

THE BRASS BANDS IN IRISH POLITICS.

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IN THE "IRISH PEOPLE," DUBLIN.

Every Irishman who has set his heart on the regeneration of his country and her emancipation from the selfish and rapacious thralldom of English misgovernment must be prepared to have the rage of Dublin Castle in its open attacks upon his character and his motives. The Castle however, brings to bear in its attempt to paralyze the energy and defeat the objects of every Irish Nationalist movement subtler influences. The venal barrister who gets business in the first instance by courting the people and attempts to get office by courting the Government, the prostitute Press-hack who, with the Castle bribe in his pocket, endeavors to poison the minds of the people against their leaders, and the traitors to their country, and their constituents in the House of Commons, have all been utilized at various periods by the English Government to work as far as they can have in the ranks of Irish patriotism, and to create disaffection and distrust in the hearts of the people towards the men who are toiling with a single eye to the redemption of their native land from the withering blight of a system of government which by a denial of Legislative Independence tends not to the benefit, but to the destruction of her people.

Keogh and Siddle and their base confederates were not exercises in Irish public life. They were not abnormal malignant growths on the Irish body politic unknown either before or afterwards. The worthless who names are instinctively remembered when the expression "brass band" is used have had their predecessors, and are likely to have their successors. Henry Grattan was impeded in his work and prosecuted in his day by a Brass Band, whose methods bear a strong family likeness to the methods adopted by the Brass Band with which we in more recent times have been acquainted.

Grattan for instance had to contend with the barrister who began as a member of the patriot's party, and for coarse metallic gain and advancement from Dublin Castle became the bitter reviler and traducer of his country and his country's friends. In this connection as a type of a class which comprised many members in Grattan's time, the name of John Fitzgibbon, who became Earl of Clare and Lord Chancellor will at once be remembered. John Fitzgibbon, who was known as "Black Jack," has been excellently described as "a little angry lawyer drawing up indictments against his own people." Fitzgibbon began his career as a red-hot patriot, and owed his early advancement to the post of Attorney-General to Henry Grattan himself. Grattan's selection of Fitzgibbon was thought at the time to be impudent by better judges of character than he—notably by Charles James Fox, Denis Daly, who died in 1791, and was an early and confidential Parliamentary associate of Grattan's, also truly estimated the character of Fitzgibbon. At a social dinner party in 1785, when both Daly and Grattan were among the guests, allusion was made to a union between England and Ireland. Fitzgibbon exclaimed in an exulting tone: "Who will dare talk of a union? If such a thing was proposed I would fling my cup in the man's face." When Fitzgibbon retired Daly said, "That is the man who would support it—that little man who has talked so big would vote for a union, ay, to-morrow."

When Fitzgibbon saw that the road that led to his own personal aggrandisement was by the back-stairs of Dublin Castle, and not by the narrow path of honor and of patriotism he manifested the bitterest malignity and the most venomous hostility to Grattan, and indeed unquestionably suborned an informer named Hughes to bring a charge of high treason against Grattan. He failed in his attack on Grattan's life, but procured his dismissal from the Privy Council. An attack made on Grattan in the Irish House of Commons by Fitzgibbon was thus answered by Yelverton:—"My honorable friend did not provoke the attack, equally ungenerous and untrue, and for which no justification can be found in any part of his splendid career. The learned gentleman has stated what is not he is not stupid in his prejudices; he does not tramp on the prosperity of his country, or live like a caterpillar on the decline of the letter of the constitution with the affection of a parasite, and abandon its principles with the effrontery of a prostitute."

Fitzgibbon, speaking as Earl of Clare in the Irish House of Lords in favor of the union, referred to Mr. Grattan in terms which were evidently inspired by deep personal hatred. That speech, he subsequently published in pamphlet form. "The peace and

happiness of ages," said Fitzgibbon, "the clear interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and their lasting connection were sacrificed to the timidity and jealousy of the patriot statesmen of 1782, or rather to their corrupt love of a flimsy and precarious popularity. Let these have the grace now to hide their heads. But before I dismiss this adjustment, of 1782, I shall take leave to advert to the description given by the gentleman who is called the father of it (Mr. Grattan)."

Mr. Grattan, in his reply, to Fitzgibbon's tirade, enumerated among the irritating circumstances of the position, "the little penknife of the implacable pleader and his dirty quill mangle his country's character and her wounds." Long after Fitzgibbon had sunk amid contempt and execration, and the open dislike of his Castle masters into a dishonored grave, Grattan spoke thus: "I pressed for the appointment of Fitzgibbon, and I have that sin to answer for. I made him Attorney-General; the form of the Constitution made him Chancellor, and his country and myself were the two peculiar objects of his calumny." To show the depth of Fitzgibbon's treachery to the Irish cause and to Grattan, I cite the words of Fitzgibbon with reference to Grattan in the Irish House of Commons in 1785: "The man whom I am proud to call my most worthy and honorable friend; the man to whom this country owes more than any State ever owed to any individual; the man whose wisdom and virtue directed the happy circumstances of the times and the spirit of virtue to make us a nation."

Fitzgibbon was the type of the prostitute renegade lawyer who first rose by means of the National cause, then harassed, and finally betrayed that cause for coarse metallic gain.

Another type of the Brass Bands-men of Grattan's time was the deserter for place from the National ranks and the reviler for hire of his former colleagues. Such a one was Isaac Corry, who likewise began his career as a member of the patriot party, then became the "critic" of that party, and finally accepted the Irish Chancellorship of the Exchequer from which Sir John Parnell had been dismissed for his opposition to the Union. When Grattan, in 1780, returned to the Irish House of Commons, which he had quitted in justifiable disgust three years previously, Corry was put up by his paymasters to reply to Grattan in his heroic attempts to defend the liberties of his country. I take from a single speech of Corry's the following epithets applied by this bribed Castle traducer to Grattan, with whom he had been on intimate terms and to whom he owed his public career—"Unimpeached traitor," "confidant of rebels," "deserter of a profession where wealth and station were the reward of industry and talent," "the man who fled from the country when he had excited one rebellion, and has come back to raise another."

Again the Government pensioned a Press to write down the patriot party, and to attack Mr. Grattan on the highest and most elevated and patriotic grounds. A Dr. Jebb, a physician in Dublin, had ably supported the National party by his pen; he suddenly changed his tone into one of carping and venomous criticism. Years afterwards he met Mr. Grattan in private and made the unparaphrased observation that he was much indebted to him, for that through his means he had obtained a pension of £300 a year, which was given him by the Government for writing the patriot party down. Here is an extract from the letter of the Duke of Buckingham, the Lord Lieutenant of the day, to the English Prime Minister, Lord North, begging his sanction for this pension:—"Mrs. Elizabeth Jebb, is the wife of Dr. Frederick Jebb, a physician of this town (Dublin), and author of the letters which appeared in the beginning of last session under the signature of 'Quatmozin,' and other political productions. As the Press was exceedingly violent at the time, and had great effect in inflaming the minds of the people, it was recommended to me as a measure of absolute necessity by some means, if possible, to check its spirit. On this negotiation was opened with Dr. Jebb, who was then the chief of the political writers, and he agreed upon the terms of my recommending him for a pension of £300 a year to give his assistance to Government. Since that time he has been very useful as well by suppressing inflammatory publications as by writing and other services, which he promises to continue to the extent of his power."

The Government, moreover, resorted to still more disreputable assassines in the reptile press. The notorious

Dr. Patrick Duigan, who had a host of offices as Advocate General, Vicar General, Judge of the Prerogative Court, Privy Councillor, Commissioner for distributing the compensation money to the patrons of rotten boroughs, and member for Armagh, to which he was nominated by the Protestant Primate, was for a generation the venomous hired assassin in the Press, in the Government interest, of Mr. Grattan. Here is a specimen of the Doctor's style in a pamphlet addressed to Mr. Grattan, in which the following passage from the Psalms was selected as the motto:—"Thy false tongue imagineth wickedness, and with lies thou hast loved unrighteousness more than goodness, and to talk lies more than righteousness. Thous hast loved to speak all words that may do hurt, oh, thou false tongue."

"I have taken up my pen," says this scoundrel to Grattan, "to detect your falsehoods, to expose your misstatements, to pluck off your mask of patriotism and public spirit, and unveil to the world your projects and designs in all their natural deformity. You have abandoned all decency and indulged in what appears from your constant practice a natural propensity in all kinds of the most savage abuse of everything which must be held revered and respectable in a State whilst it has existence, and have even out-pained Paine; it is impossible in answering you strictly to adhere to all the rules of politeness to which every decent writer is entitled from his antagonist. No man wrangles with a chimney sweep without soil from his coat; however, I shall endeavor to keep myself as uncontaminated as possible in the contest, though my adversary be armed, as Doctor Bentley is represented to be in the Battle of the Books, wielding with one hand a flail and with the other a pot of ordure."

And then, moreover, the patriot party, and more especially Grattan as its leader, were subject to a torrent of invective, vulgarity, and falsehood by the hired Castle newspaper press. John Giffard may be taken as a type of the press assassin in Grattan's time. He, too, began political life as an ardent patriot and an Irish Volunteer. He acquired in time the sole editorial control of the "Dublin Journal," which he prostituted for the worse purposes of the venal party. He was not only in the direct pay of Dublin Castle, but he was appointed to a lucrative office in the Revenue Department, and was made Sub-Sheriff of Dublin, in 1794, for the express purpose of packing the jury which convicted Hamilton Rowan. Giffard was called "the Dog in Office," and his paper "the Dog Journal." He sought, as Dr. Madley tells us, "to stab with his pen, and pike with his tongue every friend to National progress." While the Government were plotting their scheme for the destruction of the Irish Parliament and holding confidential communications with the leading politicians for that purpose, Giffard, their hired journalist, was busy reviling the Irish Nationalist leaders for warning the people of the intended destruction of their liberties. On October 16, 1798, the following lying paragraph, clearly inspired by the Castle, appeared in "the Dog Journal":—"A most insidious and unadvised rumor of an intended union with Great Britain has been set afloat by the Jacobin prints of this city in order to do the little mischief it remains in their power to achieve. Perilous and perplexed would be the discussion of so momentous a question of any period, but at this time of convulsion the dangers with which it would be attended are too fearful for contemplation." On November 17, "the Dog's Journal," expressed its entire disbelief in the rumors of a Union disseminated by newspapers, "chiefly those of Jacobin complexion," but ten days later it inserted a notice which had appeared in the "Times," of November 22, stating that a Union would be brought forward, and added that it had reason to believe this paragraph to be true.

I will have occasion to deal hereafter with other phases in the career of this Brass Band journalist of the Grattan period. I will now content myself with quoting Grattan's reply to Giffard when accused by him of treason. Sir Jonah Barrington, who was present says that Grattan's words were memorable, because they conveyed in a few short sentences the most overwhelming philippic, the most irresistible assemblage of terms imputing public depravity that the English language is capable of uttering.

"When I observe the quarter whence the charge comes, I am not surprised at its being made. It proceeds from the hired traducer of his

country, the excommunicated of his fellow citizens, the regal rebel, the unpunished ruffian, the biggest agitator; in the city a fire-brand, in the court a liar, in the streets a bully, in the field a coward. And so obnoxious is he to the very party he wishes to espouse that he is only supported by doing those dirty tricks the less vile refuse to execute."

Grattan and his friends were not exceptionally unfortunate in being the subjects of the abominable and mendacious obloquy which proceeded from the liveried servants of Dublin Castle and from men awaiting to desert the National cause, and lusting to be bribed by the British Government. The same fell agencies which endeavored to compass the destruction of Grattan, have been employed from generation to generation to mar the work and defame the reputation of every upholder of the Irish National flag.

CATHOLIC NEWS FROM AMERICAN CENTRES.

FATHER McALLEN.—A Mission was given at St. Francis Xavier Church, Jerseyville, Ill., from the 21st to the 28th January. Rev. Father Fallon, lately of St. Patrick's Montreal, is the pastor of the parish. Father McAllen, SS. of St. Patrick's was invited to give the Mission. He won the hearts of the people from the start, and preached three sermons a day for the week, and after the closing exercises the people were loath to leave the Church. He lingered to hear more. He also gave a lecture on the ceremonies of the Church, at which the Knights of Columbus, of Alton, attended with many others to do honor to the Reverend Father. The success of both Mission and Lecture were very gratifying to all concerned. Many receptions were given to the Reverend Father by the Mayor of the town, and other distinguished citizens, and the one wish of all is a speedy return of Father McAllen to the Catholics of Jerseyville, to enlighten their minds and refresh their souls with God's holy truth.

TRAPPISTS FOR BOSTON.—Father Murphy, the head of the Order of Trappist Monks in the United States and Canada, has returned from Rome after a seven week's visit with permission from the general of the order for the building of a monastery in Medway, Mass. The only thing remaining to be done before the deal can be consummated, is to have it ratified by Archbishop Williams, and his sanction has been asked by the authorities at Rome. The tract of land to be used embraces nearly 700 acres.

ARCHBISHOP CORRIGAN will go to Rome to visit the Pope after the Easter season. This announcement has again revived the story that he is to be made a Cardinal.

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE of St. Brigid's Church, Avenue B and Eighth Street, New York, was celebrated on Sunday, February 4, the feast day of St. Brigid of Ireland, patroness of this church. A very interesting feature of the jubilee was that the chalice used on the occasion is a relic of the penal times in Ireland, and of the family of the present pastor, the Rev. Dr. P. F. McSweeney.

ARCHBISHOP KAIN, of St. Louis, will leave for Rome soon after Easter and remain in the Eternal City probably six months or longer. He will be accompanied on the journey by Rev. Father David S. Phelan, editor of the Western Watchman.

Bishop Montgomery of Los Angeles Cal., will preside over the St. Louis diocese during Archbishop Kain's absence.

SUMMER SCHOOL.—The Order of the Sisters of St. Joseph, which conducts the Champlain Institute in Port Henry, N.Y., is about to erect on the Summer School property at Cliff Haven a collegiate institute for the higher education of women.

A MISSION to non-Catholics is going on during the present week in the Church of the Paulist Fathers, New York city, and there are in attendance from 1,500 to 2,000.

MILITARY BLUNDERS.—It will be years before the British public will hear the last of the military blunders in South Africa, says a London paper. Mutual accusations are accumulating between the War Office, the Cabinet, the Committee of National Defence, and the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wolseley. They will not officially appear in print until the campaign is over, but by degrees the recriminations are leaking out. It has just been disclosed that Lord Wolseley's advice was either not asked or was rejected in regard to the following questions: the recall of General Buller, and the ignoring of his warnings; the refusal to mobilize the Second Army Corps until it was too late; and the appointment of Lord Roberts and Kitchener to the supreme command. The "Politicians" settled these matters with a high hand. Who is responsible will be a nice question to settle between all the great heads of the State.

HAPPENINGS IN IRELAND.

What between the session of the Imperial Parliament, the movements of Irish politicians, the organization of the League, the War in South Africa, and sundry other events of like importance, Ireland is being kept in a species of fever of late. There is no end of news that might or might not interest you. We will glance at a few passing events, and the most "passing" of these before me now is the death of Mr. Thomas Wrigley Gresham, M.A., M.D., J.L., the Registrar-General for Ireland, which occurred last week at Priorsland, Carrick-Mines.

The Dublin death-rate is down, but it is still high. When it comes to be examined it will, we believe, puzzle the sanitarians; that is, if they bring intelligent scientific minds to bear upon it, and not the quasi-political optics of the College of Physicians. Thus this week the rate among the professional and independent class is 50.1, among the middle class 31.9, among the artisan class 31.0, and among unskilled workers, etc., 39. So that the best-houses have the highest death-rate. Nor is this true only of the past week, but of many weeks. Influenza and its complications are the cause of the whole increase; other infectious diseases were never less prevalent.

Strange arguments suit some people. The announcement of the Government's choice of T. P. Gill, one of Mr. Parnell's former lieutenants, as Secretary of the new Irish Board of Agriculture and Industries is suggestive of the lines upon which the ministry's Irish policy is now proceeding. It is a question in their minds of prosperity versus home rule, and they are putting all their money on prosperity through such media as co-operative agriculture and land-purchase acts.

The death of a prominent Dublin Nationalist in the person of the late Mr. John O'Shea, Vice-president of the Old Guard Union, and one of the veterans of the '67 movement is announced. This sad event took place at his late residence, 68 Bernhart St., on Monday morning. Although a steadfast supporter of extreme Nationalist principles, his tolerant views regarding the efforts of brother Nationalists of all shades of opinion won him their unanimous esteem.

The death of Mr. William Lavinian of pneumonia, at the comparatively early age of fifty, removes from our midst a writer who has done good work for Irish literature both in prose and verse. His first volume, "Glanua and Other Poems," published in 1889, contains some admirable verse which deserved to be better known, while his second volume, "Fand and Other Poems" (1892), showed a distinct advance upon even his first creditable effort. His "West Irish Folk Tales," of which a second edition was recently published, form an excellent collection of Gannagh's folk-lore, and their value was widely recognized in all quarters. Mr. Lavinian, who was a native of county Mayo, was originally in the Civil Service, but retired some time ago, on a slender pension, and has since lived in Wex, where his death occurred after an attack of influenza.

The following very suggestive resolution was passed by the Louth County Council:—"Resolved—That a committee be appointed to wait on His Eminence Cardinal Logue for the purpose of naming a day for a collection in aid of the evicted tenants' restoration fund at the churches in this diocese, the committee to consist of the chairman, Vice-Chairman (Mr. T. J. Byrne), Mr. T. C. Macardle, Mr. Neary, and Mr. McCarthy."

Some specially lively scenes have taken place already in the House of Commons.

Mr. John MacNeill, anti-Parnellite, enlivened the session by asking why the Irish militiamen were sent away from Ireland. Mr. William Johnston, conservative, promptly interjected—"Because they are rebels!"

This caused Mr. John Dillon, Irish Nationalist, to exclaim:—"Irish rebels are good enough for you to fight behind in the Transvaal!"

Mr. Timothy Healy, Nationalist, joined in asking—"Why doesn't Sanderson (moving Mr. Edward J. Sanderson, Conservative, and son of the great Orange leader, Colonel Sanderson) go to the front?"

After Mr. James Bryce, Liberal, had severely criticized the Government for "provoking an unjust war," Mr. George J. Goschen, First Lord of the Admiralty, declared that the Cabinet assumed full responsibility. Then another scene was started when Colonel Sanderson, Conservative, in a lively speech provoked a scene by declaring that the Nationalists never attacked in front, but always from the rear. This remark was met by uproar from the Irish benches. Mr. Dillon complained that the Nationalists had been insulted. Others jeeringly asked Colonel Sanderson why he did not go to the front? Mr. William Redmond said the "Speaker ought to protect Irishmen from such insults," adding, "If I had said anything, I should not be per-

mitted," the bull evoking roars of laughter. Mr. Redmond retorted to the laughter, "That's the way to hoist the Union Jack in Pretoria." Mr. John Redmond then appealed to the Speaker for a decision as to whether Colonel Sanderson's remark was not unparliamentary. The Speaker, in a long speech for him, pointed out that such remarks were in order so long as they did not become personal.

Colonel Sanderson, smiling, said:—"I have not meant to insult any one, but looking back upon the historical record of the Irish war, I thought myself justified."

This was followed by renewed Irish protests and cries of "Coward!" Mr. Dillon exclaimed, "Some English soldiers got behind Irish soldiers." William Redmond said, "This will be nice reading in Pretoria." Mr. Dillon exclaimed, "Thrice as many Irish soldiers as English have been killed in the Transvaal."

Mr. Balfour appealed to the House to refrain, and the Speaker persuaded Colonel Sanderson to withdraw the expression!

However the all absorbing question both inside and outside of the House is, the union of the various Irish elements. On this topic the "London Universe," in a very lengthy editorial says:—"One more effort is being made to reconcile Irish parties, and to weld the lot into a harmonious and effective organization. Is it too much to hope that there will be no further this time? So far the prospect of the present move bears a promising aspect. The Parnellites have become alive to the necessity for common action. That is a material point gained. From the start they rejected all overtures for peace, believing that the country was substantially with them, and that their ultimate success was only a question of time. Two general elections having supplanted that shadowy hope, the leaders have learned in the school of adversity that their cause was steadily losing ground.

These considerations belong to departed years, and we wish to let the dead past bury its dead." To better understand the situation we will reproduce the resolutions adopted at a conference between the different sections of the National Party in Parliament. The meeting was held in the Oak Room of the Mansion House. The resolutions read thus:—"That in the opinion of this Conference the existing political situation renders it necessary immediately to consolidate the various elements of the Irish Nationalist representation in Parliament into one party, in order to safeguard the interests of Ireland."

"That having considered the resolutions passed at the Unity Conference of Irish Representatives on the 4th of April, 1898, to the following effect, viz:—

1. All Irish Nationalists to be reunited in one Party on the principles and constitution of the old Parnellite Party as it existed from 1885 to 1890. 2. The reunited party to be absolutely independent of all British political parties. 3. The main object of the united party to be to secure for Ireland a measure of Home Rule, at least as ample as that embodied in the Bills of 1886 and 1893. 4. The party also to fight on the old lines for the redress of all Irish grievances, notably those connected with the Land, Labor, Taxation, and Education. 5. That since a genuine reunion favours a real reconfiguration we declare our view that all the adherents of a reunited Party should accept and receive from each other recognition and standing based on past public service, and capacity for future public service to Ireland, absolutely irrespective of the course any adherent may have left it his duty to take at or since the division of 1890, and that the reunited Party and its adherents should, fully recognizing the rights of every constituency to select its own candidate, exert all legitimate influence in favor of the adoption of this principle in the selection of candidates for Parliament, and for Party offices; and as the earliest practicable exemplification of the spirit of this resolution, those meeting, mainly composed of those belonging to the larger Party, declares its readiness to support the choice of a member of the Parnellite Party as first Chairman of the United Party."

We hereby declare in reference thereto—that we are prepared to cooperate in promoting the re-construction of a United National Party, on the lines laid down in the foregoing resolutions, and, without regarding them as exhaustive, are ready to accept them with a view to diminishing points of difference with our Parliamentary colleagues."

"That, with a view to beginning the work of re-union in the National ranks, we hereby authorize the chairman of this Conference to invite the Irish National members of all sections to a meeting at the opening of Parliament, there to take Counsel as to the policy to be pursued in the interests of Ireland in the coming Session, and to make any other arrangements that may be necessary for the re-construction of a United Party on the old lines." Here is a sign of bright hope for Ireland's cause and ultimate Home Rule.