THE ORANGE SOCIETY.

Michael Macdonagh in the August Contempor

The Orange Society—which, like its religious antithesis, Maynooth College, is celebrating its centenary—has been, during the greater part of its century of existence, a politico theological or-ganization, its chief aim being to com-bat the progress of the Roman Catholic Church in English speaking countries but it is a remarkable fact that, like all societies and confederacies, political as well as agrarian, which have existed in Ireland, it has had its origin in feuds associated with the vicious land system of the country. The society was established on September 21, 1795, in the county of Armagh. The causes which led to its formation had been in operation in the north east corner, or the Protestant corner, of Ulster during the preceding quarter of a cen-tury. The tenantry of the estates in that part of Ireland were then, as they are now, the descendants of the Prot estant settlers. Scotch and English, who were sent to Ireland after the various confiscations of the lands of the old Celtic and Roman Catholic families which followed the insurrections of the seventeenth century and the revolution The Roman Catholic peas antry had been reduced in those Ulster counties, as in the other parts of Ire-land, to a very low and debased social condition by the operation of the Popery Laws passed after the Revolu-tion; and, as Dean Swift so well expressed it, had become but mere "hew ers of wood and drawers of water" for the well-to do Episcopalian and Presby terian agricultural classes. But dur ing the last half of the eighteen cen tury the Penal Laws, so far at least as they affected the social status of the Roman Catholics, had gradually fallen into desuctude or been repealed, and the adherents of the ancient creed were slowly but surely pushing their way to leading positions in trade and agri culture throughout the country.

This relaxation of the Popery Laws was due in a large degree, no doubt, to a remarkable prevalence of religious toleration, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say religious indifferentism, in the upper and governing classes, in Ireland, at this time; and also to the local patriotism-to the love for Ireland, apart from England, a their birthplace and their home-which the influence of Henry Grattan had awakened in those classes. But the fact is unquestionable that in north-east Ulster, at least, motives of greed and cupidity largely induced many o the territorial magnates to let their farms to Roman Catholics in preferenc to Presbyterians and Episcopalians Undue competition for land, that most baneful of Irish social evils, was brought into play in the letting of farms. The Irish peasantry have always been noted for their land hungar. The provession of the form into the peasant of the farm in the peasant of the peas The possession of a farm is to them the great prize of life, and to obtain it they were willing, before the advent of Mr. Gladstone's land legisla tion, to accept any terms or condition the landlord might impose. This crav ing for the occupation of the soil natur ally became most intense when, after a long period of exclusion from the land, Reman Catholics were, about the middle of the eighteenth century, allowed by law to occupy farms under They were also content with a very small return for their toil and -thanks to the state of social tenants when leases under which farms were held had expired. Many of the Ulster landlords were not slow to avail themselves of this new economic de velopment in order to swell their rent They evicted their Protestant tenants and handed over the farms thus cleared to Catholics at enormously in

creased rents. The north-east corner of Ulster then became the theatre of a savage land war. All the horrible deeds with which we are unhappily so familiar in connection with agrarian agitation in the Catholic counties of Ireland, during the present century, were enacted in Protestant Ulster during the last half of the eighteenth century. Thousands of the evicted Protestant tenants emigrated to America with hearts full of bitter resentment against the land lords, and in the time of the Revolution had, as they boasted, revenge for their wrongs, by the blow they struck against the mother country. The Protestant tenants who remained at home formed an oath-bound society, which rapidly extended amongst the farmers, and agricultural laborers and the artisans of the rural villages, with the object of preventing Roman Catholics from entering into compe tition with them, not only in the taking of farms, but in all classes of employ ment. The society was known by its members as the "Peep of Day Boys," because of visits they paid by dawn of morning to houses of Catholics to terror ize the occupants into quitting Ulster. Sir Robert Musgrave, a rather prejudiced anti Catholic writer, admits, in his "History of Ireland," that the "Peep of Day Boys" committed the most cruel outrages on the Catholics during these visits - injuring their persons, breaking their furniture, demolishing their homesteads, maining their cattle, and destroying their crops. The Catholics very appropriately called them "Wreckers," and, forming a secret society themselves for the protection of their lives and properties, for, owing to many flagrant failures of justice, they seemed to

"Wreckers" and "Defenders," which have been accepted by all historians, are, I think, of at least some significance as illustrating the attitude towards each other of the two parties in the eighteenth century, and as pointing out the side that began this fratricidal strife, which for more than a hundred years has kept at fierce heat the baleful passions of religious bigotry and racial animosity amongst English speaking people in Canada, in Australia, and in the United States, as well as in Great Britain and Ire-This terrible social contest between

the "Peep of Day Boys" and the "Defenders" was further embittered their hereditary religious and racial hates, and for a quarter of a century it was intermittently waged on each side with the weapons of the murderer, the cattle hougher and the incendiary. Meantime the Society of United Irishmen was founded to obtain Parliamentary reforms — including Catholic Emancipation — by constitutional means, but after years of vain effort to secure that object it developed, under the influence of French revolutionary principles, into a secret organization for the establishment of an Irish Republic. The society bent all its efforts to bring about a political alliance between Catholics and Protest-tants, without which it felt it was utterly impossible that it could achieve its purpose. It was successful to a great extent amongst the middle classes. It also made considerable progress amongst the peasantry in the Roman Catholic counties of Leinster. But although the urban Presbyterian populations of Ulster formed at first the backbone of the movement, it naturally found it difficult to make any headway in the counties of that province in which this social feud between Protestants and Catholics was being implac ably waged. Indeed, when Orange Institution was founded in 1795, the influence of the United Irish

men in Ulster began to wane. In September 1795 several riots took place between the "Peep of Day Boys" and the "Defenders," and culminated in a serious affray, known as "the Battle of the Diamond," on the 21st of that month, in Armagh county. "The Diamond," where the famous battle was fought, is a place with a few houses, in which four roads meet, a short distance outside the city of Armagh. A large party of "Defenders, armed principally with pitchforks, scythes and spades, marched from the adjoining counties into Armagh to the assistance of the hard-pressed Catholics of that county. Their progress was stopped at the Diamond by a well-posted and well-armed body of "Peep of Day Boys," and the fight which ensued, and which fiercely raged for many hours, ended in the defeat of the 'Defenders," who left about thirty of their adherents, men, women and children, dead upon the field. In the evening after "the battle" the firs lodge of the Orange society was founded in the house of one James Sioan, at a place called Loughall near the Diamond

The Orange society took its name from William of Orange, and pro claimed its aim and object to be the maintenance of Protestant ascendency in Ireland. The lodges multiplied apidly throughout Ulster. The Peep of Day Boys" ceased to exist as separate organization and were absorbed in the Orange society, which degradation to which they had been reduced during the long years of their outlawry—and, consequently, were able to outlid the occupying Protestant tenants when leases and as a secret and oath bound. Plowden, an English Roman Catholic, who wrote a "History of Ireland" at the opening of this cen tenants when leases and oath like its precursor, was secret and oathfounded but anonymous authorities, the following as the original oath of the Orange society:

"I-do swear that I will be true to the King and Government, and that I will exterminate the Catholics of Ire-

land, so far as in my power lies." This oath is repudiated by Orange authorities, and is, beyond all doubt, a pure invention; but, unhappily, the frequency and earnestness with which its latter declaration was translated in to action by the Orangemen in the early stage; of their movement, has rendered the statement that it was the oath of the society only too credible to the Catholic lower classes. Elated by their victory at the battle of the Diamond the Orangemen demolished during the months that followed almost every Catholic house in the county of Armagh. and thousands of Catholics were forced to fly for their lives to the province of Connaught, as well as as to the neighboring counties of Cavan, Monaghan, and Tyrone. "To hell or Connaught," was the ultimatum presented to the Catholics of north-east Ulster. Over seven thousand of them took refuge in in the remote western province. Matters became so bad that a meeting of the magistrates of the county of Armagh, summoned by the Governor, Lord Gosford, was held on December 28, 1795, to consider the state of the county. "It is no secret," said the Governor, in his address to the magistrates, "that a religious persecution, accompanied with all the circum stances of a ferocious cruelty which have in all ages distinguished that calamity, is now raging in this county. Neither age nor sex, nor even acknowledged innocence as to any guilt in the late disturbances, is sufficient to excite mercy or afford protection. The whole crime which the wretched objects of this ruthless persecution are charged with, is a crime, indeed, easy of proof. It is simply a profession of the Roman Catholic faith. A lawless banditti have constituted themselves judges of this new species of delinquency, and

property and an immediate banishment." Resolutions urging the authorities to afford protection to the Roman adopted by the magis trates, but the Government do not seem to have done anything towards restor ing law and order. Indeed, it is commonly asserted by Nationalist historians that, at this time, as at subsequent periods, the Orange society was fostered, nursed, and encourage by the Government for its own political party ends. This, no doubt, is an ex aggerated, if not an utterly unfounded

statement. The truth is, the Govern ment were so circumstanced that they could not possibly cope with the move ment. There were at the time few regular troops in the country, and the local yeomanry and many of the magistrates who commanded them were Orangemen themselves, or at least were in thorough sympathy with the objects and deeds of the Orange society, and therefore disinclined, to say the least, to take any steps for the protection of the Catholics. An Armagh magistrate named Edward Boyle, writing to Under-Secretary Cooke, at Dublin Castle, in September 1796, thus expresses the attitude to-wards the Orangemen of the least partisan of the persons who were locally charged with the administration of the aw, in view of the apprehended rebel

"As to the Orangemen, we have rather difficult card to play. They must not be entirely discountenanced —on the contrary, we must, in a cer-tain degree, uphold them, for, with all their licentiousness, on them must we rely for the preservation of our lives and properties should critical times We do not suffer them to occur. parade, but at the same time applaud

lion of the United Irishmen:

them for their loyal professions."
Undoubtedly, the progress of the Orange society destroyed the power of the United Irishmen in Ulster, the province in which, in 1795, the revolu tionary organization was strongest and pest equipped in arms, with the resulthat when the Rebellion took place three years later, in 1798, Ulster, on whom the leaders of the movement mainly depended, made but a feeble and spasmodic fight. On the other hand, the outrages which went on unchecked in several of the counties of Ulster, and thence extended all over Ireland, were the means, principally of goading into rebellion in 1798 the wretched Catholic peasantry of Wexford and Wicklow, who had not beer to any great extent members of the society of United Irishmen. "They call themselves Orangemen and Pro estant boys," said Henry Grattan, in the Irish House of Commons in 1797, in the course of a debate on the deeds of the society. "They are a banditti of murderers, committing massacres in the name of God and exercising des potic powers in the name of liberty. This, the Orange historian says, was

the original oath of the society : "I-do solemnly swear that I will, to the utmost of my power, support and defend the King and his heirs as long as he or they support the Protestant as

Now what is the "Protestant ascendency" which the sovereign should support in order to ensure the loyalty of the Orangemen to the Throne? The answer will be found in a resolution of the Protestant Corporation of Dublin in 1792, three years before the estab-lishment of the Orange society. For some time previously a number of leading and influential Roman Catholics known as "The Catholic Committee." had been mildly agitating by petition and prayers to the Irish Parliament and the king, for a slight relaxation of the Penal Laws, and in 1792 they succeeded in obtaining a "Relief Act, which enabled Catholics to vote for nembers of Parliament-that is, for Protestant members - and admitted them to the outer Bar and to inferior military and naval commissions. The Dublin Corporation, highly irate at these concessions, passed a resolution declaring

"That the Protestants of Ireland will not be compelled by any authority whatever to abandon that political situation which their fathers won with their swords, and which is, therefore, their birthright.

The Corporation then proceeded to define "their birthright," and this is

what they said it was: "A Protestant King of Ireland, Protestant Parliament, a Protestant Hierarchy, Protestant electors and Government, the Bench of Justice, the Army, and the Revenue, through all branches and details, Protestant ; and this system supported by connection with the Protestant realm of England.

The loyalty of the Orangemen has, indeed, always been conditional. The late Sir Samuel Ferguson, the Irish poet (known to English readers as the author of "The Forging of the Ancker"), very aptly and humorously describes it-no doubt from personal experience, for he was a Belfast man and a Protestant-in his poem, "A Loyal Orangeman ":

A am a loyal Orangeman;
From Portsdown, upon the Bann.
My loyalty a will maintain
Was ever and always without a stain;
Though rebelly Papishes would call
My loyalty conditional,
A niver did insist upon
Nor ask condition beyont the one—
The crown of the causeway in road or street,
And the Papishes put under my feet."

In 1814 the condition in the oath to support the king only so long as he would maintain Protestant ascendency was replaced by the words "being Protestant," and that conditional phrase still exists in the declaration which, instead of the oath, is now made by every member on joining the soci-

ety:
"And I further declare," it says,

country, and the succession to the Throne of her Majesty's illustrious house being Protestant."

"They are loyal just as far as it suits their own interests and their own convenierces, "said Mr. Stanley, afterwards Lord Derby, of the Orangemen

The misdeeds of the Orange society have been frequently exposed in the Imperial Parliament. In 1813 several petitions were presented to the Lords and Commons praying for its suppres sion, and Mr. William Wynne, in the debate which ensued in the House of Commons, pointed out that the exist-ence of the society was directly in opposition to the 39th of George III. cap. 79, an Act passed in the year 1799 for the purpose of putting down societies meeting for political purposes and bound together by oaths or tests. Canning eloquently urged that the law should be put in force against "this despicable society, which, if suffered to exist, might shake to its foundations this noble country;' and Lord Castle-reagh, speaking on behalf of the Government, pronounced the society as dangerous ; "particularly so in Ireland," he added, "where, if there had formerly been some cause for it, it had survived the danger."
Nothing was done by the Government, however, till 1825, when an Act was passed dissolving the society for three years. The Act was evaded simply enough. For the three years of its existence the "Orange Lodges" were called "Brunswick Clubs," and, when the Act lapsed into 1828, the "Brunswick Clubs" were re-transformed into Orange Lodges. At this time the society was of the most widereaching and formidable character. In 1808 an Orange society, distinct from the Irish organization, but with the same objects, had been established in England, with headquarters at Manchester. In 1821 the Grand Lodge was removed to London. Duke of York was invited to become Grand Master, but he declined, on being advised that the organization was illegal; but, in 1828, after the Act of Suppression had lapsed, the Irish and the English branches of the institution were amalgamated, and with Ernest, Duke of Cumberland (brother of George IV.), as Grand Master, the society, still oath-bound, and with and elaborate system of secret signs ani pass-words. commenced afresh its

career of fratricidal strife. And now comes a remarkable epi ode in the history of the institution. In March, 1835, a debate in the House Commons, initiated by Hume, resulted in the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the origin, bjects, and methods of the Orange so-It was said, indeed, that there ciety was a plot in the society to place the Duke of Cumberland a most unpopular and disreputable member of the Royal family) on the throne on the death of his brother, George IV., to the exclusion of his brother, William (afterwards William IV.), and of the Princess Victoria (the present Queen), who were the direct heirs to the crown. This is known as "The Fairman Plot." The The committee were unable to get any direct evidence in regard to the plot as the member of the Orange society who made the statement to Hume died a few days before the committee began its investigations. There was, how-ever, a good deal of indirect evidence, in the way of written documents, to give color to the statement. It was proved that Lieutenant Colonel William Blennerhasset Fairman (Grand Secretary and Grand Treasurer of the institution in Grand Britain) went about the country between 1829 and 1834 with the sign manual of the Duke of Cumberland, as Grand Master, in his pocket, forming lodges in civil and military circles. The sign manual, or warrant, appointing Colonel Fairman as organizer of lodges was thus endorsed: "Given under my seal at St. James's, this 31st day of August 1828, Ernest, Grand Master." The Duke of Cumberland was Commander in Chief of the army. Evidence was given that thirty eight lodges of the Orange society existed in the army at home, and a large number also in the army abroad, and that it was assumed in military circles that these lodges were formed by the direct authorization of the Commander-in Chief. The Duke of Cumberland declined the invitation of the Select Committee to give evidence. It was stated on his babale in Parliaments behalf in Parliament, though not credited, that the warrants for the military lodges were issued by him in blank, and that he was unaware of the uses to which they had been put. Colonel Fairman, who was examined, refused to produce certain books which, it was believed, would have thrown light on the springs of action of the inner circles of the institution. Speaker ordered his arrest for his contumacy, but he absconded before the

warrant could be executed. The evidence collected by the Select Committee is, however, most invaluable to the student of the Irish problem. It throws a lurid light on the deeds of the Orange society during the forty years of its career that had then passed; and not even the most ardent and bigoted partisan of the order will find in the pages of that Blue Book the slightest testimony, of any impartiality or of any weight, in support of the necessity for its existence. Here is a passage from the report of the Select Committee:

"The obvious tendency and effect of the Orange institution is to keep up an exclusive association in civil and military society, exciting one portion rant failures of justice, they seemed to have lost all confidence in the efficacy of the sentence they have pronounced is of the law, they gave themselves the equally concise and terrible. It is nower, support her Majesty Queen crease the rancor and animosity too of the Defenders." These terms, nothing less than a confiscation of all victoria the First, the laws of the laws o

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persons of different religious persuaions; to make the Protesta enemy of the Catholic and the Catholic the enemy of the Protestant; by processions on particular days, to excite to breaches of the peace and to bloodshed; to raise up other secret societies among the Catholics in their own defence and for their own protection against the insults of the Orangemen; to interrupt the course of justice, and to interfere with the discipline of the army, thus rendering its services injurious instead of useful when required on occasions when Catholics and Protestants may be parties. All these

evils have been proved by the evidence before the House in regard to Ireland." It is a remarkable fact that not a single word in defense of the Orange society is to be found expressed by any minister of the crown in the numerous parliamentary debates of which the soiety has been the subject, or in the reports of the various parliamentary com mittees that have inquired into its ob jects and actions, or in any historical work by any independent and impartial Protestant writer. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that no movement in this kingdom has been so universally condemned and reprobated.

TO BE CONTINUED.

MEXICO. The Catholic Revival in the Lodge Ridden Republic

The days of Masonic domination in our sister republic of Mexico are num-bered. The successor of President Diaz is likely to be elected by the people instead of by the lodges. No one who visits the country can fail to see the signs of renewed Catholic life and zeal which manifest themselves on every hand. Not the least of these symptoms are the presence of a Papal Delegate, the provincial councils which have been or are about to be held in the ecclesiastical provinces of Mexico, Durango, Guadalajara, Michoacan and Linares, and the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE MEXICAL

CHURCH,

preparations for which are being made in these provincial councils F. R. Guernsey, the Mexican cor-respondent of the Boston Herald, in one of the most recent of his always inter esting letters, writes as follows: great fact which is everywhere apparent is the revival of Catholicism notes it in the restoration of churches, in the frequent repairing of old con-vents, in the arrival of learned and devout priests from abroad, in the new missionary zeal of the Church among the Indians, and in the crowded churches. The Carmelite Order is to be re-formed here, and already a new provincial is coming over from Spain. The Jesuits are growing in numbers and are taking charge of many parishes, besides establishing seats of learning—a tactful, persistent body of men. Female educational orders are springing up and are tolerated by the Government. Even Liberals send their daughters to their schools, for the education given is of a superior quality. A non-Catholic looking on CANNOT BUT ADMIRE THE CHRISTIAN

ZEAL of the best of the clergy, who lead ascetic lives, are really poor, dependent on the aid of wealthy people of their faith, are and animated by a sincere desire to minister to the spiritual welfare of the masses. I know priests who have gone into the most savage parts of the country as full of zeal as the early Franciscans, and others who live among the poorest populations of cities sharing the same humble fare as their flocks. body of men can anywhere be found than the Passionist Fathers now laboring in one of the suburban cities among the most degraded poor.

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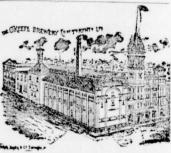
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