

1848—(Continued.)



IN the last Owl, we said how France and Italy were shaken by the volcanic shocks of an almost universal revolution. The influence of the commotion extended over the whole political world, and above all, had a powerful effect in Ireland. In order to understand the rebellion in Ireland we should cast a glance over the pages of her history. Often and often has that history been told, those misfortunes depicted, those sufferings painted: but Denis Florence McCarthy, in his opening stanza of the "Bell-Founder," gives the whole tale in four lines:

"Oh! Erin, thou desolate mother, the heart in
thy bosom is sore,
And wringing thy hands in despair, thou dost
roam round thy plague-stricken shore:
Thy children are dying or flying, thy great ones are
laid in the dust;
And those who survive are divided, and those who
control are unjust.

Such is the true position of that country up to the year 1842—or 1843. It was then that Davis gave expression to the maximum; "Educate that you may be free," and with his companions, Dillon and Duffy, resolved to put it into execution. They established the *Nation*, and with the pens of McCarthy, Mangan, Dowling, McDermott, McGee, Williams and a host of others, they commenced to instruct the people in their duties, and to direct them along the highway of national freedom. Soon the smile replaced the tear, the shadows (although not wholly vanished) were golden, like the flush of the dawn upon the eastern hills, through the clouds of ages silver shafts of light were piercing and the veil of sorrow was replaced by the chant of hope. In 1845 Davis was called from his labor of love to his early and lamented grave in Mount Jerome—yet the *Nation* continued to flourish and instruct. The mind of the public became gradually more enlightened and slowly but surely the spirit of liberty walked forth, from place to place, until the hills, the vales, the round towers, the streams, the very atmosphere itself became filled with its

influences. A few years rolled on and the great movements on the continent began to stir the sleeping people from their slumber of years, and a new and fresh cause of that movement sprang up in Ireland to push them on to a mighty effort.

As Meagher so graphically describes it: "From the winter of 1846 to the summer of 1848 the wing of an avenging angel swept the sky and soil; the fruits died as the shadow passed, and men who had nurtured them into life saw, in the withered leaves, that they too must die, and dying swell the red catalogue of carnage which was the stay and support of that empire of which they were the persecuted foes. And all this time they were battalioned into faction, drilled into disunion, striking each other above the graves that yawned beneath them, instead of joining hands above them and snatching victory from death."

The men of the country saw that their only salvation was in union. It was then that William Smith O'Brien, Thomas Francis Meagher, Terrence Bellew MacManus, John Martin, John Mitchell, and a host of others joined hand and offered their services to the country. We might say that the famine of 1847 was the immediate cause of this "rising of the clans." It was then that the first idea of "Home Rule" being a possibility came into existence. The chiefs and the people walked forth to the conquest of what they considered their inalienable rights. However the whole rebellion may be said to have terminated in the sentence passed upon Meagher and his companions in the Clonmel dock in the autumn of 1848.

Fired with the spirit of European independence and stirred into action by the rapidity of the times, bonded patriots struck for a high stake. They failed, it is true; but like Napoleon, whose Egyptian losses only confirmed his power, failure only helped the success of their plans for the future—for truly out of the movement of 1848 sprang the grand struggle of to-day for Home Rule.

Thus it was that Ireland joined in with the other peoples of Europe in that great universal movement for independence and