

cussion was frequently set at naught. At this juncture many members seceded from the organization, but the more resolute, and those more or less influenced by republican principles remained. Seeing that there was now no further hope of obtaining their end of constitutional means, and driven to desperation by atrocities, perpetrated upon their fellow-countrymen in the name of British law, these undaunted spirits resolutely prepared themselves for an armed struggle.

The causes of the insurrection are enumerated as follows in Mr. McGee's *Popular History of Ireland*: (1) "Coercive legislation, (2) Orange persecution in Armagh and elsewhere, (3) domiciliary visits, (4) military outrages in town and country, (5) free quarters, (6) whipping and tortures, (7) total suppression of the public press, (8) bitter disappointment of Lord Fitzwilliam's recall, (9) annual failure of Ponsonby's motion for reform, (10) despairing secession of Grattan and his friends from parliament." The natural result of such a combination of legislative and administrative evils, was to exasperate beyond all justifiable sufferance, a people already groaning under a foreign yoke. Hence before the close of 1797 there was a rapid augmentation in the ranks of the United Irishmen.

It is, no doubt, well in touch with our subject to say a few words about the frightful cruelties and indignities to which the Irish peasantry were subjected prior to, and during the fatal struggle of '98. Not to notice these excesses would be to deprive the United Irishmen of half the golden merits they have acquired by their undaunted stand against oppression. No such open and heartrending acts of barbarity were ever before

recorded in the history of any Christian people. A description of these revolting scenes will be more telling if given in the words of reliable gentlemen who had either been themselves witnesses of the facts, or who had obtained a knowledge of them upon unquestionable authority.

In the year 1795, the members of a diabolical secret organization in Northern Ireland, known under different edifying titles, such as "Protestants Boys," "Peep o' Day Boys," and "Wreckers," announced for the information of everyone whom it might concern, the all important fact that thenceforward they would be called by the more pretentious name of Orangemen. These vile spawn of injustice, infamy and hate, in adopting their new appellation, did not lay aside their old character of ruffianism and cruelty. One of their main objects, if not their sole aim, was the total extermination of Catholics. *The Owl* will please pardon us for soiling its feathers with such swill as the Orangemen's oath; we mean no injury to the wise bird. Here is how these loyal Christian satellites solidified their union. "In the awful presence of Almighty God, I, A. B., do solemnly swear that I will, to the utmost of my power, support the King and the present Government; and I do further swear that I will use my utmost exertions to exterminate all the Catholics of the kingdom of Ireland." The latter part of this highly religious effusion was probably intended as a necessary means to keep the preceding part from the danger of violation. At any rate it was faithfully observed by the wretched defenders of King Billy's "immortal memory." Unchallenged by the British law, these malefactors killed, maimed or ruined such of their Catholic fellow-