

services were not required by their chief, were generally fighting among themselves. Every lad of spirit who could gather a score or two of followers, set up for himself, seized or built some island or forest stronghold, where he lived by his right arm on the plunder of his neighbours, and fought his way to the first place under his lord." Various proposals were made to remedy this state of affairs. The government was, however, handed over to the Earl of Kildare. The Kildares deriving their strength from their popularity, governed by humouring what were called "Irish ideas," among which were "the free right of every man to make war on his neighbour at pleasure," and the appeal to the ordeal of battle in any disputed case. After a quarter of a century of Geraldine rule, the system of repression was adopted. Henry the Eighth, while disavowing all intention of depriving the chiefs of their lands, required them to make a formal surrender, to be restored to them with English titles and to come under the legitimate jurisdiction of the King, though with certain liberty of use of the Brehon laws. That the Irish could not see the justice and beauty of this arrangement, seems a subject of wonder to the historian. Probably it would have been better if they had been able to conform to authority and law, as administered by Henry. But they thought differently, and wanted to be governed by their own ideas. Had they been left to themselves they would gradually, like other nations, have become emancipated from them. It was the fact that a foreign power was taking away what they held most dear that prevented them from seeing the benefits of the scheme proposed. But a new difficulty was about to arise which rendered the task of governing Ireland impossible to England. The religions of the governors and governed were to be henceforth different. To the antipathy of race was to be added the antipathy of creed. England was about to become Protestant. Of course, considering the relations of the two countries, other things being equal, Ireland would instinctively hold by the old faith which gave her a chance of throwing off the yoke of England. So when Kildare declared for the Pope he was thrown into the tower where he died; his son, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, was compelled to surrender and was hanged at Tyburn. The Kildare Geraldines were attainted; the estates of English absentees were confiscated, the Abbey lands of Ireland were given over to dangerous chiefs, who accepted them gratefully, surrendered their own lands to receive them back subject to English condi-