

"While Scotland preserves the memory of those who fell in the Rebellion of 1745, while their lives and actions are recorded by loyal Scotchmen, and read by loyal Englishmen, there can be no reason why the reminiscences of the Irish Rebellion of 1798, and of those who unfortunately were engaged in it should not be faithfully recorded without prejudice to the loyalty of the writer or the reader of their history." We need make no apology then for espousing the cause of the United Irishmen. Their sad, sad history, or the history of the times in which they lived, is sufficient to draw upon them and upon their actions the admiration of all truly unprejudiced and patriotic men.

During the month of October, 1791, there sprang into existence in the industrious Capital of Ulster, the famous organization, with the members of which we have chiefly to deal in our present essay. The leading spirit in its formation was Theobald Wolfe Tone, a young Protestant Barrister of great forensic powers, and a most devoted advocate of Catholic rights. At the inaugural meeting of the society, twenty members grouped themselves around this indomitable leader. Amongst those advocates of freedom and equity were Samuel Neilson, proprietor of the *Northern Star*, Thomas Russell, a Justice of the Peace for County Tyrone, and William Putnam McCabe, afterwards distinguished for his devotion to the cause of Ireland. A fraternal union of all Erin's sons, irrespective of religious belief, was the grand aim of these distinguished patriots; hence they called themselves United Irishmen. About a month later, Tone established the society in Dublin, and soon afterwards, it gained a firm footing in other parts of Ireland. The organi-

zation was at first neither secret nor unconstitutional in its transactions. Its two main objects corresponded admirably with the grievances of the times; they were parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation. Even now, after the dust and wear of a century has blurred the records of the United Irishmen, it gives us pleasure to recall the fact that such an illustrious body of Protestants and Presbyterians formed themselves into a league to unanimously demand redress for the sore grievances of their Catholic fellow-citizens.

To fully understand how much in need this redress then was, and how absolutely necessary for the people's welfare was parliamentary reform, it is sufficient to scrutinize the history of the times. The matter was ably dealt with in the last issue of *The Owl*; hence the inutility of minute consideration here. Suffice to say, the so-called Dublin parliament was unmistakably the most barefaced misrepresentation of a people, that ever degraded the solemn business of legislation; moreover the Catholic millions of the Emerald Isle, were in a condition akin to that of the slaves who formerly writhed in agony beneath the whizzing lash of some pagan master.

The work of the United Irishmen was carried on without interruption until May, 1794, when their meeting-place was invaded by a large force of police; the leaders were arrested, their papers seized and the meeting, then in progress was dispersed. This uncalled-for action of the authorities gave a fatal blow to the society as originally constituted, and necessitated the adoption of secrecy, as the only means of self-preservation for the future. The freedom of the press no longer existed, and the privilege of public dis-