these requires little explanation on my part. A nation is that type of society with which we are all familiar and within which we ourselves dwell. The noyau, however, is a different case altogether, and it becomes necessary at this juncture to specify exactly what it is we are talking about. 1) Noyau are noisy affairs. The newcomer may, at first, A noyau, briefly stated, is a human society which is held together by its inner antagonisms. It differs from the biological nation in that the latter is held together by animosity towards other groups (nations). A noyau, to state it another way, is a sort of anarchy wherein individual beings miraculously manage to survive despite an extreme amount of social disorder. Ardrey was thinking specifically of Italy when he wrote. He could just as well have been thinking of Ireland:

Shortly before he died, Cavour is reputed to have said, 'We have created Italy, now we must create Italians.' But a century has passed since the risorgimento, and no one has yet succeeded. . . . Italy remains a patchwork of jealousies, feuds, ambitions, rivalries and headless horsemen.7

I first read those words while sprawled upon the bed

7 Robert Ardrey, The Territorial Imperative (London: The Fontana Library, 1967), p. 204. Says Ardrey, "I have taken from the French ethologist Jean-Jacques Petter the term "noyau" as a label for the society of inward antagonism. It is awkward—-even bad taste, perhaps--to introduce a foreign word to a discussion in which we are afflicted by so many concepts foreign to our normal thinking. It has seemed to me
in my hotel room in Dublin this past summer. The "gaff" is located on Marlboro Street, within easy walking distance of both the Georgian Tenements and the Quays. As such, the site affords an excellent and never to be forgotten opportunity to watch a full-blown noyau in operation. And the society which I observed matched fairly well the criteria set down by Ardrey in his book.

1) Noyaux are noisy affairs. The newcomer may, at first, be unable to distinguish between the din rising from an urban center situated within a noyau and the crescendo which is a familiar part of such areas in non-noyaux. The sonority of the noyau, however, is much more individualistic in character, possibly because the men, women and children who contribute to it are in themselves so hotly individualistic. The vociferation is also more aggressive:

...the Italian must turn up his radio or his television set to maximum volume or quarrel with his wife in such tones as to leave no neighbor in doubt that the master is home and in charge of the situation. If an Italian drove his car quietly or failed to rev up his engine at four in the morning, it would be a public humiliation, an un-wise, however, to get as far away as possible from all those English words like "community" or "society", which inevitably bear connotations of co-operation. Noyau—meaning, roughly, a nucleus—is correct in that it implies a primitive evolutionary step towards societies characterized by mutual aid. But more important to this inquiry than its precision is its lack of connotation for the English-thinking mind, and that is what we shall need if we are to build up an appreciation for those groups of individuals held together by mutual animosity, who could not survive had they no friends to hate." The Territorial Imperative (pp. 185-186). The Irish, like Ardrey's Italians, appear to be ill-disposed towards co-operation and organization, as a gang of ditch-diggers will quickly prove.
announcement that he did not own a car.8

So too, in Ireland. Regardless of where a noyau may be located, surely, one can hear it from a long way off!

20 For all their hullabaloo, noyaux are generally safe places to live. The Irish, like the English, are capable of horrendous brutality in war and on the playing field, but in more normal times the great Gaels dwell within a society remarkably free of violent crime. You are much safer after dark on the streets of Dublin than in any good, middle-class American small town. There was considerable fear this summer that packs of Dublin "Skinheads" and teams of sweet young Colleens operating as purse snatchers might change all that, but there appears to be much more smoke than fire in the matter. Most observers, including myself, are confident that the noyau will somehow overcome such activity. Besides, both types of criminal behavior are foreign imports; the first from that same lovely land that brought you Mods and Rockers and the second from Milan. The stabbing incidents which took place when two gypsy clans renewed an old blood feud at the Limerick Fair in mid-August are more representative of native Irish violence.9 (Northern Ireland, we should point out, is a completely different matter. We

8 Ibid., p. 205.
9 An excellent analysis of the violent nature of Dublin political life is to be had in V. S. Pritchett's, Dublin: a Portrait (New York: Harper & Row, 1967). Crime in Ireland has traditionally been of the political variety and has been perpetrated by mobs of Gaels, and not by individuals.
shall have cause to appraise Ulster's infamous violence, a little later.)

3) Noyaux are also very durable, and of all their qualities, this one may well be the most significant as far as our purposes here are concerned:

A society founded on family territories, innumerable peripheries, and an unholy complexity of inner antagonisms is a society of remarkable staying power. It is flexible. Lacking heart or head, it is difficult to kill. It may lose a portion of its body this century and get it back the next; in the meantime the absence of an arm or leg goes virtually unnoticed.10

The subject of the durability of noyaux conveniently leads us to the necessary process of qualifying somewhat our statements about the great Gaels and their island home. For, even though the similarities between the Irish and the Italian noyaux are indeed remarkable, there exist important differences as well, and an analysis of those discrepancies will contribute a great deal to our understanding of the unique Irish national character. What about those illusive social institutions which are so durable? Just how flexible are the great Gaels? And, more important, what about that great lost limb known as Ulster?

The reader may well respond to our commentary thus far by raising the question, "If Ireland is a noyau, that is, a society which owes its cohesion to its inner antagonisms, and which is, theoretically, uninterested in forming

10 Robert Ardrey, The Territorial Imperative, p. 206. To be perfectly fair, however, I believe that Italy has protested property losses in the past.
antagonisms directed against other societies, how do you propose to explain Ireland's long struggle for independence? Is not this the kind of struggle which is characteristic of nations, and not of noyaux?" More important is the question of the drive to unify all of Ireland:

An angel's voice sang round my bed, 'A nation once again!' And Ireland, long a province, Shall be a nation once again!11

Let us commence our explanation by pointing out that Ireland is not a perfect noyau; it has been warped and disfigured by extensive contact with the English nation, it has not been left alone. I believe that Irish "Nationalism", or the drive to make the entire island a single religious and political unit, is very much the expression of a noyau that wishes to be left to pursue its merry pandemonium of inner antagonisms in peace. Let us support our argument by merely mentioning that the great Gaels have not waged offensive war against another people for a thousand years. When they have fought for their homes, they have fought at home. The problem is that the noyau has not been left in peace, and it has reacted to the pressure applied to it by the nation that is England in a way curiously typical of both noyaux and nations; a series of "Nationalistic" rebellions, conducted in true noyau fashion and characterized by poor planning, inept execution, plain bad luck and the ever-

11 A Nation Once Again--Traditional. This is often considered to be the unofficial anthem of the Provincial I.R.A.
The Irish problem is further complicated by the fact that one fourth of the island, the province of Ulster, is not a nouvau at all, or is, at the very best, a badly distorted one. The importation of tens of thousands of Protestants from the English midlands and Scotland into the "Plantation of Ulster" during the reign of Elizabeth I and after, and the subsequent disenfranchisement of the native Catholic Irish drastically altered the appearance and personality of this northern quarter of the nouvau. What we are seeing in troubled Ulster today is, I believe, the attempt of a nation, personified by the Protestant community, to impose its will upon a nouvau and the corresponding attempt of the nouvau to go its own way. The conflict has, as everyone is aware, found its most convenient form in the horror of "religious" warfare. The fact that the representatives of the nation are Protestant and those of the nouvau are Catholic could, perhaps be attributed to pure coincidence, even if we note that Calvanistic Protestantism, with its emphasis on frugality, hard work and, above all, social conformity, is far better...

The immense disparity between Britain and Ireland as to population, military potential and economic power has, in recent times, placed the possibility of a successful Irish rebellion in the realm of dreams. As we shall see in the next chapter, however, such a canyon did not always exist, and the failure of risings such as 'the 98' must be attributed to the simple fact that the Irish people did not support their rebels. Nations may revolt against their oppressors; nouvaux generally find that such displays of social unity are far beyond their capacities. One problem of note has been internal dissension.
suited to a nation that to a *nostalgia*.

But religious strife only serves to obscure the numerous other differences between the combatants. The simple fact is that the two groups differ in a great number of ways other than in their faith; they are racially different, culturally different, their thought patterns are different. It is difficult, indeed, perhaps impossible, to point out with mere words the dissimilarities between an Englishman and an Irishman, or between an Orangeman and a resident of the Republic to the south. It is a reality which cannot be appreciated through books, or newspapers, or travel brochures. A book such as Ardrey's may help, or, as was the

13

We should also note that there is a difference between Ulster Protestants and Englishmen, though the former would be the last to admit it. The Orangeman takes great pride in his English lineage, and frequently goes to great extremes to ape every English cultural or social development. Alas, when the Orangeman sojourns to the Motherland he discovers that, instead of being "more English than the English", he is not really English at all. But the rub is that he is, by his own insistence, not really Irish either; he fits no category. It is an interesting aside to the Ulster quandary that the Orangeman is afflicted with an identity crisis of immense proportions.

To a limited extent, some Ulster Catholics have the same problem. They often attempt to be "more Irish than the Irish" to the south. Young Catholic nationalists rally round their Gaelic language and culture in much the same way as the Orangemen rally round their faith. It always comes as a shock to these enthusiasts of the old Ireland that their Catholic brothers in the Republic generally do not share their enthusiasm or interests. The Cookstown firebrand, Bernadette Devlin, like most nationalists, went through an ultra-Irish phase in her school days, and was appalled upon her first visit to the Republic to learn that many people there regard Ceilidh dances and similar "traditional" past times as backward and unsophisticated impediments to Ireland's progress. Worse, in-
case with this writer, may lend new words for the expression of old intangibles. But in the final analysis, only contact of a highly personal nature with the societies in question may convey a true understanding of them. You cannot appreciate the differences that exist between the streets and lanes of London or Glasgow on the one hand and those of Belfast or Dublin on the other unless you walk them. There is an atmosphere in English pubs and around English hearths which is somehow unlike that of their Irish counterparts, and only by entering into the environment can one hope to comprehend the heterogenities.

Thus far in this chapter, we have attempted to in some small way underscore the peculiarities of the Irish national character and relate those incarnate substances to Ireland's patriots. We have far from concluded our search for the essence of Irish nationalism, but now it is time to

stead of striving to preserve the Gaelic, many Irishmen are now arguing that the ancient language of their fathers should be replaced in the schools by a modern Continental language. One Irishman of my acquaintance, who now resides in London, sent his son to school in Ireland until he discovered that one of the boy's homework assignments involved translating Gaelic into Latin. "That topped it for me", he related. "Imagine! Translating one dead language into another!" Little wonder that most Ulster Catholics, like Miss Devlin, eventually seek solutions to their problems within a purely Ulster context, having concluded that, "... all is not well in our dear little Republic of Ireland." ((Bernadette Devlin, The Price of My Soul (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1969), p. 63.)

It is my opinion that much can be learned of troubled, mixed societies by examining the identity crisis within them. Other examples might be the Afrikaners and the Rhodesians and, closer to home, the French Canadians. All of these lands, I believe, may—someday—become Northern Irelands.
move on to a preliminary investigation of the Irish police'most durable institution, the Catholic Church.

The first reality which makes itself evident whenever one considers Irish Catholicism and Irish Catholics is the fact that both are unique in Europe today and have been for some time. The Italian, or Austrian, or French Catholic is largely content to endure only the most minimal outward signs of devotion. That is, he is baptized in the Church, married in the Church, and buried in the Church. Otherwise, the European Catholic prefers to leave the family's religious obligations in the hands of his womenfolk, usually those of advanced years. And, it goes without saying that religious practices under these circumstances are little more than the superficial walking through of appropriate ceremonies by flesh-and-blood robots. Little wonder that some cynical Continental clerics have come to regard some nations, especially France, as "missionary countries".

The Irishman is a complete contrast, at least on the surface. J. H. Whyte, the outstanding authority in the field of modern Irish Catholicism, has correctly pointed out that his countrymen have the most enviable of attendance records at religious services. And, as to the possibility that the often-quoted statistics may only indicate that most of the great Gaels prefer to go through the motions, or are not sincere in their beliefs, Whyte notes:

Irish Catholicism is something more than mere custom. It may be true that some Irish Catholics go to mass only out of habit; but it seems unlike-
ly that the habit would persist unless, to many Irishmen, it was something more than that. And anyone who observes Irish devotional patterns will acknowledge that there is far more than mere conformity involved. The Church obliges its members to go to mass on Sundays; it does not require them to attend mass on weekdays and yet many thousands do so. It obliges its members to go to communion at least once a year; the queues for communion in the churches, Sunday after Sunday, show that many Irish Catholics are not content with 'just getting by'. The large and, until very lately, increasing numbers of vocations to the priesthood is another index of vitality.¹⁴

My own observations lead me to agree with Whyte in this regard, and I can readily attest to the sincerity of my Irish friends' devotion. I also agree with Whyte that the Irish tend to set their clergy apart from and above themselves:

One facet of this loyalty of Irish Catholics to their Church is the tradition that they do not criticise their clergy in public. This tradition, it is true, has in its full strength been of comparatively short duration. There seems to have been more plain speaking between clergy and laity in the nineteenth century than after 1900; and since about 1950 there have been increasing signs that the tradition is breaking down. . . . Whatever they may have said in private, Irish Catholics have paid respect to what their bishops

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¹⁴ J. H. Whyte, Church and State in Modern Ireland: 1923-1970 (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan Ltd., 1970), p. 7. As to recruitment for the priesthood, I would like to add that, in many parts of the country, Irish parents still subscribe to the old tradition that one son must be groomed for taking over the family farm or business, and one other son must enter the Church. Whyte notes later on that this tradition, like many others, is slowly eroding away. While the number of priests in the country continues to increase, there has been a slight decline in the number of ecclesiastical students and ordinations. The author cites the annual returns of the Irish Catholic Directory as his source here. Regardless, anyone who has ever stood on an Irish streetcorner will notice the many clerics.
said, and, in appearance at least, Irish Catholic opinion was remarkably monolithic on most matters where the Church's belief or practice was relevant.  

Private criticism of the clergy most certainly does occur, however, even though such dissent is difficult to detect save in hushed dialogues between the closest of friends or within the family group. I believe I may consider myself to be on just such a level with a handful of Irishmen. The criticism most commonly aired was that the Church in Ireland simply is not in touch with modern problems and new ways of thinking in terms of such issues as birth control. Running a close second was the complaint that too many clerics abuse their privileged position and behave in an arrogant or unsympathetic way. Criticism of any variety is, as one should expect, most recurring and harsh among the young.

But if public criticism does not take place on an individual basis, it has been occurring more and more in the form of group expression. Such open disapproval of a Church policy or an individual cleric may, at times, become extreme, especially when the debate results in an open confrontation between the Church and a special interest group. An example which comes to mind at the present involved a recent incident caused by a demonstration sponsored by the small, but growing Irish Woman's Lib movement. A band of about thirty women journeyed to Belfast, loaded up on birth control devices, and then returned with them to the Republic.

Ibid., pp 7-8.
lic, defying both the Church and the customs officials at the Pearse Station in Dublin. During the course of the well planned (and extremely rambunctious) display, the Harpies were finally obliged to surrender their illicit treasure, but the gauntlet had clearly been thrown down.

More typical, less extreme examples of group defiance of the dictates of the Church may be seen, I think, in the recent easing of the many restrictions which have for so long hampered the country's literature and stage productions. When I made my third trip to Ireland in 1969, I was somewhat surprised to find that works such as Ulysses were readily available in any bookstore. Such was not the reality before that time. Other traditionally banned works, both of a moral and political nature, have fared equally well.

But the big breakthrough has been in the theater. In

Judging strictly from my own observations, I would have to maintain that the Church's ruling on contraception is widely compromised in Ireland today. There is a considerable traffic in contraceptives between Ulster and the south, albeit it is conducted with considerably more discretion than in the case cited above. It is common practice for businessmen and vacationers to "pick up a little something for the folks back home" in the course of their travels across the border.

I have been in Ireland in 1967, 1968, 1969 and 1971. The first two trips were in conjunction with wider tours in other parts of Europe.

Magazines, however, have not participated in the new wave of leniency, and one should not expect to find Playboy on any newstand in the Republic. The best to be had along these lines are comparatively mild English productions such as Weekend and Tidbits. Periodicals which treat politics are safe, however. After awhile, I believe censorship will ease up even more.
August, 1971, I attended a play in Dublin, the likes of which would have been unheard of in Ireland only a few years ago. The production was entitled, *It's a Two-Foot-Six-Inches Above the Ground World*. It dealt with "the pill", and it was packing them in. Curiously enough, there were more than a few clerics in attendance at the performances.

In addition, the great Gaels have, within the safety of their ballad clubs, been expressing group criticism of the Church by giving new emphasis to some of the lighter of the sad songs. It must strike the observer as odd that the Church and its clergy hardly ever appear in the vast expanse of Irish music, but such is indeed the case. There are but a handful of songs which treat the religious side of Irish life, and those are satirical, not harsh. None-the-less, such rare selections have been enjoying a new popularity in recent years:

In Glendalough lived an old saint Renowned for his learning and piety.  

The plot, which involved the efforts of a modern Irish couple to limit the size of their young family in the face of the local parish priest's opposition, would have been in itself sufficient grounds for condemnation of the play in earlier times. Even more at variance with the traditional purity of the Irish theater was the language employed in the script. Quoth the heroine, "If I thought the size of my family was any of the Pope's damn business, I'd write him a letter!" But the line which really brought the house down takes place during a conversation between the priest and the village rake:

"Do ye like food then, Father; I mean, do you enjoy eating?"

"Why, certainly!"

"Fine! You like a good feed, I like a good fuck! What's the difference? We're both gluttons."
His manner it was curious and quaint
And he looked upon girls with disparity.20

What it all adds up to is the inescapable fact that
the Irish noyau, for better or for worse, is at long last
resisting the hold of what may be its only genuine institu-
tion, the Catholic Church. But such a development would be
better treated in a paper dealing with modern times. The
reason why it has been brought into our commentary at this
juncture is because it demonstrates quite clearly that the
Irish are capable of defying their Church. What is more im-
portant for our interests in this particular study is the
fact that they have done so at times in years past when
specific issues were involved. Here again, Whyte is my prim-
ary source. He maintains that, along with a general loyalty
to the Church and an inclination to avoid public criticism
of the clergy, there is also a tradition of occasional lay
independence among Irish Catholics:

Religious loyalties are strong, but other for-
ces have sometimes proved stronger still.

One example in the past has been provided by
agrarian crime. For most of the nineteenth cen-
tury, Irish farmers suffered from a shockingly op-
pressive land system. . . . In their struggle to
secure reforms they had the active help of the
Catholic clergy, who indeed were often the local
leaders of successive farmers' agitations. But the
Church insisted that agitation must be carried on
by peaceful means. It would never be right, for
instance, to take human life, or forcibly to re-
sist the law. Yet all through the nineteenth cen-
tury, such methods were used. Oppressive landlords
were shot. Tenants who accepted farms from which
another farmer had been evicted had their cattle
maimed or their homes burnt around their heads. On
this matter, it seems, what the clergy considered permissible, and what public opinion was prepared to tolerate, just did not coincide.21

Whyte also notes that the great Gaels at times resisted or ignored the dictates of their clergy in political matters, specifically; in the cases of the Fenian movement of the nineteenth century, the fall of Charles Stuart Parnell in 1890, and the Irish Civil War of 1922-1923. With that in mind, it is now time to focus our attention upon the Church's role in selected merry wars.

21 J. A. Whyte, Church and State in Modern Ireland: 1923-1970, p. 8. The author also notes that agrarian crime did not totally disappear with the termination of British rule in the Republic: "As late as 1960, the Bishop of Kerry had to make certain kinds of agrarian outrage reserved sins in the parishes of Ballinacelligott and Tralee... disputes can still occur between farmers over the ownership of land, and, when this happens, it sometimes appears that the drastic traditions of the nineteenth century land war are not yet dead." (pp 8-9.)
CHAPTER TWO
PRIESTS AND PATRIOTS

I chose the black, I chose the blue.
I forsook the red and the Orange too.
I did forsake them and them deny;
I chose the Green
And for the Green I'll die!

The Croppy Boy

The purpose of this chapter is to appraise Church policy towards Irish nationalism with an eye towards discerning why such a policy was developed and what effect it had upon the course of the merry wars. Ever since 1155, when Pope Hadrian IV (Nicholas Breakspear) is traditionally reputed to have granted Henry II a bull of special privileges known as Laudabiliter which enabled the latter to conquer Ireland, the Church has been directly involved in Anglo-Irish affairs of state.

As a prerequisite, we must outline the characteristics of Anglo-Irish battles. First, we should note that "Irish Rebellions" is an unfortunate term for the merry wars of the great Gaels. It is unfortunate because it creates the impression that the risings were conflagrations which swept up the whole of the Irish people in a popular movement to expel the ancient Saxon foe. Such was simply not the case.

The Rising of the Black--John Keegan Casey. The words of Casey were added at a traditional tune.
The Rising of 1798, as we shall see, engulfed the counties of Wexford, Kilkenny and Tipperary. Throughout the rest of the country, it was, by and large, business as usual. The Rebellion of 1848 saw skirmishes again in Wexford and Tipperary and in Waterford. The rest of Ireland lay peaceful. The Easter Rising of 1916 was confined almost exclusively to Dublin. Finally, the Black and Tan War of 1917-1921, proved that the I.R.A. battalions centered in the rural areas south and west of Dublin were often not inclined to carry the battle to the British forces in an aggressive fashion.

Technical difficulties do, of course, account for much of the disorganization which plagued the patriots' efforts, especially as far as the pre-twentieth century risings are concerned. Communications were slow and unreliable, can be removed in no other way, and when there is messages were lost in transit or were not explicit enough in their wording. Pre-arranged signals which were to designate the outbreak of hostilities were often garbled and uncertain in their meaning:

\[ I \text{ hear orders from the captain; } \]
\[ \text{Get ye ready quick and soon! } \]
\[ \text{For the pikes must be together } \]
\[ \text{At the rising of the moon.} \]

But poor planning, misplaced communiques, bad luck and personality clashes among the ranks of the patriots can—

1. Four of Ireland's thirty-two counties have traditionally been considered "rebel counties". They are Waterford, Wexford, Tipperary and, most important for our particular study, Limerick.

2. The Rising of the Moon—John Keegan Casey. The words of Casey were added to a traditional tune.
not alone account for seven hundred years of failure. The key issue here is not the physical possibility or impossibility of a united Ireland ever emerging victorious from a head-to-head confrontation with the massed might of the British Empire. Rather, the key issue here is that no united Ireland ever materialized to even make the effort. The fact is that there has never been a popular rebellion in Ireland, and all three: priests, patriots and people, contributed to that reality.

Speaking of the Church's long tradition of opposition to rebellion in Ireland, Whyte explains that:

This opposition was based on two main grounds. First, the theological textbooks say that rebellion is justifiable only in certain exceptional circumstances—such as, for instance, when the evils of the existing regime are intolerable and can be removed in no other way, and when there is a real prospect of success. It was argued by many churchmen that these circumstances did not obtain in Ireland. Secondly, the Church condemned secret societies; but it was hardly possible to plan an insurrection without some kind of secret organization.

I believe that two additional reasons may be cited along with Whyte's. First, it is my opinion that the Church counselled opposition to the advocates of rebellion out of a genuine humanitarian concern for the innocents who inevitably bear the brunt of war. In the second place, it is my belief that the Church massed its influence and power

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against Ireland's patriot sons because it feared that the British Government would, if it sensed that the Church was in any way behind an attempt to defy the authority of the Crown, strive all the harder to legislate Catholicism out of existence on both sides of the Irish Sea. This desire to protect at all cost what reforms had been granted understandably became even more of a factor after the repeal of most of the Penal Laws in the 1780's and 1790's. Though I am inclined to believe that he exaggerated somewhat, there does appear to be a goodly amount of truth in what a Dublin priest told me when he said that, "The Church was all for rebellion prior to the repeal of the Penal Laws, because the Church was a disenfranchised institution. But after the reforms, the official attitude was somewhat different, to say the least." But if the Church played an important role in eventually short-circuiting dissent opinion in Ireland, so too did the patriots themselves. They never really succeeded in rallying the great majority of the Irish people to their cause for an extended period of time, and for good reasons. One consideration here is that the leaders of the various nationalist movements usually came from the ranks of the country's educated elite, and not from the people themselves. The fact that many of the patriots were Protestants.

Father Joe O'Hanlon, a relative of a close personal Dublin friend of mine, told me this. I would like to here thank him and the numerous other clerics I met in Ireland for their assistance and sympathy.
was another primary factor. The Crown did all it could to insure that Catholics could not enter the Irish education system by way of oppressive legislation. Hence, the educated elite in question was bound to be non-Catholic. The fact that the great patriots sprung from such a group tended to place them out of contact with the general mood of their countrymen, sometimes hopelessly so.

Social aloofness of the leaders of the nationalist movements may account for the tendency on their part to place much more emphasis on high-sounding philosophies rather than on solid, down-to-earth planning. It is an inescapable fact that no separatist movement anywhere in the world has been so dominated by dreamers and idealists. All too often, the patriots were, as the Dubliners would say, "brainy, but at sea". Along similar lines, we could also note that, like the Scottish nationalists of the 1950's and 1960's, Ireland's patriots all too frequently were done in because the platform they offered contained only one plank— independence from England. Little or no mention was made of

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As we have seen, the Church frowned upon involvement by its parishioners in nationalist movements and this too contributed to the domination of such groups by non-Catholics. Catholics were relegated to technical schools such as University College of Dublin. Even now, when the aforementioned institution has been merged with the prestigious Trinity College, some traces of the old snobbery remain. The common tale around the Irish capitol is that one can tell a Trinity man by the gin stains on his tie, whereas UCD students are distinguished by the cow dung on their boots. We need not dwell on the rugged nature of the annual Rugby match between the two schools. Suffice to say that it usually spreads into the streets.
economic realities such as the status of the farmer when the poets and advocates of Gaelic tradition were discussing the "new Ireland".

It was another of their shortcomings that the patriots spoke often of "Ireland for the Irish", while allowing non-Irish philosophies to dominate their thinking. Very often, they attempted to transplant the spirit and ideals of Continental rebellions (especially from France) to their own country, only to see it reject the foreign tissue. They were men who delighted in pointing to their uniqueness as Irishmen, and yet they let the revolutionaries of other lands, and, occasionally, of other times, do their thinking for them. Always there was their beloved "deathless dream", blotting out the burning sun of reality and demanding action when Dame Reason called for prudence and the waiting game.

How easy it is to admire the patriots in hindsight! How easy to see theirs as the only way for Ireland to live in honor and grace! But how many of us would have followed these visionaries had we been their contemporaries and possessed some insight into their probable end?

Throughout history, the majority of the Irish have opted not to play the patriot game, and their contrariety was just as much to blame for the unsuccessful outcome of the merry wars as was the intransigence of the Church and the bunglings of the patriots. Several factors contribute to this curious conservative streak in the Irish character. One circumstance of note which tended to work against rebellion
was a tenacious localism which sprang from the ancient clan system of the Gaels. As in Scotland, the English proved to be masters at playing the clans off against one another during the earlier years of the conquest. And, again as in Scotland, risings proved easy to suppress once the initial conquest had been completed simply by taking advantage of the political realities of a society wherein Conqueror "A" automatically had the support of Clan "X" in a confrontation with Clan "Y", because Clans "X" and "Y" had been at one another's throats for generations. These old clan animosities died hard, and they survived the Flight of the Wild Geese to find new expression in county localisms. It is an affliction of the Irish political character which survives in rural districts of the country to this day.

Another factor in this regard is the autocratic tradition in Irish society, a reality which may, I believe, also have its origins in the clan system of long ago and the close family ties which that system rested upon. According to Whyte, "The Irish are not, contrary to common opinion, a belligerent race. They are not 'agin the government'; they

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6 "The Wild Geese" is a term applied to the aristocracy of the Irish clans (notably the O'Neill's) who fled to France during the eighteenth century. Many of them found employment in the army of Louis XIV. Their exploits are well remembered in sad songs such as Padraig's Gone to France and The Lowlands of Holland:

Up popped the bawdry captain
And he stood at my bed head,
Saying, 'Arise oh young nobleman
And come along with me
To the lowlands of Holland
For to fight the enemy.'
are certainly more amenable than the British to authority."

Both of these factors; localism and an autocratic nature, can, I am inclined to think, be considered to be two more manifestations of the noyau. For, as we have seen, in a society based around inner antagonists, the loyalties of individuals rarely embrace the society as a whole. Instead, they remain attached to the lower levels of family and clan. In addition, we have also noted the noisy, but inoffensive, nature of the noyau. Such a society is not really belligerent, though the din which arises from one would lead a foreign observer to conclude that the individuals dwelling within were out to tear the world apart. England's policy towards Ireland during the merry wars has always been characterized by over-reaction. It is my opinion that much of this may be explained by the fact that the English nation took the noisy Irish noyau seriously. I can think of no better way of concluding this brief appraisal of the reaction of the great Gaels to their patriots than by noting once again that theirs is a society devoted to diversity, not unity. As Ardrey has said:

Nations produce heroes, noyaux geniuses. The nation is fundamentally anti-genius, since survival rests on uniformity of response; the noyau is fundamentally anti-hero, since variation is its life's blood. The noyau must look skeptically upon the hero and hope that he will not get anybody into too much trouble. The nation must look with suspicion on the genius and pray that common sense

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J. H. Whyte, Church and State in Modern Ireland: 1923-1970, p. 23. This may seem an odd comment, but I personally believe it.
Ultimately, of course, the English themselves must also accept much of the blame for what has transpired in Ireland over the centuries. Perhaps more than the average nation, they were simply not prepared to tolerate a noyau, and their policy in Ireland was, from the very first, based on the presupposition that the Irish were a potential enemy which must somehow be made to bend, and not a potential friend which could be assimilated into some sort of dual-island political union. To them, Ireland was, and always has been, an area to be exploited in every way, and not one to be developed for the mutual advantage of both parties. It was this type of attitude which frequently served to drive many of the Gaels into the arms of the radicals.

Historians have traditionally attributed England's famed hostility towards the Irish to international rivalries; that is, to the tendency of the great Gaels to follow a policy of allying with any and all forces hostile to the Crown. Certainly, there is abundant evidence to prove that Ireland's patriots enthusiastically pursued a philosophy of, "England's plight is Ireland's might." They courted the favors of, among others, Robert the Bruce, numerous Stuart

8 Robert Ardrey, The Territorial Imperative. p. 205. This need not imply that the noyau is necessarily pro-genius. (Noyaux are really not pro-anything.) It is common knowledge that, in order to be successful, the Irish artist, playwright, or what have you, must first leave Ireland. The great Gaels have traditionally treated the genius much like a patriot. Then too, many artists have also been patriots.
pretenders and Bourbon monarchs, Napoleon and the Kaiser. All were at war with England at the time when the Irish sought their support, and always the struggle involved was a life-or-death conflict for England. But more significant is the fact that the so-called allies never produced the well-trained armies, the ships laden with weapons, the financial reserves. It is another of the patriots' failings that they too often placed their hopes on outside assistance which was not forthcoming.

Despite the fact that the Irish have always had a nasty habit of appearing at Britannia's back door whenever the wolves were massing on her front porch, I believe that domestic conflicts with the Irish within England itself have served as a more abundant fountain for animosity, at least since the Industrial Revolution. In times of internal strife, the Irish sought refuge in England, and inevitably they arrived in huge numbers. Driven across the Irish Sea by war and famine, Paddy dug in the mines, drove the spikes through the silver rails, laid the hot asphalt in a thousand lanes and alleys, manhandled cargo from endless holds up onto the docks and back again. Paddy did it all... and he did it for next to no wages at all, much to the displeasure of the English working man. More bad feelings were caused by Irish strikebreakers than by Irish patriots who sought to liberate their homeland by signing pacts with all comers. Even in the best of times, the Irish who found their way to England were often in such a sorry state economically that...
they became a millstone about the necks of the native English population. And, when all else came to naught, Paddy found a home in the armed forces of the very government whose harsh policies had forced him from his native land in the first place. Sometimes he didn't even wait to leave Ireland to join up:

I wish the Queen of England Would write to me in time, And place me in some regiment All in me youth and prime. I'll fight for Ireland's glory From the clear daylight 'til dawn And I never would return again For to plow the rocks of Bawn.

But neither foreign intrigue nor touchy labor relations during the Industrial Revolution and after suffice to explain England's brutal Irish policy during the initial conquest in the twelfth century. True, animosities had grown up over the centuries prior to Strongbow's arrival because of numerous raids and counter-raids across the Irish Sea. The problems raised by Irishmen earning their daily bread in England are far from being a thing of the past. It is still common practice for great numbers of men and women to leave the Republic and seek employment in Britain, as sad songs like Crooked Jack tell us:

Come Irishmen both young and old With adventure in your souls! There are better ways To spend your days Then working down a hole! The English working man, it should be added, is still frequently resentful.

The Rocks of Bawn—Traditional. Impoverished rural areas such as the Bawn district have always been fertile grounds for recruiters.
neighbor was, simply, because Ireland was there and it could be conquered. And, apparently, the English were never in any doubt that real differences existed between themselves and the Irish. English policy has been, by and large determined by the admission of that fact.

It was my original intent to conduct an analysis of the merry wars of the great Gaels right from the initial conquest down to our own century. I soon realized, however,

The realization by the English that they were indeed among an alien people manifested itself in a deliberate policy of segregation throughout the centuries. Much of what has transpired in Ulster is a direct result of this premeditated attempt to keep the beings native to the conquering nation apart from the members of the noyau. By and large, the English settlers compromised this policy during the early centuries of the conquest, with the result that many of them were, within a few generations, absorbed by the native populace. But when Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558, the situation was altered drastically. She wisely determined to deal with Ireland, "that running sore of rebellion", by planting more English settlers than ever before in one concentrated area. The province of Ulster was chosen as the target because it was here that Irish resistance was the best organized, and the most successful, due mainly to the activities of the great O'Neills. The "Plantation of Ulster" system that was initiated by Elizabeth in 1599 was a more concentrated, better administered version of traditional English policy. Segregation was much more efficiently enforced, and at times physical barriers were even established to set the races apart. The English settlements were referred to as "The Pale", and hence we have come by the expression, "beyond the pale" to designate individuals who are considered to be outside of "civilized" society.

The result of the Plantation System was the disenfranchisement of the native Irish. The destitute Gaels rose in rebellion against the English settlers in 1689, with the result that King William of Orange was obligated to take the field against them. The climax came on July 12, 1690 at the Battle of the Boyne. William's victory at that engagement guaranteed the continued existence of the Plantation System in no-
that such an undertaking would be far beyond the limited space available to me here. Consequently, I have decided to select for analysis three of the risings: "the 1798", because it was here that the patriots came the closest to total military victory over the English, and also because it was at this time that events brought to the fore Ireland's most famous "Croppy" priest; "the 1848", because it forms a perfect composite picture of all that ever went wrong with the merry wars; and, lastly, the Easter Rising of 1916, because it has dominated Irish political life right down to the present day, and because it forms the backdrop for our story of Dr. O'Dwyer. Hopefully, all that has been said thus far may, in the course of the analysis which is to follow, be brought together and tested for validity.

II. The Wexford Rising of 1798

Then Father Murphy from old Kilmore
Spurred up the rocks with a warning cry;
'To arms!' he cried, 'For I've come to lead you And it's Ireland's freedom I'll win or die!'

"The 98" was the patriots' last chance. Never before in 1798, in 1916 is still going on?

The main sources which I have used in my discussion of the Rebellion of 1798 are Story of a Year: 1798, by Raymond Postgate, and Sir Arthur Bryant's The Fire and the Rose. For the Rebellion of 1848, I used The Great Hunger by Cecil Woodham-Smith. I found Six Days to Shake an Empire by Charles Duff, and Agony at Easter by Thomas M. Coffey to be the best sources for the Rebellion of 1916. These works, plus others which were used, are listed in the bibliography.

Boulavogue--P. J. McCall.
and never again were the conditions so ripe for a total military victory over the hated Saxon. The reader may object, arguing that the Easter Rising of 1916 was a military victory for the patriots. It was not. The 1916 rebellion and the long guerrilla war which followed in its wake resulted only in the Treaty of 1921 which partitioned Ireland. It was a treaty which touched off a civil war and which resulted in the sorry situation in Ulster today. It was at best a partial settlement, and the patriots (nowadays commonly referred to as the I.R.A.) are still striving for the total military victory which has for so long eluded them. Need we ask ourselves why there is violence in Ulster today if we but recognize the fact that, in the hearts and minds of the patriots, the merry war which began in Dublin in 1916 is still going on? No coward O'Donnelis then! Fight the old fight again!

Even if the patriots would have succeeded in 1798, the question of how long Ireland could have remained free from English domination in one form or another of course remains. Regardless, the fact is that the Irish would never have a better opportunity to find out.

Not since the sailing of the Armada was the survival of the English nation more in doubt than it was in the spring of 1798. Britannia, alone and friendless, stood in the chilling shade of the Corsican corporal's long shadow:

The three great naval powers of the Continent—France, Spain and Holland—were now aligned against her, outnumbering her ships of the line by nearly two to one...the working class population of the industrial north was hungry and rest-
less, and powerful invasion-forces were waiting with transports at Brest and Texel for a chance to break the blockade and strike. And then, as always, there war Ireland. Never before had so many English policies backfired so disastrously. First, there was the policy of sentencing suspicious Gaels to a life of toil in the hulls of the British fleet. The end result of that brilliant stroke of genius was that the Irish sailors, who comprised better than ten percent of the navy's manpower, had played a key role in a mutiny which swept up nearly the entire fleet in 1797, and which had been put down only with the greatest difficulty. Now, in the spring of 1798, other patriots believed that Desmond, the great war wolf of Celtic mythology, was once again howling in the lanes and alleys of old Ireland:

Onward O'Donnell's then!
Fight the old fight again!
Sons of old Ireland are loyal and true!
Make the proud Saxons feel Erin's avenging steel!
Strike for your country!
O'Donnell Aboo!16

Desmond was howling, and Britannia evidently had

14 Sir Arthur Bryant, The Fire and the Rose (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), pp 134-135. It should also be noted that, as recently as 1745, the Highland Scots had risen against the English under the leadership of Charles Edward Stuart, the "Young Pretender".

15 This was the so-called "Spithead Mutiny".

16 O'Donnell Aboo--Michael Joseph McCann. When the Republic was selecting a national anthem, this song ran a close second to The Soldier's Song, which was eventually selected. "Aboo" means "forward". The O'Donnells were a powerful Ulster clan.
misplaced his muzzle:

Ireland, almost denuded of troops, was defenseless, and a French army of liberation was waiting to embark...under cover of the Dutch fleet. Like the Black Death four centuries before, the Revolution had crossed the Channel...here in the island which she had conquered, misgoverned and never understood, proud England was faced that spring with disaster. 17

According to the statistics which are available, the population of Ireland stood at four million in 1798, which contrasted with ten millions in England, Scotland and Wales. Across the Channel, Napoleon could count forty million noses. The ratio becomes even more impossible if we recall that the reliability of many of those ten million souls in England's care was, at best, suspect. The odds, it seemed, were stacked completely in Ireland's favor. But events were to prove that, once again, Desmond's bark was far worse than his bite. The patriots more than evened the balance with England by making numerous errors. Let us see what some of


16 Ibid., p. 139. This was to be the last time that the patriots could hope to utilize the prolific nature of the Irish people to their advantage. The population continued to increase at a fantastic rate after 1798, but from then on it was a hindrance to the country, and not an asset. By 1845, the first year of the Great Famine, Ireland was dangerously over-populated. Cecil Woodham-Smith, in her work, The Great Hunger (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1962), estimates that the population in that year stood at twelve million. Over one million died in the five years that followed, but more important, emigration was made acceptable to the great Gaels, and ever since the Famine they have continued to pour forth from their native land. By the dawn of our own century, there was such a disparity between Britain and Ireland as far as popu-
them were.

For one thing, the patriots had, as usual, relied too heavily upon foreign assistance. There hope in this regard was dashed when Napoleon decided that greener pastures were to be had on the south shore of the Mediterranean and accordingly dispatched the army which had been earmarked for the liberation of Ireland to Egypt. But the patriots could have won without French help... if Ireland would have united behind their banner and risen as a single force. The fact that most of the country remained passive in the face of a never-to-be-repeated opportunity accounts for the failure of "the 98", not Napoleon's desire to pursue an adventure in Egypt.

Philosophies which did not appeal to the majority of the great Gaels and internal dissension within the ranks of the patriots are the prime culprits. The Flight of the Wild Geese had destroyed the Irish clan system as a basis for opposition against the English, and before resistance could be effective again, a new foundation had to be constructed for it. The new foundation—the independence movement of the eighteenth century—was Protestant in its origins, leader-

lation is concerned that the patriots were faced with the very real problem of their own numerical inferiority, a problem which really did not exist prior to the Famine. From 1645 onwards, Ireland was almost unique among the countries of the world in that its population steadily decreased. It was not until 1967 that the census figures for the Republic showed a very small increase! (The population of Ireland now, both Ulster and the south, is 4,435,000. This compares with 54,022,000 people in England, Scotland and Wales. (The World Almanac, 1971).
ship and membership. The Society of United Irishmen was a group which favored autonomy for Ireland because of economic and personal reasons. Like the signers of the Declaration of Independence, whom they so admired, these patriots wanted a political, not a social, revolution. They did, however, consider themselves to be "enlightened," and they favored Catholic emancipation. Up to a point. Their agitation contributed much to the gradual relaxing of the harsh legislation which had for so long made Irish Catholics slaves in their own country. But then came the extremes of the Reign of Terror, and many United Irishmen began to have second thoughts about the advisability of liberating too many Catholic peasants too rapidly. Others, however, had different ideas, and the ranks of Irish nationalism were once more ripped asunder by personality clashes and conflicting philosophies.

Theobald Wolfe Tone, a young Protestant radical, initiated a new trend in Irish nationalistic thought with his doctrine of Militant Republicanism, a philosophy which called for freedom for all Irishmen regardless of religion and a social revolution which was to include land reform. The moderates eventually decided that the threat of the radicals was a more important consideration than freedom for Ireland, and they handed over to the British authorities the names of Tone and his followers; the informer had struck again. Those who escaped the net fled south to the Fighting Counties, where they scored a few minor successes in a series of wide-
ly scattered skirmishes before they were finally surrounded and crushed at Vinegar Hill near Enniscorthy, County Wexford on June 21, 1798.

In England, William Pitt had long feared that there was a definite threat of a peasant rebellion, and from 1796 on he had taken great pains to short-circuit such a rising by brutally pushing the peasantry into a confrontation before the United Irishmen were prepared for it. What followed was one of the darkest chapters in Anglo-Irish History. British troops were encouraged to provoke the Irish at every opportunity, London underwrote the activities of the night-riding "Peep-O-Day Boys" (later the Orange Order), who saw sense, refused to countenance the United Irish so to it that Catholics never got the wrong idea about the new legislation which allowed them to own property, and administrators like Lord Carhampton gave to Irish rebels the name "Croppies".

Pitt's policy very nearly succeeded too well. The Wexford Rising was marked by a spontaneous peasant rebellion in that county which, had it been properly supported by the fragmented United Irishmen, could have engulfed Ireland in a peasant movement capable of sweeping the English and their...
collaborators into the sea. We should note that this, the most violent incident of "the 98", came about as an upheaval which was largely unconnected with the activities of the patriots. It is also worth noting that this upheaval was inspired by a priest.

Throughout the 1780's and 1790's, the Church had frowned upon the activities of the United Irishmen, partly because the society was dominated by Protestants, and partly out of fear that the rebels would cause an English reaction which would entail retraction of the token reforms which had been granted to the Church:

The Catholic priests, whose influence was immense, refused to countenance the United Irish societies; they even in Church pushed away from their knees United Irishmen who wished to confess to them. They preached peace and resignation.20

Father John Murphy of Bonagar and Boleyvogue was no exception. He followed the Church's policy to the letter, that is, until the outrages of the English reached his own parish. After a detachment of yeoman cavalry sacked a nearby village and burned his own chapel and house, Father Murphy flew into a rage, calling upon his flock to take up pitchforks and whatever weapons they could find and follow him in a march to expel the English from Ireland forever. Farmers and villagers swarmed from near and far to rally round the Croppy priest as his band marched through Wexford. By the

time he reached Enniscorthy, where he joined forces with a small army of United Irishmen, he had more than 8,000 followers.

Father Murphy, unfortunately, was not really a Croppy; what he had done had been the result of a momentary emotional outburst, and not a premeditated plot. Having lit the fuse of rebellion, he did not know what to do with the smoldering powderkeg he held in his arms. Eagerly, he subordinated his authority to the United Irishmen at Enniscorthy almost immediately after his band had joined forces with them.

What happened to him next is uncertain. The sad songs, as we might well expect, tell us that he was either broken on the rack or burned at the stake after falling into enemy hands at Vinegar Hill. Actually though, it is not known for certain just what did happen to him. Like the United Irishmen and the rebellion on which they had raised their dreams, the Croppy priest of Bonagar seems to have faded away into the long night of Irish History, leaving behind little more than a legacy of some of the very saddest of the sad songs.

III. The Rebel Counties Rising of 1848

This section does not begin with an offering from the sad songs. The reason is that, of all the merry wars, "the 48" has been almost totally overlooked by the poets and composers. Possibly this is because the Great Famine, which supplied the setting for the rising, completely dominated and exhausted the minds of the Irish people, the Fled included:

That causes the children of Ireland to rose
So farewell unto ye and farewell to me, etc., it is
But the omission of "the 48" from the sad songs is also due to the fact that this rising stands out among theerry wars as the most disastrous and most ill-conceived of all. It was not a war. It was a glorified plot. It was a comedy performed on a stage set for maladroics.

The incident (and that is all we can really call it) was perpetrated by a group known as Young Ireland, the successors of the United Irishmen. Led by William Smith O'Brien, John Mitchel and Francismagh, the latter who became first territorial governor of a strange place called Montana after his exile, the Young Irishers are noteworthy for being more idealistic than any previous patriots. They also set some kind of record for absorbing into their thought more than the usual amount of foreign philosophy.

The guiding light of the Young Irishers was Fintan Lalor, an Irish recluse who borrowed heavily from Continental thinkers in the formulation of his theories concerning the rural revolution. Lalor, and the Young Irishers who practically worshipped his philosophy, were quite correct in assuming that the Famine had destroyed all fear of risk in the Irish people. They were, on the other hand, incorrect in assuming that the Fled as well as the bardic minstrels of the old Gaelic tradition were the hardy and intrepid survivors of this later epoch.
It's not for the want of employment at home That causes the children of Ireland to roam; But the rents kept getting higher And they could no longer pay.
So farewell unto ye Bonny, bonny Slieve Galleon Braes.

But the omission of "the 48" from the sad songs is also due to the fact that this rising stands out among the merry wars as the most disastrous and most ill-conceived of all. It was not a war, it was a glorified riot. It saw a comedy performed on a stage set for melodrama.

The incident (and that is all we can really call it) was perpetrated by a group known as Young Ireland, the successors of the United Irishmen. Led by William Smith O'Brien, John Mitchel and Francis Meagher, the latter who became first territorial governor of a strange place called Montana after his exile, the Young Irelanders are noteworthy for being more idealistic than any previous patriots. They set some kind of record for absorbing into their thought more than the usual amount of foreign philosophy.

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21 Slieve Galleon Braes—Traditional. The filid were the bards and minstrels of the old Gaelic tradition.
suming that the Famine had made Ireland ripe for rural rebellion. After Phytophthora infestans had destroyed their potatoes, the destitute, starving Irish peasants did, it is true, have nothing to lose. But what the patriots simply failed to comprehend was the all-important fact that the peasants were not interested in new solutions to Ireland's age-old problems; they were interested in food, and in food only! That the Young Irishers missed the point altogether may be attributed to the fact that they, like so many other patriots in Irish History, were from an educated, comfortable elite which had, by immersing itself within philosophical treatises and the sanctity of the academies, become hopelessly, hopelessly out of touch with reality.

There is really not much to relate. Done in by informers in much the same way as their predecessors had been in 1798, the surviving leaders of Young Ireland fled from Dublin and scampered pell-mell through the counties of Wexford, Waterford and Tipperary, hoping against hope that they would be able to "raise the countryside". Their lack of contact with reality was unbelievable. At one point, they told the assembled throngs of peasants in the villages through which they passed to return to their homes and collect rations for at least a four day campaign before joining the line of march! Converts were few in number. Most of the people who gathered in the village squares and along the roadsides to listen to the rantings of the Young Irishers assembled in the first place only because they thought that
the fine young gentlemen from Dublin were bringing them food. When they found out otherwise, most of them simply drifted back to their homes across the country. Dublin was under siege. A few adventuresome souls were found who were willing to go along with the game, however, and the Young Irishers eagerly pressed on. Their glorious revolution simply laid down and died without incident in most places, but at Ballingarry in Tipperary the Young Irishers and their rapidly diminishing "army" finally got the direct confrontation with the authorities which they had longed for. At the Widow McCormack's house on the outskirts of the village they attempted to muscle their way through a police barricade and were fired upon. One Young Irisher was killed and two others were wounded, and "the 48" came to an end amid a wild rout through the Widow McCormack's cabbage patch. Frustrated and heartbroken, they continued, and when "the 48" was over, the residents of Ballingarry were, by and large, of the opinion that the most regrettable casualties had been the cabbages. The activities of the Young Irishers would be remembered to history as little more than a comical interlude, curiously acted out in the midst of the unfolding of Ireland's most tragic melodrama, were it not for the reaction which the "rising" caused in London. Throughout Anglo-Irish History, the English have typically over-reacted to the efforts of the patriots, and in 1848 the men in London moved according to pattern. As we have seen, "the 48" was little more than a disorganized brawl. The English, however, believed it to be a deadly ser-
ious affair. Ireland is up in arms! Tens of thousands--no, make that hundreds of thousands--of savage peasants are looting and burning their way across the country! Dublin is under siege! Incredible as it may seem, such were the rumors which were circulating through the British capitol. The Young Irelanders, most of whom were at that moment either in English chains or on board ships to America, would indeed have been flattered. The Irish people they left behind them, however, were to know only more hardships as a result of their scatter-brained activities; the British Government immediately cancelled all famine relief to Ireland. Had the potato not at last recovered in 1849, the results of this move would have been catastrophic for an Ireland already exhausted beyond further effort by years of starvation.

Prior to the rising itself, many clerics, frustrated and heartbroken by the hardships of the Famine, had flirted briefly with the philosophy of the Young Irelanders. The most outstanding of these was Father Kenyon of Templederry, the "Patriot priest of Tipperary":

An eccentric, but a man of culture and intellect, Father Kenyon exercised immense influence in Tipperary, and had given a pledge to the Young Ireland cause on behalf of twenty parishes. He had consequently been elected to a seat on the council, and the Young Ireland leaders had implicit faith in him.

Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, p. 339. Smith has been my main source for the Rising of 1848. While she tends to place the blame on the shoulders of the English Government to an undue degree, her work is, none-the-less, the "classic" study of the Great Famine.
Gradually, however, the increasingly radical trend within the Young Ireland movement turned the more moderate clerics away from the society. In February, 1848, the final blow was delivered in the form of a Papal Rescript authored by Pius IX. The Pope, reacting to intense British pressure brought about by Lord Minto's mission to Rome, accused the Irish clergy of giving "provocation to murder" and forbade any activities of a political nature in the future. From that point on, the Young Irelanders could no longer count on any significant support from the Church, not that that much had existed previously. During the rising itself, the clergy frequently persuaded would-be rebels to return to their homes. We cannot be overly critical of them in this respect if we but reflect for a moment upon the utterly hopeless nature of "the 48". These clerics no doubt did a considerable service to humanity by restraining their people from taking part in an adventure which could only lead to unnecessary suffering and grief.

IV. Dublin, 1916--"The Terrible Beauty"

The Four Courts of Dublin they cruelly bombarded; The spirit of freedom they tried hard to quell. But above all the din came the cry, 'No surrender!' It was the voice of James Connolly, the Irish rebel.23

The sky was never darker for Ireland's radical patriots than it was in the spring of 1916 on the eve of the Dublin Rising. The gap between them and the majority of the people was wider than it had been on the eve of the Easter Rising. Not so literally, it means "Ireland, for the Irish and all that such a philosophy implies". James Connolly--Traditional. Connolly was the primary leader of the 1916 rising. Seriously wounded during the battle, he was executed in a wheelchair.
great Gaels yawned wider than it had even in 1848, and it was widening day by day. Ireland in 1916 had no use for rebels. Since "the 48", the nationalist movement had come almost completely beneath the sway of the moderate Home Rule faction, and they painted for the Irish people a portrait of the future which was rosy indeed. In 1914 the Protestants of Ulster had initiated what had to be the most singular rebellion in all history; they threatened to resort to force of arms in order to remain with, not break away from, the mother country when the British Government had toyed with the idea of granting Home Rule to Ireland. Despite the fact that only the events at Sarajevo had prevented a civil war, John Redmond's Home Rulers continued to tell the Irish that autonomy for their country was to be the first item on Parliament's agenda after the war. The British Government, needing Irish cannon fodder in the trenches, was quick to feed the great illusion with glittering promises.

Loosely assembled beneath the banner of Sinn Fein, the patriots were a lonely voice which called for the old fight just one more time. That voice was frequently garbled by differing philosophies and personality clashes, and it fell upon deaf ears. Britannia's soothing promises of Home Rule and better things to come had drowned out dissent.

Sinn Fein is generally translated as "Ourselves alone". Not so literally, it means "Ireland for the Irish" and all that such a philosophy implies. It means that revolution does not stop at being merely political; true revolution must also have social connotations.
and Ireland, clad in full Gaelic armor, had entered the lists at England's side to "protect the rights of the little countries". Burke, Hill, Hudson, Judge, Nolan (Royal Linstar Fusiliers); Harvey, Moore, Walsh (Royal Irish Rifles); Crilly, Urwin, Manship (Inniskilling Dragoons); Heany, Costello (Connaught Rangers). . . . their names filled the papers every day; Irishmen who had marched away in Irish regiments to die for England:

Fare ye well, Inniskillings, fare ye well for awhile. Go all around the borders of Erin's green isle. And when the war is over you'll return in full bloom. And we'll all welcome home our Inniskilling Dragoons.25

We should note that when Patrick Pearse proclaimed the Republic from the steps of the G.P.O. on Easter Monday, more than 160,000 of his countrymen had pledged themselves to service in His Majesty's Forces, and many of them had already paid the supreme price for their loyalty.26

The Inniskilling Dragoons--Traditional.26

The names cited above were picked at random from the daily casualty lists carried in the Irish Daily Independent (Dublin), February to March, 1916. There were a great number to choose from. The statistics concerning the number of Irishmen serving in the British armed forces were obtained from Appendix 3 of The Report of the Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland, p. 118. When considering these statistics, the reader should remember that there was no conscription in Ireland during the Great War. When Paddy died for the Crown he did so as a volunteer.

After the Easter Rising, German troops in a line of trenches opposite a detachment of Munster Fusiliers displayed what were termed "insulting placards" which had to do with the rebellion. After dark, the Munster men went over the top, captured these insults to their loyalty, and returned with them to their own lines despite stiff German opposition. (Daily Independent (Dublin), May 1, 1916. The question of
had become synonymous with "traitor" for many of the great Gaels, and it was little wonder that the patriots felt a genuine sense of urgency in early 1916. All of the Sinn Feiners agreed that something had to be done before all contact with the public was lost, and they all further agreed that violent actions alone would suffice to solve their problems. A debate within their ranks, however, revolved around the issues of timing and circumstance. Eoin MacNeill, leader of the movement, was joined by the majority of the membership in wishing to initiate guerrilla warfare, but

why the Celtic peoples have always tended to make their way into the military life is an interesting one, as is the question of why the loyalty of Britain's Irish, Scottish and Welsh troops has always been impeccable. I can think of only one instance when Irish soldiers mutinied out of sympathy with their kin at home. This was the brief revolt of a company of Connaught Rangers (the famed "Devil's Own") in the Punjab in 1920 during the height of the Black and Tan War. The incident is beautifully chronicled by Sam Pollock in his work, *Mutiny for the Cause*. (London: Sphere Books Ltd., 1969).

To many Irish, Scottish and Welsh recruits, the British army was identified with three meals a day and some sort of escape from the boredom and futility of daily life in impoverished areas:

One morning in March
I was diggin' the lawn
With me brogues on me feet
And me spade in me hand.
Then I says to myself,
'Such a pitty to see
Such a fine strappin' lad
Footin' turf 'round Tralee.'

*From The Kerry Recruit*

Continued loyalty was insured by the fact that there was really nowhere else to go for most of the men. But even with such an emphasis on economic factors, we yet cannot completely escape the fact that there seems to be within the Irish character a certain quirk which favors the military life. Regardless of where he has gone, Paddy has been a soldier... and a volunteer.
only in the event that the British introduced conscription into Ireland and if concrete promises of substantial aid could be wrung from Berlin. A minority of the patriots, on the reverse of the coin, wanted immediate battle. Further, they wanted, not guerrilla war, but rather, an open demonstration involving a more conventional fight.

It is hotly debated whether or not Pearse, Connolly and company actually determined to lay down their lives in a cause which they knew to be lost in order to resurrect the spirit of Irish nationalism. In the aftermath, it is easy for us to see that, in the long run, what was best for Irish patriotism in 1916 was not a guerrilla campaign which might possibly succeed, but rather, a great, well-publicized confrontation which would, in all probability, fail. The patriots, however, appear to have had a different idea, or at least some of them did. While many of the Dublin rebels seem to have gone into battle with a decidedly pessimistic attitude, some of them, like Pearse, evidently actually believed that their far-fetched plan had some chance of success.

...Loyar, Bishop of Limerick.

But, regardless of whether they intended to or not, from April 24 to April 29 the patriots stepped to the altar of Irish nationalism and the great human sacrifice was made. Like all the rebellions which had proceeded it, the one initiated by Pearse and Connolly was a dismal failure. But the great Gaels had been made to see the error of their ways; they began to realize that Britain really had no intention
whatsoever of granting Home Rule, that the dreams for the future which had been painted for them were no more than just that. The same old game was being played in London, as always, and with cleared heads the Irish rallied around a new crop of martyrs.

The Dubliners were still combing the wreckage of what had once been Sackville Street and the Four Courts for survivors of the rising when the British Government dispatched a commission to discern what was up with Ireland this time and assess the blame for the recent turbulence. The investigators found that, as was the case with the other merry wars, the Church had adopted a conservative, pro-British stand. As had also been the case before, however, there were the exceptions to the rule; individual clergies who openly expounded the rebel cause. Many of these dissidents, it was discovered, operated out of, or found sanctuary in, the Diocese of Limerick. Like the members of the Commission, we must now focus our attention upon the rebel cleric around whom all other priests of a similar bent rallied; Edward Thomas O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick.

Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was of the family O'Dwyer of Kilsananagh, County Tipperary, whose home estates were located at Cullen. The man who would one day become Ireland's
A cleric's hand set the heather blazing
And brought the neighbors from far and near.

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CHAPTER THREE
THE BISHOP

The name of Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was already a familiar one among the Englishmen who ruled Ireland at the time of the Easter Rising. For, throughout the war years, and indeed, for much of his life, the Bishop of Limerick had made a habit of rubbing the powers-that-be in Dublin Castle the wrong way. But such had not always been the case. In his earlier years, Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was, politically speaking, the epitome of what a "good" Irish cleric should have been: conservative, "enlightened", convinced that continued union with Great Britain was the only reasonable course for Ireland to pursue. It is therefore important, I think, that we conduct some sort of analysis of Dr. O'Dwyer's conversion to dissidence. Perhaps then we will be in a position to understand how thousands of his fellow Irishmen also came to tread the radical path.

Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was of the family O'Dwyer of Kilnamanagh, County Tipperary, whose home estates were located at Cullen. The man who would one day become Ireland's
most controversial cleric was born into surroundings which smacked of respectability and conservatism. His grandfather Morgan O'Dwyer was active in commercial enterprises throughout the southern counties and ran a large stable of horses on his extensive estates. Throughout the region, it was commonly noted that, "The O'Dwyers hunt their own hounds in their own grounds".

There was an equal abundance of wealth and social prestige in evidence on the other side of the household. In 1806 Morgan O'Dwyer had married into the great Keating family. His father-in-law, Brian Keating, was one of the most prosperous dairy farmers in Tipperary and was even prominently mentioned in Arthur Young's book, *Tours Through Ireland*.

If wealth, social prominence and prestige were an integral part of the O'Dwyer inheritance, so too was service to the Church. It is indeed a peculiar circumstance of history that the Bishop of Limerick had once before been a man named Edward Thomas O'Dwyer, whose name had also been cursed in English circles. This earlier Bishop of Limerick had supervised the heroic defense of his city against the armies of William of Orange in 1690.

Edward Thomas's father, John Keating O'Dwyer, had

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John Archdeacon Begley, *The Diocese of Limerick From 1691 to the Present Time* (Dublin: Browne & Nolan Ltd., 1938), p. 562. Begley has been my main source for the biographical sketch of the bishop's beginnings. His work is the closest thing I found to an actual published biography of Dr. O'Dwyer.
continued the family tradition of Catholic service by taking Minor Orders before leaving college to pursue secular activities. He became an excise officer and was stationed in Limerick, where he married a Miss Quinlivan in February 1841. Shortly thereafter he accepted a transfer to Holy Cross in County Tipperary. It was here that Edward Thomas was born on January 18, 1842, christened in memory of his illustrious ancestor, the Bishop of Limerick. Four years later another transfer brought the O'Dwyer family back to Limerick to stay.

The young Edward Thomas very soon began to display those attributes which were to contribute so much to his success in later life. His teachers pointed him out as the genius of the Christian Brothers school he attended, and his lucid mind enabled him to win the highly coveted "Gold Watch Award" for advanced students. While his parents and teachers no doubt saw this as his greatest scholastic achievement, Edward Thomas's classmates held another of his successes in much higher esteem. Despite being a short, rather frail appearing youth, he defeated the school bully in a recess brawl. A boyhood acquaintance later recalled that he had seen the young hero at the local Redemptionist Church the day after the fight—going all alone around the Stations of the Cross. A pattern was already discernible; the high intelligence capable of solving problems of both an academic and practical nature, the bulldog determination, the honest piety which too often went hand-in-hand with a pronounced
self-righteousness and arrogance.

Edward Thomas continued to accumulate awards and comments of praise in secondary school, and in 1860 he came to the attention of one Doctor Ryan, who sponsored him as a student for the diocese. Edward Thomas entered Maynooth College later that year. In 1867 he finished his academic career very near the top of a class which was to produce no less than six bishops. He was ordained and assigned to Limerick where, despite his delicate constitution, he impressed his superiors as, "...a young priest of presentable appearance and fascinating manner (who) won from the priests and people of the diocese esteem and popularity which, through the storm and stress of later years, he retained".

Before commencing his new life, Edward Thomas spent a few weeks at Kilkee, where he came to the attention of the Reverend Doctor O'Shea, P.P., V.G. during a dinner hour debate with a Protestant clergyman who was staying at the same hotel. Edward Thomas had excelled in Rhetoric at Maynooth, and his argumentation on this occasion, along with his considerable grasp of the intricacies of theology, so impressed Dr. O'Shea that he arranged to have the fledgling cleric appointed curate at Rathkeale. It soon became apparent, however, that Edward Thomas was possessed of a certain capacity for independent, even impetuous action which could, on occasion, irritate his fellows. Such was apparently the case at

Ibid. p. 564. Edward Thomas retained an ability to work well with his peers all his life.
Rathkeale, for, after less than a year, the parish priest there contrived to have Edward Thomas removed to the small parish of Cappagh. The priest reported that he no longer cared to endure his curate's "rather novel methods". There were to be several similar incidents; Edward Thomas achieved a permanent position as curate of Adare only after serving (and briefly so!) in the parishes of Bruff and Saint Patrick. From miles around to hear his sermons, even Edward Thomas! The parish priest at Adare, one Father Flannagan, had at one time been chaplain to the Earl of Dunraven and was well-known throughout the south as a public orator of some accomplishment as well as a man who loved to dabble in local politics. He soon encouraged his new curate to cultivate similar interests, and Edward Thomas O'Dwyer stepped into the bedeviling world of grassroots Irish politics.

His initiation was an interesting one. Edward Thomas applied his considerable talents as a public speaker in the election of 1870, when he assisted Isaac Butt in his successful bid to become Member of Parliament from the city of Limerick. During these initial months of his life-long and very close friendship with Butt, Edward Thomas first developed two pastimes which were to remain favorites of his as long as he lived; horseback riding and writing lengthy letters to newspapers. He became very proficient at both.

Edward Thomas was, at this time, living the happiest

3 Ibid. The unhappy priest did not, as far as I could discover, go into detail in this matter.
days of his life. He was fast becoming the darling of all of the "right" people in the Limerick area, both lay and ecclesiastical. They adored his penetrating argumentation, his sparkling, caustic wit, and eagerly scanned the pages of the local dailies for the latest comment or little morsel of sagacity from the pen of the rising young cleric. In addition, the citizens of Limerick, both high and low, literally came from miles around to hear his sermons. Even Edward Thomas's superiors in the Church were won over at this time, and in 1872 he was moved to the parish of Newcastle West. In this instance, the move was a genuine promotion, and not a transfer initiated to placate a discontented fellow priest. In short, no matter where he looked, Edward Thomas O'Dwyer could see that he was definitely "society". The group he now called his own was typical of the society of Irishmen who saw England as the epitome of Western civilization:

Oh, I remember in September
When the final stops were drawn
And the shouts of crowds now silent
When the boys to tea had gone.
Let us, oh Lord above us,
Remember simple things
When all are dead who love us;
The captains and the kings.

By the moon that shines above us
In the misty morning's light,
Let us cease to run ourselves down
And praise God that we are white!
And better still, we're English!
Tea and toast, and puffin rings;
And old ladies with stern faces
And the captains and the kings.4

From, The Hostage—Brendan Behan. No other, I believe, has so well described the Irish gentry.
But Edward Thomas was about to see his shining new star flutter and fade. He was soon to learn that the pet opinions and philosophies of the "right" people were not necessarily comensurate with the hopes and desires of the majority of the great Gaels. Edward Thomas, in other words, was about to back a loser.

The situation was this: in 1874, Mr. William Monsell of Tirvoe, a man who had for many years represented County Limerick in the House of Commons, was raised to the peerage, a reality which necessitated a special election to produce a successor. In "rebel" Limerick, only a nationalist could hope to have a chance, but only if he were a particular type of nationalist. To explain, let us note that the majority of Ireland's nationalists were, at this time, of the moderate variety. They were separatist, but not Republican, advocates of relative autonomy for Ireland who placed their hopes in reasoned argumentation and parliamentary politics, not the gun and the boycott. Simply stated, they were Home Rulers.

Radicalism did not enter into the Election of 1874 at any time. Rather, the grounds for debate were to be found in the personalities and backgrounds of the rival candidates. The Limerick gentry sponsored Mr. John Kelly of Rocktown Castle and his candidacy was wholeheartedly endorsed by the local clergy. Complications arose, however, when the Farmer's Club of Limerick tagged Mr. William Henry O'Sullivan, a club member and shopkeeper from Kilmallock. Both men were nationalists who ran on essentially the same platform,
but there the similarities ended. Kelly was a landlord, a member of the aristocratic elite. Polished, sophisticated, urbane, patrician, Kelly was a man who believed that only the "enlightened", long-range policies of his caste could lead to solutions for Ireland's problems. O'Sullivan, in contrast, was a man of the people who was more interested in gaining immediate reforms for the country's farmers and small businessmen, and less interested in impressing upon the English the fact that an Irishman could, if properly educated, appreciate good music and poetry or play polo with the best of the British gentry.

When the leaders of the Church determined to support Kelly in the local press (as was common practice), there was little doubt as to whom among them they would select to conduct the propaganda campaign; Edward Thomas O'Dwyer. The latter accordingly focused all of his considerable talents upon Kelly's campaign and soon the papers were filled with the exchange of charges and counter-charges between the young priest and the champion of the Farmer's Club. Unfortunately, the rivalry soon escalated into an unabashed smear campaign, complete with name-calling and attempts at character assassination. Speaking of the issue of Home Rule, for example, Edward Thomas maintained that:

Mr. O'Sullivan's election would be the most fatal blow it has yet received and would put it back many a year from its attainment.

From the earliest days of the Home Rule agitation we have been taunted by Imperialists at home and in England with the character of the men who would be chosen for an Irish Parliament. From it
they said: "...would be excluded men of social status, of education, of ability. Instead of being composed of men who, by association and training, were fit to hold the destinies of a country in their hands, it would sink to the level of a monster board of guardians or town council, where the loudest talker and shallowest brain very often lead the way in the accomplishment of petty jobs. "...Will he not give our enemies a confirmation of this slander and the refutation of our own words, when they can point to W. H. O'Sullivan, Esq, 'There is a specimen of your Irish House of Commons!'"

O'Sullivan rightly retorted that the priest's remarks were more than just a little personal in nature and out of order. Edward Thomas snapped back that, "...if the excitement of a contest represses the judgement of his own intelligence, a few hours in the House of Commons would make him feel very much like a fish out of water."

Developments continued to go from bad to worse as election day drew close. In reply to one of O'Sullivan's letters, Edward Thomas calmly noted that when one stands upon the head of a crawling serpent, the beast naturally hisses. Open displays of mutual contempt became commonplace: O'Sullivan called Edward Thomas's attacks "scurrilous". The latter sarcastically replied that, "A better trained man would say 'caustic' or 'severe'..." O'Sullivan insinuated that Edward Thomas had emersed himself in the campaign.

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5 Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator, January 9, 1874, pp 2-3.
6 Ibid., January 13, p. 3.
7 Ibid., January 20, p. 3. Edward Thomas was as harsh and snobbish when he spoke from the platform and the pulpit as in the newspapers.
in hopes of obtaining a better position in the Church, to which his opponent replied, "...profession and respectability of person and family are just the things that Mr. O'Sullivan can't abide at present". The climax of the slander-besmirched debate came when Edward Thomas referred to men of O'Sullivan's class as "walking about with their hands in their pockets like crocodiles" and accused the candidate of trying to "pitchfork his way from the stable yards into Parliament".

Edward Thomas had argued that O'Sullivan's heated remarks could very well decide the election. In the final analysis, however, it appears that it was the acid commentary of the young priest which had the greater negative impact upon the voters. When the polls closed on Tuesday, February 9th, the results of the voting indicated that the people of Limerick had rebelled against their Church and their aristocracy; O'Sullivan was elected by more than a three-to-one margin. The spectacle was that he became less and less a spoiled brat.

Possibly no other event in his life had such an impact upon Edward Thomas as the setback he suffered in this, a little-recognized spectacle in local Irish politics. The Church hierarchy denounced the election, maintaining that, "It lacks moral weight. It has been obtained in the teeth

8 Ibid.
9 Ibid. January 27, p. 3.
10 Ibid., February 10, pp 2-3. There was also a third candidate, also a moderate, a Mr. Roche.
of, and against the warning of, the people's ancient, and legitimate and ever-faithful leaders, the Clergy."

But where his superiors were only shocked and angry, Edward Thomas was grieved in a far deeper way. He began to reflect upon what he had done, and he found himself lacking. By acidly commenting that O'Sullivan was not fit to hold a major political office, he had also insinuated that the great majority of the Irish people were not capable of finding their way politically without the guidance of the aristocracy. When he had lampooned O'Sullivan as a rude country bumpkin just inches above the apes on the evolutionary scale, Edward Thomas had implied that the people of his overwhelmingly agrarian country were of the same caliber. In short, he had not merely attacked a political opponent; he had viciously belittled his own people as well.

I believe that the most important change which occurred in Edward Thomas O'Dwyer as a result of the Kelly-O'Sullivan debacle was that he became less and less a spoiled brat of the gentry class and began to take a genuine interest in the common people and their problems. The bright, sarcastic letters which had so delighted the aristocracy and the Church hierarchy appeared no more. In their place, the papers were deluged by letters from a young priest who had become dedicated to the correction of the inequities which afflicted class relations throughout the country. After the

\[11\]
Ibid., February 12, p. 2. It should be pointed out that O'Sullivan became an excellent M.P.
election, it should be noted, the great crowds came no more to hear the sermons of Edward Thomas O'Dwyer. Their feelings hurt by the letter writing campaign between the priest and O'Sullivan, they had found other speakers in other churches who were not of such an aristocratic bent, and who were more in sympathy with them. Edward Thomas set about to win them back. Livan affair had by and large been rinsed from the mouth. So it was that, while the twelve years following the Election of 1874 were ones of hard work and little drama, they were also years of rewarding achievements. After serving briefly in Shanagolden, Edward Thomas was assigned to the parish of Saint Michael's in Limerick City proper. It was here that he began to gain a reputation of being a man the common people could call a friend, due to his devotion to various reform movements and the improvement of charitable organizations within the Church. A teetotaler all his life, Edward Thomas was instrumental in establishing a temperance society in the city of Limerick and in obtaining a hall for the society's use as well. One of his most noticeable accomplishments was to found the Catholic Institute. In order to obtain the necessary physical plant for this community meeting hall and reading room, he persuaded the directors of the Munster and Leinster Bank to turn over to him their old building on Sarsfield Street. Then Edward Thomas gathered together the prominent merchants of Limerick and their property. ...and then informed them that he, of organized them into a special committee to finance the necessary remodeling and additional construction of the facil-
ity. In the midst of all this activity, he also found time to establish the Limerick Artisan's Dwelling Company, a group which made as its goal the providing of decent, comfortable budget homes for the city's working men and their families. What it all added up to was the fact that, in little more than a decade, the bad taste caused by the Kelly-O'Sullivan affair had, by and large, been rinsed from the mouths of the people of Limerick. Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was once again the most popular and the most respected cleric in the community, bar none.

His immense popularity with the people served him well indeed in 1886. In February of that year, the Most Reverend Doctor Butler passed away, and the See of Saint Munchin lay vacant. On March 3rd, the clergy of the diocese assembled at Saint John's Cathedral in Limerick to elect a successor under the guidance of the Most Reverend Doctor Croke, Archbishop of Cashel.

The election was viewed by most as a two-way contest between Doctor Thomas Hammond, P.P., of Newcastle West and the Reverend Joseph Bourke. The former had spent the greatest part of his priestly life serving as Dean of Maynooth College, and was, as a consequence, considered to be the man most qualified to fill Dr. Butler's shoes. The latter candi-

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According to Begley, Edward Thomas made all of the arrangements with the bankers for the use of their property...and then informed them that he, of course, had no money, but he would see if he could arrange restitution of some sort! The bankers were eventually paid in full, but they must have been piqued!
date, on the other hand, had once held the presidency of the diocesan college, and he was considered to be nearly as worthy of the position of bishop.

That which was forecast to be a routine election turned out quite differently, however. After Dr. Croke had tabulated the ballots, he announced that something almost unprecedented in the long history of the Irish Church had taken place; Dr. Hammond was proclaimed dignior with twelve votes, Father Bourke dignus with four votes, and Edward Thomas O'Dwyer, the humble curate of Saint Michael's and a member of the lower clergy, was pronounced dignissimus with twenty votes.

There were good reasons aplenty why the clergy of the diocese made the choice they did. We have already taken note of Edward Thomas's peerless popularity with the common people. Certainly, this had to be a powerful influence upon his fellow clerics when they cast their votes. There were other, equally important considerations, however. While it is true that Edward Thomas had never held a position of noticeable authority and responsibility as had Hammond and Bourke, his successful initiation and management of undertakings such as the Catholic Institution and the Artisan's Dwelling Company had more than proven his abilities as an organizer and administrator. Almost as important was the fact that these endeavors had demonstrated that Edward Thomas, despite being a member of the lower clergy, had considerable influence among the moneyed classes. He did, in other
words, combine a rare popularity with the common people with an ability to work harmoniously with powerful groups such as the directors of the Munster and Leinster Bank.

There were theological considerations as well. Edward Thomas had long had a reputation among his peers for excellence in almost all aspects of Catholic thought, with his grasp of matters of Scripture being exceptionally well praised. He had received special plaudits for his oratory at the recent month's mind, and many of the electors, no doubt still held his eloquence on that occasion fresh in their minds when they filed into Saint John's Cathedral on March 3rd.

Nor should we overlook the important role played in the election by the personalities of the principles. Edward Thomas was admired, if not genuinely liked, by almost all who ever met him. Quick of wit, direct and to the point in conversation, at times hotheaded and arrogant, he was all that is considered to be typical of the great Gaels. His charm, sincere friendliness, dry humor and honesty in all of his dealings with his cohorts most certainly were to his advantage in the election.

If Edward Thomas's fellows had proved their admiration for him by electing him bishop, their display was as nothing when compared to the demonstration of affection and pure joy which welled up from the ranks of the common people when the results of the election were made public. His election had been unprecedented in the history of the Irish
Church, and equally unprecedented in its display and boisterousness were the demonstrations of public acclaim which followed the election. The charivari which swept through the city that night of March 3rd was long remembered; all of the city bands turned out and played loud and long far into the night, and joyous singing could be heard in all quarters of the community. Tarbarrels blazed brightly, and candles were to be found in almost every window. The great Gaels believed that, at long last, their man had achieved high office in the Church. True, some of the more radical of the nationalists still looked back to the Kelly-O'Sullivan election and passed the new bishop off as a landlord's man, but, on the whole, Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was once again rolling along on the crest of an immense wave of popularity. He would live to see the tide go out again as it had in 1874, and the same people who danced in the streets the evening of March 3rd would one day have second thoughts about their bishop. For the time being, however, Edward Thomas was on top of the world.

Before moving to an analysis of Edward Thomas's career as bishop, perhaps it would be useful to briefly examine the man's thinking in terms of theology. The Bishop of Limerick is best known for the stand he took as regards Sinn Feinism during the Great War, and that stand was, as the reader should certainly appreciate by this time, definitely contrary to the Church's official rulings in matters concerning rebellion and membership in secret societies. We
shall, of course, devote ample space to an analysis of this aspect of Dr. O'Dwyer's thinking later. What we want to do at this juncture is to examine his theological thought in areas where politics and nationalism were not directly involved.

It is something of a paradox that this man, while he adapted such a radical stance in terms of politics, was, in all other matters concerning Church doctrine and teaching, the epitome of the conservative Irish cleric. Most of the great Gaels knew of him via his stand on controversial issues, but his fellow clerics were often better acquainted with Edward Thomas through his widely-circulated theological treatises. In this respect, it is worthy of note that he achieved considerable fame in Church circles outside his own land.

The great heresy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as far as Catholic theologians were concerned was Modernism, a theological and philosophical system which attempted to adjust traditional orthodoxy to the modern world by viewing the dictates and traditions of the Church as symbolisms, rather than as objective realities which must be obeyed. Some of the Modernists attempted to demonstrate that the great Cardinal Newman (1801-1890) was essentially a forefather of their thought. This proved to be more than Church officialdom was prepared to tolerate and the Modernist movement, which had escaped official censure from the time of its inception in 1868 until 1907, was, in
that year, condemned by Pope Pius X as being the synthesis of all heresies in his encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*. In 1908, Dr. O'Dwyer published a pamphlet wherein he supported the Pope's stand, and he was rewarded for his efforts by a letter from the Vatican.

This famous pamphlet is the best example of Dr. O'Dwyer's theological thinking. Regrettably, we do not have the time here to conduct an in-depth analysis of the intricacies of the argumentation included within it. Suffice to say, I think, that the pamphlet was, like most of the Bishop of Limerick's theology, completely in line with the dictates of the papacy. Dr. O'Dwyer published numerous other pamphlets during his career, and most of them received considerable comment in Church circles both in Ireland and on the Continent. In fact, regardless of the subject matter or the format, Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was probably the most widely read Irish cleric of his day.

We cannot underestimate the importance of these highly successful tracts. For one thing, they made Dr. O'Dwyer the most famous cleric in Ireland, and as such his public statements and writings carried great weight. More important, perhaps, is the fact that the Bishop of Limer-

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13 The letter appears in the Appendix.

14 Those works authored by Dr. O'Dwyer which I consulted during my research are listed in the bibliography. Some excerpts from these publications may be of interest to the reader. In *The Virtue of Penance*, the bishop describes penance as, "... the turning to God of a soul that feels in itself the sorrow and des-
ick's fame as a pamphleteer and the high praise which he had received from Rome because of this work tended to give him a certain immunity from criticism, at least as far as his fellow clerics were concerned. When he took his controversial stand vis-a-vis nationalism and the war in the later days of his life, his fame and honored position among the Irish bishops determined that any criticism originating from such a quarter would be minimal. In short then, by the time of the Great War, Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was something of a legend in his own time on both sides of the Irish Sea, and as such, he could always count on receiving considerable support from his fellow Gaels regardless of the nature of the issue with which he might be involved at any one time. At the very least, any fusillade leveled in his direction would be comparatively mild of charge.

But to pick up again the main thread of our story. We had noted that the Bishop of Limerick would again sink to a low level in the eyes of many of his countrymen, much as he had in 1874. The issue involved here was education, and in Ireland it was every bit as hot as politics and theology. Throughout the 1880's and 1890's, Dr. O'Dwyer had cast a conservative eye upon the education controversy, so much so that he again appeared to many Gaels as a man who was concerned with little else than the values of the gentry class.

Olation of sin. It involves two things, at least; first, a recognition of sin as the greatest evil, and, secondly, a sorrow for having been guilty of it." (The Virtue of Penance and the Sacrament of Penance (Dublin: Office of the Irish Messenger, 1895), p. 5.
from which he sprang. To explain, the situation was very much like the debate which had racked the Gaels during the Kelly-O'Sullivan campaign. The aristocracy viewed a liberal education set to the tone of Cambridge and Oxford as the solution to an improved education system, just as they also had believed that men like Squire Kelly could have gained political reforms for the country merely by being from the right strata of society. Other Gaels (the O'Sullivans, if you like) thought that a better answer was to be found in the establishment of technical schools which would train the common people to rectify those problems of an agrarian nature which afflicted the country.

The Bishop of Limerick had always worked in the interests of education, at least in-so-far as Church schools were concerned. For example, aspirants to the priesthood had always been trained at Mungret College in rural County Limerick under the direction of the Jesuits. Dr. O'Dwyer purchased the large Henry Street Mansion in the center of the city, which had formerly been the property of the Lord Limerick, and had it remodeled. Eventually the edifice replaced Mungret as the diocesan college, an arrangement which, due to the better location and improved conditions in general, was much to the advantage of all concerned. Another of the bishop's accomplishments was the establishment of the Limerick Training College which produced women who taught in schools throughout Ireland.

The interest and charity which Dr. O'Dwyer so liber-
ally extended towards the Church's institutions of education was not made available to other schools, however. In 1899 he published another pamphlet which caused his star to fade considerably among the great Gaels. This was all the more regrettable in light of the fact that the decade of the 1890's had generally witnessed the rise of the bishop's popularity. Dr. O'Dwyer had been responsible for the completion and consecration of Saint Joseph's Cathedral in Limerick, an edifice whose construction had dragged along since 1845. (It was completed under Dr. O'Dwyer's direction in 1894.) He had, in addition, did more for the common people of the diocese than any other bishop in memory. He instructed his priests to perform weddings at the convenience of the intended, regardless of date or hour. He also decreed that the dead of the impoverished should be buried and administered to free of charge. A crowning achievement was the wresting of control of Saint John's Hospital away from the city's predominantly non-Catholic Board of Governors and Patrons. Dr. O'Dwyer managed to have the facility turned over to the Sisters of Mercy and took special pains to see to it that the needs of the poor were never neglected within the confines of the hospital's walls.

Despite all of this good work, when the bishop's pamphlet, *A University for Catholics in Relation to the Material Interests of Ireland* appeared in 1899, many observers believed that it signaled the resurrection of the arrogant aristocrat of pre-1874 days. The crux of the debate here
turned around the tendency of the Bishop of Limerick to, as was the case with most other men of his class, place his own desire to see the Crown grant Ireland a university for Catholics above all other issues, including that old sore spot, land reform. Once again, his critics maintained, Edward Thomas was staking his hopes for Ireland's future on the ability of the country to produce leaders who would compare favorably with the English gentry in their good manners and conservative thinking. In short, these critics were saying that the bishop was prepared to sell Ireland to the English, provided the latter would produce one Catholic university in the exchange. Dr. O'Dwyer, for his part, believed that class distinctions had no bearing whatsoever upon the issue of a university. Speaking of the men who believed otherwise, the bishop said:

They think it is a rich man's question; that it has no direct and immediate bearing on themselves and their interests; and, accordingly, they think, not unnaturally, that they are better employed in agitating about the land, which touches them hourly, rather than on a higher education, which is above their sphere.15

Dr. O'Dwyer maintained in addition that Ireland's educational inferiority was all-important to the country in terms of every affliction from which it suffered:

It seems quite easy to show that it has more to do with the poverty of Ireland today than any other cause whatsoever; and that, whether one hopes...
to raise the industries of the people in towns, or make existence possible for agriculturists, in modern conditions, the first essential step is to bring the country... to the same road as that by which every prosperous country in this world has progressed in this century; that is, the road to higher knowledge.16

Further, the Bishop of Limerick argued that only a classical, liberal education would suffice. Technical colleges and the like, he believed, were no solution to Ireland's problems. Technical education could be of no use at all unless general scientific knowledge had first been imparted to the student by way of the liberal arts:

Some persons imagine, that in agriculture, for example, if you send round the country a number of dairy instructoresses, to show women the best method of making butter, or men to teach farmers the right way of tilling the ground and gathering the crops— that the style of the thing is technical education; but it is nothing of the sort. It is simply training. ... training makes one skilful in the mechanical processes of doing anything, but gives you no hold on the principles on which these processes depend. ... You are like an unintelligent carpenter or stone mason, who can handle his tools with a considerable amount of deftness, in the way his father handled them, but knows nothing whatsoever of the reason of his methods, and is incapable of extending or improving them.17

Nor would mere improvement of the primary and secondary systems be sufficient. Only a university could give substance to the education of Ireland's young:

... by the time they are 15 years old, in the case of 4/5 of them, that education comes to an end, and they are thrown on the world to swell the worthless and dangerous declassed... a half education, which, because it is only half, is mis-

16 Ibid., p. 6.
17 Ibid., p. 13.
chievous and harmful.

Dr. O'Dwyer saw the university as an invaluable training ground for teachers for the primary and secondary schools. He pointed out that, contrary to what many people thought, Maynooth College, being a seminary and not a formal university, could not be expected to take up the slack in this regard. Dr. O'Dwyer saw the university as an invaluable training ground for teachers for the primary and secondary schools.

Despite the fact that many nationalists in Ireland were now christening the Bishop of Limerick a landlord’s man as they had in 1874, it was evident that Dr. O'Dwyer was beginning to display in his writings a certain attitude which was far from what one would expect from a conservative cleric. Let us examine some other excerpts from A University for Catholics. In one outburst, Dr. O'Dwyer maintained that merely hoping that Britain could be persuaded to allow more Catholics to enter existent academies was no solution. (There were only about forty Catholics enrolled in Trinity College in 1899.) Ireland's university had to be a Catholic university. And, should the English ask what a liberal arts education had to do with Irishmen tending their turnips, the Bishop of Limerick had an answer ready to hand:

A Catholic is cut off by law from those educational advantages which fit men to direct and guide the processes of turnip growing, and every other agricultural process. ... he is told that he is forever to sit for knowledge at the feet of the favored sons of the minority; he will drive the plow, and dig and toil, and pay rent, and starve, and they will hold the high places of

The bishop's comments at this time concerning the nature of the Union with Britain were equally interesting, especially if we remember that he had defended that political reality with vigor in earlier years:

For the hundredth time we have learned the lesson that, while English ministers from Pitt to Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour, may, in time of stress, play upon Catholic feeling in the interests of their party and government, they are always ready to revert to disabilities and persecution when they find that they can do without us. What this all proves is that Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was fast becoming Ireland's most nationalistic bishop. In the next chapter we will see that there were priests in the country who were more extreme in their views, sometimes to the point where their sincerity as Christian spokesmen was suspect. (Let the reader but examine the material presented on pages 95 and 96.) But Dr. O'Dwyer was not another Croppy John of Bolevogue. He never seriously contemplated calling his people to arms against the English foe, as did some of the lower clergy. Edward Thomas had far too much respect for his vocation to so compromise it and himself. (And I believe we may so condemn a cleric who behaves as some Irish priests did during this period.)

If we examine the entire spectrum of the clergy's attitude towards nationalism at this time in history, I be-

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19 Ibid.
20 Ibid. Here is an expression of an ancient debate. Did England see Ireland as cannon fodder only?
lieve we will find Dr. O'Dwyer as far to the left as a cleric may go without compromising his vows to the service of what is essentially a pacific philosophy. If he had gone any further to the left, as did some priests, we would have to view him as a radical nationalist, and not as a cleric. What we must not lose sight of here is the fact that the Bishop of Limerick remained always a man of the Church and acted accordingly. His was a responsible voice, but a lonely one.

The war galvanized him into taking an even more isolated position as it wore on.

The Lenten Pastorals of 1916 offer excellent examples of the Church hierarchy's view of the war and its causation. Most condemned the Germans as Satan's own and blamed them for the carnage. Typical was the Bishop of Raphoe's comment that, "Pity and mercy are absent from the thought of those who wage war under the inspiration of the New Paganism." "No doubt inspired by Prussian militarism," said the Bishop of Derry when speaking of "Germany's brutal conduct."

The Bishop of Clonfert, describing Ireland's role in the Allied war effort remarked:

"It is a matter of confessed wonder to Englishmen themselves that so many of our countrymen have answered the call to arms. But, the mind of the country seized the idea that the rights of weaker nations were at stake, and that on this occasion, at least, England's war was a first defense..."
against unwarranted aggression.

Now, compare those words with those of Dr. O'Dwyer:

The small nationalities, on whose behalf many people have believed that the war is being waged, have played no part in it except as cat's-paws for the larger nations.24

More contrasts are available. First, Dr. O'Donnell (Raphoe) on the causes of the war, maintained that, "Apostasy from God always brings terrible punishment. The war is a direct outcome of the New Paganism". To which Dr. Caughran, Bishop of Meath, added, "We remember the scandal of France and how she profaned the Sabbath. We may only hope that that country will thoroughly learn the lesson she has received, that no nation or individual can defy God's hand with impunity". Thus, the majority of the Irish clergy were of the opinion that the Great War was some manifestation of Divine wrath. Dr. O'Dwyer had other theories:

The daily newspapers are nothing more than a record of abominable butchery, and an agency for intensifying and exasperating national hatreds... The ugly threatenings of Socialism are, I fear, no more than the first mutterings of the storm which will burst over European society as soon as the war is over, which may be worse than the war itself. If anyone thinks that millions of working-men, trained to arms in every country in Europe, will settle down peacefully to starvation in order to help reamass the fortunes of their 'betters',

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Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 4.

Ibid. Some of the bishops also believed that another famine would visit Ireland as a result of displeasure from Above. British Army--Dominick Behan.
he may be in for a rude awakening.

As the war progressed, Dr. O'Dwyer lashed out more and more at the Imperialists and the British Government, and he bent over backwards to support the cause of those who, directly or indirectly, worked against Britannia. Ireland really began to realize that she had a rebel bishop when he took up the conscription issue. As we have noted, Ireland was left free from conscription, a fact which did not prevent some 150,000 Gaels from joining the colors. We should also note, however, that there were many other Irishmen who, for reasons which ran the gamut from a higher Irish patriotism to common cowardice, did not care to risk life and limb for England:

Toorahlcorahlocrahlo, down their lives for a cause which, says one, 'If I'd a face like you I'd join the British Army'.

While Irishmen living in their own land were free from conscription, those who resided in England were subject to call. Since many Gaels were at the time working in British war industries, a considerable number of them were swept up and placed on the rolls. Others determined to return home to avoid service. Such men, unfortunately for them, chose to leave England in large groups on specially chartered ships, with the result that nasty mob violence at times broke out at the ports of debarkation. It was just

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27 **Ibid.**, p. 3.

28 Join the British Army--Dominick Behan.
such an incident which brought Dr. O'Dwyer rushing to the side of Irish draft-dodgers.

On November 6, 1915, a group of Irishmen attempted to board the Cunarder Saxonia at Liverpool, with the intent of fleeing back to Ireland. An angry English mob assembled at the docks and prevented the Gaels from boarding, and the latter were eventually rescued by the police only with the greatest of difficulty. The action enraged the Bishop of Limerick, and he wrote an open letter to the Munster News which that journal printed on November 10th. In his letter, Dr. O'Dwyer expressed his personal anger at the Liverpool incident and maintained that all Irishmen should be equally disturbed by what had happened. Then he went on to ask why Irishmen should be willing to lay down their lives for a cause which, as he termed it, was "not worth a row of pins":

"It is very probable that these poor Connaught peasants know little or nothing of the meaning of the war. Their blood is not stirred by the memories of Kosovo, and they have no burning desire to die for Serbia. They would much prefer to be allowed to till their own potato gardens in peace in Connemara. . . . What have they or their forefathers ever got from England that they should die for her? Mr. Redmond will say a Home Rule act on the Statute Book. But any intelligent Irishman will say a simulacrum of Home Rule, with an express notice that it is never to come into operation. This war may be just or unjust, but any fair-minded man will admit that it is England's war, not Ireland's."

Dr. O'Dwyer was at this time far removed from

29 Letters of the Late Bishop O'Dwyer (Dublin: circa 1916-1917), p. 20. This pamphlet is catalogued under National Pamphlets (IR94109) at the National Library in Dublin.
thinking of his friends. Speaking of those Gaels who sought to avoid military service, Dr. William Barry, Bishop of Ross, commented:

The Church of which I am a priest holds her own doctrine concerning war and non-resistance. If the conscience of any man declares war to be always unjust, she condemns that conscience as erroneous. She would not allow any of her children to decline military service on such a plea. To my mind, "conscientious objectors" misread the Scriptures, trade on the immense benevolence of the English nation, and, if not cowards, are intellectually imbecile.30

So it was that, on the eve of the Easter Rising, the man who had been dubbed the "landlord's bishop" a few years earlier for refusing to countenance the politics of the Land League of Davitt and Parnell was saying that, "The government cliques in each country have led or driven, like sheep to the slaughter, people who did not want war and who had no hatred of one another". He had come to be Ireland's most radical cleric, and he would become even more of an embarrassment to the conservative hierarchy in the months to come.

31 Ibid., March 3, 1916, p. 3.
32 Many of the Pastoralts were concerned at this time with such earth-shaking topics as the suppression of questionable literature and plays. Four bishops had signed a plea to "resist the unsavory stuff coming across the Channel", according to the Daily Independent. (March 7, 1916, p. 4.)
The cruel deed was over.
Gone was the man
Who loved Ireland so well.
There was many a sad heart
In Dublin that morning
When they murdered James Connolly
The Irish rebel.

James Connolly
Traditional

Dr. O'Dwyer continued to focus his attention upon the conscription issue throughout the early months of 1916. Then came Easter Week, and he had a much more serious and fundamental cause to sponsor. The bishop, like all of his countrymen, was taken by surprise by the events in Dublin. The great Gaels were not the only ones who did not quite know what to make of the incident, however; John Redmond was shocked, the British people and their Government were shocked, and the authorities in Dublin Castle were shocked.

As events turned out, the British Government shook itself awake first. Troops were rushed across the Irish Sea to put down the rising in Dublin and restore order. The man who was entrusted with the task of putting the Gaels in their place was General Sir John Grenfell Maxwell, an interesting personality who would become the Bishop of Limerick's idea...
of antichrist.

Born in Liverpool of Scottish parents on July 11, 1859, "Conky" Maxwell was what one might call a typical British officer. Never accused of being brilliant, he owed his position largely to the fact that he knew all the right people and was the life of the garden parties wherever he was assigned. He was courageous, but pugnacious; a capable but unimaginative administrator and organizer. He gained his reputation in campaigns in the Sudan (1896-1898), where his major obstacle was of a dental nature, and in the Transvaal, where he was a principle in a scandal having to do with civilian prisoners. He was commander of British forces in Egypt until the Dublin Rising. "Conky" was a member of the

Maxwell's diary during the Sudan campaign carried the entry, "Had a tooth removed by the unskilled hands of an army surgeon who dragged me round and round a tent holding on like grim death to my molar, which at last gave with a cluck". (Sir George Arthur, General Sir John Maxwell (London: John Murray, 1932), p. 34.) As Military Governor of Pretoria years later, Maxwell established "concentration camps" to better keep the Boers in check. The inmates, most of whom were women and children, suffered greatly from lack of proper facilities or medication, with the result that many of them died. Maxwell, however, received congratulations and thanks from Joseph Chamberlain for a job well done.

Maxwell was, according to his biographer, an individual who, ". . . throughout fifty years of manhood retained many of the characteristics of a young boy". (p. 19.) He was described further as, ". . . a sunny matinee, an unperturbable good humor, a gift of shrewd repartee conspired with a constant determination to see the best side of things." (p. 23.) He could never control either his own money or time. He was frequently in debt due to heavy gambling and a tendency to be overly generous with his cronies. In short, General Maxwell was sort of a composite of all the human weaknesses which Dr. O'Dwyer deplored.
Kitchener Clan, and as such, he was involved with English domestic politics. He had friends in high places, and he had a goodly number of enemies there as well. Consequently, much of what he did was the result of political pressures and counter-pressure.

Maxwell at first appeared to be the man for the job in Dublin. He was, as we have noted, a competent organizer, and all that was really required to defeat the amateurs in the G.P.O. and the Four Courts was a little effective organization. But after the final shots had been fired, Maxwell ordered the execution of fourteen of the rebel leaders, thereby repeating the old English mistake of making martyrs out of Ireland's radicals.

It was only after the executions that the great Gaels really began to express their opinion of what had happened. By and large, the Church hierarchy was incensed by the audacity of the Sinn Feiners. "A senseless, meaningless debauch of blood", shouted the Most Reverend Dr. Kelly at Skibberdeen. The Reverend J. Walsh commented that the only

2 The general was never tight-lipped about politics. In a letter to his wife which mentioned Winston Churchill, he wrote, "Winston Churchill is a ( ). I will leave you to fill in the blank, but use brown paint." (p. 67.)

3 I believe Maxwell cannot alone be blamed for the executions. Writing to the Prime Minister on July 17th, he complained that, "An idea is prevalent that I have been entrusted with greater powers than is the case. . . . I am now of the opinion that it is essential, if I am to remain on in Ireland for any useful purpose, that my position must be regularized." (pp. 179-180.)
possible reason for the rising had been to "aid the brutal Hun." Numerous other examples of priestly wrath could be cited. The Church, as always, had lined up in opposition to the patriots.

Maxwell found the clergy to be most co-operative, all things considered, but he was aware that Ireland had, as usual, several Croppy clerics. He determined to stamp out Sinn Feinism once and for all, and these dissident priests were part of the group which were to be removed. The general soon recognized the fact that these clerics were either under Dr. O'Dwyer's jurisdiction or, at the least, they were able to talk treason in Limerick without opposition. Maxwell was familiar with the bishop through the latter's involvement in the anti-conscription campaign, and he was well aware of the fact that any pro-rebel reaction among the clergy could only originate from Dr. O'Dwyer's headquarters. So it was that a British general came to write a letter to an Irish bishop. It was an action which caused damage only to the former, and which was possibly more harmful to his cause than a hundred Sinn Fein rifles could have been. What Maxwell succeeded in doing was something which the rebels themselves had failed to do with all of their pamphlets and inflammatory speeches; resurrect the spirit of rebellion among the great Gaels.

Maxwell would always later claim that Dr. O'Dwyer...
forced the confrontation upon him by refusing to discipline his radical priests when it was well known throughout ecclesiastical circles that such was being done by other bishops at the general's request. It was Maxwell, however, who commenced the latter writing campaign which led to so many (and for Maxwell, disastrous) complications. It does not appear, therefore, that the general was justified in blaming the bishop for what happened, even though we must admit that Dr. O'Dwyer made no effort to avoid the impending conflict. He certainly must have realized that the British authorities would take steps against him as they had against his brother bishops if he did not do something about his radical priests.

On May 6th, Maxwell wrote to Dr. O'Dwyer from Dublin. He began by requesting the bishop's help in moving against two radical priests in the Limerick area, Fathers Hayes and Wall. "Had these priests been laymen they would have already been placed under arrest", stated Maxwell, adding that he expected the bishop to oblige him by, "...moving these priests to such employment as will deny their having intercourse with the people, and inform me of your decision." The challenge had clearly been made. Three days it would stand before being answered.

Dr. O'Dwyer replied to General Maxwell's first letter,

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Letters of the Late Bishop O'Dwyer, p. 20. The names of the two priests in question do not appear in this collection. They are, in fact, reproduced only in General Maxwell's biography.
ter in a way typical of him. In the first place, he instructed his secretary, the Reverend James O'Shea to do the actual writing, an act which comprised a definite breach of decorum, since the general had written in his own hand, and not through his own secretary. (Although Father O'Shea signed the letter, the style is unquestionably that of the Bishop of Limerick.) The letter which General Maxwell held in his hands on May 10th began with a statement that the bishop could not take any action against the priests in question without sufficient evidence, which the former requested the general to forward to Limerick. (The implication here, of course, is that Dr. O'Dwyer considered himself far too busy to bother with such matters, and therefore Maxwell would have to do the groundwork, since he had nothing more important to do.) In addition, Dr. O'Dwyer coolly informed the general that he would, in any case, act only according to Church law. No decision would be based upon the dictates of British martial authority. A priest had spoken to a secret meeting to plot to have any part in proceedings which might be held to help your cause. I have learned of this in the following conversation, and I must tell you that this is a serious matter.

The Bishop of Limerick's note came as something of a shock to General Maxwell. We should note that both men were acting out of a sense of natural superiority and fully expected compliance with their wishes in all fields. We have seen that Dr. O'Dwyer was at times an egotist. General Maxwell was no less so. The general dashed off a reply to the bishop the very day he received the latter's letter, and this time his impatience and anger spoke out from every line. Maxwell had done his homework well, and he had a long
list of specific charges ready at hand to make against the two clerics in question. The case against Father Wall was especially damning. A member of the Gaelic Athletic Association (which was sometimes little more than a Sinn Fein frontal organization), he had attended lectures by Patrick Pearse and other radicals, an activity which had been specifically forbidden by the Church ever since the 1915 Pastoral. In addition, the young priest had publically blessed the colors of an Irish Volunteers regiment and had spent considerable time distributing Sinn Fein literature to the general public on the street-corners of Limerick. Maxwell also noted that Father Wall had been speaking to radical groups and assemblies in an inflammatory way. This was most certainly an understatement. My research has led me to believe that he was the same priest referred to during the testimony of the Royal Commission on the rising. C. I. Gelston, County Inspector for County Claire (Royal Irish Constabulary), testified that a priest had spoken to a secret meeting and encouraged the people present to actually take up arms. "He told them if they could not get long-distance rifles to get shotguns... and if they could not get shotguns they should get revolvers, and if they could not get revolvers they should get pikes, and if they could not get pikes that every man had a hatchet or a slasher in the house." And, as he left the meeting, the cleric was reputed

The Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland, p. 86, question # 1951.
to have told the meeting to, "Trust England if you like, trust Germany if you like, trust John Redmond if you like, . . . "but you should trust in God and keep your powder dry."

General Maxwell had evidence aplenty. He went on to insist that, "If these reports are true it should not be necessary for me to make definite charges, supported by evidence, against these priests". Once again, the general concluded with a request for assistance from the bishop, and this time the request was more in the nature of a demand.

Dr. O'Dwyer let his opponent cool his heels for five days before composing a well-thought-out reply. That reply was, in essence, a harsh, uncompromising rebuke of both General Maxwell and British policy in Ireland generally. The bishop began by maintaining that, as far as the two priests were concerned, "I do not know that they have violated any law civil or ecclesiastical". He then flatly refused to assist the general in his efforts:

In your letter of the 6th instant you appealed to me to help you in the furtherance of your work as military dictator of Ireland. Even if action of that kind was not outside my province, the events of the past few weeks would make it impossible for me to have any part in proceedings which I regard as wantonly cruel and oppressive.

He concluded his assessment of Maxwell by stating

7 Ibid.
9 Ibid. p. 24.
10 Ibid. General Maxwell, we may assume, probably did not consider himself a military dictator!
that, "Your regime has been one of the worst and blackest chapters in the history of the misgovernment of the country". Clearly, the Bishop of Limerick had let it be known just how deep were his nationalistic sentiments. The priests were guilty of violating the civil law, at least insofar as the British interpreted it, and the bishop knew it. What he was in effect saying was that his rebel clerics and the patriots they supported were above the jurisdiction of the laws which the English had imposed on Ireland.

We may only speculate what Maxwell intended to do after he received Dr. O'Dwyer's letter, for the general's biographer is silent on the subject. That he was in a quandary there can be no doubt. After all, how did one go about disciplining a cleric in the twentieth century? At any rate, he never got a chance to make a reply. Immediately after sending the letter to Dublin, the Bishop of Limerick had used his influence with Mr. William Reeves, a close friend and a reporter for The Cork Examiner, to get the letters published in that paper. Thus, Dr. O'Dwyer had, with one motion, cut the ground from beneath his rival. From General Maxwell's viewpoint, it was bad enough that he was being stumped by an aging cleric; now the entire country knew about it!

The great Gaels rallied around the Bishop of Limerick. While many people no doubt believed that he had been

Ibid. Despite such comments, both men kept up a facade of politesse and gentility.
ill-advised to sponsor the cause of the Sinn Fein radicals, they were none-the-less angered by General Maxwell's aggressive, arrogant attitude, especially as it manifested itself in his final letter to the bishop. The Irish, it seems, had found the perfect underdog; here was the frail and elderly, but still defiant, Bishop of Limerick, standing up to the gruff assault of Britain's bully. All in all, it was exactly the kind of affair upon which Gaelic sympathies thrive. On May 24th, the Limerick Board of Guardians met and adopted a resolution lauding their bishop's actions in the Maxwell affair. On June 18th, the Tipperary Board followed suit, and by the middle of the following month it seemed that the entire country was publically expressing support for the firey Bishop of Limerick. This entire period, admittedly, was one during which many Irishmen began to react against the British conduct of the Dublin Rising. There was, then, considerable ill feeling towards the Crown, and we must not over-estimate Dr. O'Dwyer's contribution to the general anti-English mood which was sweeping through Ireland. Never-the-less, what he did was important. First, his actions confused the other Irish bishops, with the result that they began to play down somewhat their anti-Republican sentiments. This development could not help but ease the burden on the embattled rebels. Second, Dr. O'Dwyer's stand against General Maxwell had provided the great Gaels with a popular hero. More important, this new hero was, for a change, not a man of whom it could be said was not accep-
Maxwell could do little more than fret and fume as he watched Dr. O'Dwyer's star rise higher with each passing day. The publication of his correspondence with the bishop had made him both a bully and a fool on both sides of the Irish Sea. Worse, he realized that his position in Ireland would make it easy for his political foes in London to place the blame for what had happened directly on his shoulders should the situation in Ireland worsen further to the point where it would become too hot for the British Government to handle. Many politicians in England had waited for Maxwell to make a mistake; now he had apparently made it. The activities of the Bishop of Limerick and the reaction which they had aroused had turned Ireland into a hot potato destined to be left resting in General Maxwell's lap.

The general had bombarded London with requests for specific, written orders which would leave no doubt in the public mind as to who was giving orders and who was only following those orders ever since his arrival in Ireland. All was in vain, however; he was too perfect a pigeon. And, he evidently blamed the Bishop of Limerick for the harmful turn of events, complaining to Kitchener that:

He is the only dignitary of the R. C. Church who has taken up this attitude... I am afraid this action has done some harm and incited others to defy authority. I am getting reports now from the R.I.C. that priests are offering Masses for the repose of the souls of those who have died or been executed, martyrs to their country's cause... It is an extremely difficult matter to deal with this question, and I think if His Holiness...
the Pope could be induced to advise the Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops in Ireland to prevent priests from mixing themselves up with matters political, seditious, or unconnected with their spiritual position, some good might come of it.12

But there was to be no respite. General Maxwell had clearly demonstrated that he believed that renegade clerics could be handled in the same way as nonconforming junior officers in the British Army. A note to those with influence, a whispered word to somebody who knew somebody, a request that so-and-so be hustled off to the backwoods; was not this the way to handle dissentience? The general was evidently not capable of viewing situations in any other than a military way.

Maxwell was never to have an opportunity to even the score with the Bishop of Limerick. In August, the cruiser Hampshire sank with the loss of its most important passenger; Kitchener himself. With the loss of his influential friend, General Maxwell's game was up. Conveniently accused of exceeding his authority (an authority which had never been clearly spelled out to him), and thus of bringing about the sticky turn of events in Ireland, Maxwell was soon kicked upstairs to a recruiting position in Scotland. How it must have grieved him to leave that obstinate, incomprehensible island! Even when he was preparing to depart, the papers were filled with ever more notes of congratulation to the Bishop of Limerick, notes which just kept arriving from

Boards of Guardians and other institutions throughout the country. What was worse were the published replies from the Bishop of Limerick. Dr. O'Dwyer was, quite exactly, at the very height of his glory. As he accepted the thanks and congratulations of his fellow Gaels, his egotism vented itself in ways reminiscent of the O'Sullivan-Kelly campaign of so many years before. He calmly referred to Maxwell as "that brute", and took great pains to point out to all interested parties that he, the Bishop of Limerick, had been right all along with regard to his view of the English and their policies, and almost everybody else had been wrong.

Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was once again a popular man. He who the patriots had once accused of offering to sell the soul of Ireland for a university, he who they had long cursed as the "landlord's bishop", had proven to be the guiding light for the new wave of patriotism which was sweeping the country. He was given the Freedom of the City of Limerick (a ceremony similar to our own act of bestowing "the keys of the city" upon some favored personage), and was fairly worshiped by the same man who had, just a year before, bestowed the same honor upon John Redmond. The bishop became something virtually sacred to his faction, an idol of sorts, a thing of a living shrine for Sinn Feiners, and many of them, including DeValera, went on pseudo-pilgrimages to Limerick, just to meet with and talk to Ireland's "Croppy Bishop". Dr. O'Dwyer's brother bishops, moreover, bent over backwards in a frantic effort to emulate this man who was so obviously fallen to everlasting heights of adulation.
I

For what suffer our patriots today?
We have a language problem, so they say;
Must grieve our hearts full sore.
We got rid of one strange language,
Now we are faced with many, many more.
For what suffer our patriots today?

For what died the Sons of Roisin?

Luke Kelly

Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was once again a popular man.

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just to meet with and talk to Ireland's "Croppy Bishop". Dr.
O'Dwyer's brother bishops, moreover, bent over backwards in
a frantic effort to emulate this man who was so obviously
and embarrassingly) popular with the young priests and the laity. But for Edward Thomas O'Dwyer, time was quickly running out. He was amazingly agile and nimble for a man seventy-five years old, but he was not destined to reach the age of seventy-six. Edward Thomas O'Dwyer loved horses; his rival General Sir John Maxwell loved to watch them run around the gaming oval. Curiously, this love of horses, possibly the only ground for agreement between the two men, was a factor in the mortal end of both. In mid-August, 1917, the Bishop of Limerick caught cold while riding in the countryside, developed pneumonia and died on the 21st of the month. Twelve years later in Cape Town, South Africa, General Maxwell caught cold while at the local track, developed pneumonia, and died. The date was February 20, 1929.

When Edward Thomas O'Dwyer became Bishop of Limerick, the common people of that community had celebrated with a show of joy and enthusiasm which had been unbounded. Their grief at his passing was equal in the depth and sincerity of the emotions which were laid bare. On the day of his funeral the city which he had called his home for almost all of his life virtually ceased to breathe as great hosts of citizens lined the oddly silent streets to watch a procession which looked like a Who's Who of Irish Catholicism. Businesses closed their doors, athletic events were postponed, black was the mode of dress in the city for days. The papers were filled to overflowing with expressions of sympathy and condolence from Boards of Guardians and prominent individuals
throughout Ireland. Poems were written and submitted, some of which originated from beyond the confines of County Limerick. Then there were the speeches and the editorials, and how grand they were; plaques and statues were mentioned frequently, and many, many people suggested that a book should be written about the late cleric.

It all came to naught, of course. The statues were never commissioned, the memorial plaques were somehow forgotten. And, while the lone biography of General Maxwell is certainly far from being exciting or stimulating reading, at least he does have a biography, which is more than we can say for the Bishop of Limerick. An explanation? All we can really do is return again to our earlier comparison of the noyau and the biological nation. Nations, it seems, remember their heroes through the printed word. Noyaux, on the other hand, do not adapt themselves very well to such formalized memorials. Then too, a noyau is at the roots anti-hero to begin with.

But a more important consideration here is the basic political fickleness of the great Gaels. Call it the expression of an independence of mind and heart which disallows dwelling upon the morose if you like, or term it some sort of instinctive rebellion against Brobdingnag. It is a little bit of both, to my way of thinking, and I would add that it also has something to do with the fact that the great Gaels remember only their martyrs, and Edward Thomas O'Dwyer did not die a loser.
What are we to say of him then? Just where does the rebel Bishop of Limerick fit into the panorama of Irish History, and what did he contribute, if anything? I am often tempted to succumb to those theories of history which preach that so-called "great men" are actually nothing more than manifestations of the hopes and ambitions of larger masses of people. But everytime I weaken in the future, I am certain that the example of the Bishop of Limerick will serve to return my focus to the role which the individual plays in the unfolding of events. Perhaps there was, in 1916, a sort of mood, a yen if you will, deep within Ireland's Catholics which demanded a rebel cleric. But, from what research I have done, I must maintain that the individual actions of an individual man were far more important determining factors. Edward Thomas O'Dwyer was truly one of a kind, and had he not spoken out, I fail to see who else in the Church hierarchy would have. More than anything else, these facts have led me. The bishop was a dissident Irish cleric, and as such, he fits into a certain pattern, a detectable legacy-pattern in Irish History, which is every bit as real as the pattern and legacy which is composed of the existence of the many, many other clerics to whom the compromising of an official dictate was unthinkable. Ireland has always had an essentially conservative Church, and she has always had the odd number, the rebel cleric. Edward Thomas O'Dwyer stands out because he was a rebel bishop, and not just a rebel priest, and because circumstances dictated that he do his
rebelling in an age when most men were of the opinion that insurrection of any kind was outdated. He was never the most admirable of personalities. There was a certain aloofness, a marked arrogance in his thought and action; he was always patrician, and he was always patriarchal. It is hard to imagine him as any other than an Irish bishop. Yet, he was an honest man, and a sincere man, and a man genuinely concerned with the plight of those around him. Why he was a rebel I cannot say. He made his home in a "fighting" county, and indications are that, as an educated man, he must have appreciated the tradition of insurrection which grew like the heather on the Galtymore Mountains. But there had been many other occupants of the See of Saint Munchen, and they had not been rebels. We could say that his national and racial makeup were the primary factors in his turn to radicalism, but we have already seen that most of the great Gaels have not been rebels. More than anything else, these facts have led me to believe that Edward Thomas O'Dwyer acted because of some peculiarity of his own constitution, and not to heed the call of some pre-determined cultural demand.

II

This thesis, though I did not intend it to be so, was concluded on Saint Patrick's Day. For that I am thankful because the time of year thus provided an excellent stimulus for what remains to be said. For Saint Patrick's Day is both a good day to remember and to forget. It is a good day to remember all the fine patriots who died for Ireland; it is a
good day to forget that most of the great Gaels did not want to know them and very often were instrumental in their downfall. It is a good day to remember the glories of the merry war of 1916; it is a good day to forget that it is still being waged on the Shankill and in the Bogside. It is a good day to remember that two-and-one-half-million Catholics have their own Republic; it is a good day to forget that they gained it by selling away the rights of another half-million Catholics in Ulster. It would be a good day to wander into a Dublin pub, call for "the black-and-tan" and slap an Irish pound note on the bar; it would be a good day to forget that the backing behind that lovely piece of paper is English gold, and what Britannia gives Britannia can also take away:

I do not believe any other thesis can tell us whether at the risk of falling to the enemy's hand we continue to maintain that we may learn much of the great Gaels by examining the theory of the norm.

We may regret that historians will no doubt note that the city of Limerick was home to Maria Dolores Eliza Rosanna (Lola Montez) Gilbert before they recall that a man named Edward Thomas O'Dwyer could say the same. Yet it has been most refreshing for me (and I hope for the reader as well) to briefly examine the career of this man who was, quite simply, an Irish man of God.

We could condemn the Church for its poor record as far as its treatment of the patriots is concerned. But before we hurl stones at the clergy, we should perhaps remember that most of the great Gaels treated the patriots equally as shabbily. We have seen what a difference a Father Murphy or an Edward Thomas O'Dwyer can make in terms of the ac-

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For What Died the Sons of Roisin?--Luke Kelly.
ceptance of a nationalist movement among the Irish people. But I cannot maintain that the great Gaels did not follow their rebels because of the prohibitions of the Church. The fall of Parnell and other political developments such as the Election of 1874 in Limerick demonstrate quite clearly that the Gaels are capable of resisting their Church. . . when the price is right.

At the commencement of this thesis, I indicated that it would deal with an Irish man of God. Upon reflection, I think the reader may agree with me that, in the case of Edward Thomas O'Dwyer, the man overcame the frock; he was, first and foremost, a great Gael, and when the time came to choose, he, like so many other Irishmen, chose the Green. I do not believe that Ardrey's thesis, or any other thesis, can tell us why in any final sense. However, at the risk of falling to the level of the phrenologists, I continue to maintain that we may learn much of the great Gaels by examining the theory of the noyau.

We may regret that historians will no doubt note that the city of Limerick was home to Marie Dolores Eliza Rosanna (Lola Montez) Gilbert before they recall that a man named Edward Thomas O'Dwyer could say the same. Yet it has been most refreshing for me (and I hope, for the reader as well) to briefly examine the career of this man who was, quite simply, an Irish man of God.
APPENDIX 1

IRELAND -

POLITICAL

A. Limerick (Luimneach)
B. New Castle West
C. Killaloe
D. Adare
E. Kilmallock
F. Bruff
G. Rathkeale
H. Glin
I. Athea
J. Pallaskenry
APPENDIX THREE

EDWARD THOMAS O'DWYER
BISHOP OF LIMERICK
APPENDIX FOUR

GENERAL SIR JOHN MAXWELL
Headquarters, Irish Command
Park Gate, Dublin
6th May, 1916

My Lord,

I have the honour to request your lordship's cooperation in a matter connected with the present deplorable situation in Ireland, the settlement of which I am confident you desire no less keenly than I do.

There are two priests in your diocese, the Rev. Fr. Hayes, of Glin, County Limerick, and the Rev. Fr. Wall, of Newcastle West, County Limerick, whose presence in that neighborhood I consider to be a dangerous menace to the peace and safety of the realm, and had these priests been laymen they would have already been placed under arrest. In this case I would be glad if your lordship could obviate the necessity for such action by moving these priests to such employment as will deny their having intercourse with the people, and inform me of your decision.

I have the honour to be,
Your obedient servant,
J. G. Maxwell,
General

Commander-in-Chief,
The Forces in Ireland
Abbey View, Kilmallock,
May 9th, 1916

Sir,

I am directed by the Bishop of Limerick to acknowledge the receipt on this morning of your letter of 6th instant, which has been forwarded to him at the above address.

The Bishop desires to point out that the action which you suggest to him to take towards Rev. Fr. Wall and Rev. Fr. Hayes would be a very severe punishment, which the Bishop has no right to inflict on these people except on a definite charge supported by evidence. If then you are good enough to specify the grounds on which you consider that their presence in the neighborhood of Glin and Newcastle West is a "dangerous menace to the peace and safety of the realm", the Bishop will investigate the matter and inform you of his decision. But whatever may be the rights of the military authorities acting under martial law, a bishop in the exercise of his authority has to follow the rules of ecclesiastical procedure.

I have the honour to be,
Your obedient servant,

James Canon O'Shea,
(pro. Secretary)

When I wrote to you I hoped that you would have been able to take steps to prevent priests from mixing up in organizations that are a danger to the realm. If these reports are true it should not be necessary for me to make definite charges, supported by evidence, against these priests, who, I imagine, will not deny their participation in the Irish Volunteers movement, which has led to such deplorable events all over Ireland. Therefore it should not be difficult for your Lordship, under such disciplinary power as you possess, to prevent at any rate priests from mixing up with and inciting their flock to join an organization such as the Irish Volunteers have proved themselves to be.

I beg to remain, my dear lord Bishop,
Yours very truly,

J. G. Maxwell
General

Commander-in-Chief,
The Forces in Ireland
My dear Lord Bishop,

I beg to acknowledge the letter of May 9th, from your Lordship's secretary.

Father Wall has been reported as on 14th November, 1915, speaking in his church against conscription. He is said to have attended a lecture by P. H. Pearse on the "Irish Volunteers of 1682" and of blessing the colours of the Irish Volunteers at Rathskeale on 2nd January, 1916; also speaking at a meeting that took place at Clogh on 17th March, 1916.

Father Hayes is said to have been active with a certain E. Blythe, organizing Irish Volunteers. In November, 1915, he got printed a large number of leaflets appealing to young men of the Gaelic Athletic Association to join the Irish Volunteers. He is said to be president of the Irish Volunteers at Askeaton and Bruff. He is said to have been present at the Irish Volunteers' meeting at Bruff when a certain John MacDermott delivered inflammatory and seditious speeches on 17th March, 1916.

When I wrote to your Lordship on the 6th I hoped that you would have been able to take steps to prevent priests from mixing up in organizations that are a danger to the realm. If these reports are true it should not be necessary for me to make definite charges, supported by evidence, against these priests, who, I imagine, will not deny their participation in the Irish Volunteers movement, which has led to such deplorable events all over Ireland. Therefore it should not be difficult for your Lordship, under such disciplinary power as you possess, to prevent at any rate priests from mixing up with and inciting their flock to join an organization such as the Irish Volunteers have proved themselves to be.

I beg to remain, my dear Lord Bishop,

Yours very truly,

J. C. Maxwell

General

Commander-in-Chief,

The Forces in Ireland
Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of twelfth instant, which has been forwarded to me here. I have read carefully your allegations against Rev. Fr. Hayes and Rev. Fr. Wall, but I do not see in them any justification for disciplinary action on my part. They are both excellent priests, who hold strong Nationalist views, but I do not know that they have violated any law civil or ecclesiastical.

In your letter of the sixth instant you appealed to me to help you in the furtherance of your work as military dictator of Ireland. Even if action of that kind was not outside my province, the events of the past few weeks would make it impossible for me to have any part in proceedings which I regard as wantonly cruel and oppressive.

You remember the Jameson Raid, when a number of buccaneers invaded a friendly state, and fought the forces of the lawful Govt. If ever man deserved the supreme punishment it was they. But, officially and unofficially, the influence of the British Govt. was used to save them, and it succeeded. You took care that no plea for mercy should interpose on behalf of the poor young fellows who surrendered to you in Dublin. The first information which we got of their fate was the announcement that they had been shot in cold blood. Personally, I regard your action with horror, and I believe that it has outraged the conscience of the country. Then the deporting of hundreds and even thousands of poor fellows without a trial of any kind, seems to me an abuse of power as fatuous as it is arbitrary; and altogether your regime has been one of the worst and blackest chapters in the history of the misgovt. of the country.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Edward Thomas,
Bishop of Limerick
APPENDIX SIX

POPE PIUS’S LETTER TO DR. O’Dwyer

(From the Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator, March 23, 1908. Both the Latin and English versions were carried, a policy which filled the front page.)

To our Venerable Brother,
Edward Thomas

Venerable Brother,
Health and Apostolic Benediction,

We would have you know that your pamphlet, in which you show that the writings of Cardinal Newman, so far from differing from Our Encyclical Pascendi, are in closest harmony with it, has Our strongest approval. You could not, indeed, have done better service alike to the cause of truth, and to the eminent merit of the man.

There appears to have been established amongst those whose errors we have condemned by that Letter, as it were a fixed rule that for the very things which they themselves have invented they seek the sanction of the name of a most illustrious man. Accordingly, they freely claim that they have drawn certain fundamental positions from that spring and source, and that, for that reason, We could not condemn doctrines which are their very own without, at the same time, nay, in priority of order, condemn the teaching of so eminent and so great a man.

If one did not know what a power the ferment of a puffed-up spirit has on overwhelming the mind, it would seem incredible that persons should be found who think and proclaim themselves Catholics, while in a matter lying at the very foundation of religious discipline they set the authority of a private teacher, even though an emin­ent one, above the Apostolic See.

You expose not only their contumacy, but their artifice as well. For, if in what he wrote before he professed the Catholic faith, there may perchance be found something which bears a certain resemblance to some of the formulas of the Modernists, you justly deny that they are in any way supported thereby; both because the meaning underlying the words is very different, as is also the purpose of the writer, and because the author himself, on entering the Catholic Church, submitted all his writings to the authority of the Catholic Church Herself to be corrected if it were necessary.
As for the numerous and important books which he wrote as a Catholic, it is hardly necessary to defend them against the suggestion of kindred with heresy. For amongst the English public, as everybody knows, Henry Newman in his writings unceasingly championed the cause of the Catholic Faith in such a way that his work was most salutary to his countrymen, and at the same time most highly esteemed by Our predecessor.

Moreover, Venerable Brother, We give thanks from Our heart to you, and to your clergy and people, for your dutiful zeal in coming to the aid of Our poverty by sending the usual donation; and in order to win for you, and first of all for yourself in particular, the gifts of the Divine bounty, and also to testify Our goodwill, we most lovingly impart the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter’s, the 10th day of March, in the year 1908, the 5th of Our Pontificate.

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