

I remember speaking to a beggar man in Galway on this subject—the fellow had not a six-pence worth of clothes on him, yet he was a man well up in the history of Ireland. Says he: “As long as they had the sign of the cross on them we didn’t know how to strike them properly. (Applause). My friends, you have all read and studied the history of Ireland, and it is a history that comes very near home to many among you.

INVASION OF THE NORMANS.

The Normans invaded Ireland at the close of the twelfth century. They found Ireland broken up and divided after the death of the heroic Conn. O’Brien, but not broken in courage. Notwithstanding this, they were unable to take possession of Ireland. These divisions among themselves continued during the reign of the Plantagenet Kings—during the reign of the Edwards down to the time of Henry VII., more than four hundred years. The battle was fought on every field in Ireland, but the ancient courage of the race remained, and though divided, the grand soul of the cause was holy enough and the love of the people was strong enough to make every Irishman come forth and strike a blow and bleed and die for his native land. (Applause.)

But it was only in the sixteenth century—three hundred years ago—that the contest between the two nations assumed the great proportions of a national war. Henry VIII. called upon Ireland, not only to resign the idea that she was a nation, but he called upon her to abjure her allegiance to the religion which she had received from St. Patrick. The sword which had never been sheathed for three hundred years was once more raised, and the nation swore that two things should never perish, viz.: that they were a nation and a Catholic people. (Applause.)

Then the clans that were so separated again united. Nay, more, foremost in the national contest appeared a people who never before had fought for Ireland’s glory, namely, the ancient Normans who came over with Strongbow.

I wish to speak kindly of the Fitzgeralds, because, as Mr. Froude reminds me, I have a drop of their blood in my veins. Their brothers in England had become Protestants, but they had stayed in Ireland and mixed themselves up with the Irish people, and then, like men they threw their sword into the cause of Ireland because the cause of Ireland