

'98 IN A NUTSHELL.

Historical Calendar of its most notable events.

By JOHN E. REDMOND, T.P.

May 27—Outbreak of the insurrection. On the previous day (May 26) a brigade of yeomanry and militia had burned the church of Boulavogue, of which Rev. John Murphy was pastor. This act precipitated the rising. Bonfires were lighted along the Wexford hills and the people, armed with pikes, poured in from all sides. The first fight occurred in the afternoon at Oulart Hill, Father Murphy leading the rebels. The British were severely routed and almost annihilated, only five red-coats escaping from the field.

May 28—Father Murphy mustered a large force and led it against Ennisicorby. Battle of Ennisicorby, in which the British were again defeated and the town captured.

May 30—Fight of Three Rocks mountain. British routed with heavy loss. Town of Wexford surrendered to the Irish. Beauchamp Bagenal Harvey of Barry castle elected commander-in-chief of the insurgents, with Father Murphy second in command.

June 1—Capture of Newtonbarry, under Captain Keogh, and subsequent recapture by a large force of British regulars during the night. Heavy loss on both sides. On the same day the insurgents, under Rev. John Murphy, were badly defeated at Ballycarrow. These were the first serious checks received by the insurgents.

June 2—Capture by the Irish forces of Lord Kingsborough and several British officers. Additional troops arrived from England, General Walpole assuming command.

June 4—Battle of Tobeneering. The Irish, armed chiefly with pikes, utterly routed General Walpole and captured his cannon. Pursuit of the British to the town of Grey. After an ineffectual attempt to capture the place by assault, the insurgents laid siege to Walpole's fortifications.

June 5—Battle of Ross—Three times the Irish captured the town after great loss. General Harvey showed incompetence as a leader and allowed drunkenness and plundering. As a result the British returned with reinforcements during the night and recaptured the stronghold. The struggle for its possession had lasted altogether thirteen hours, and had been attended with extraordinary bloodshed. General Jones commanded the British.

June 8—Formal deposition from the insurgent leadership of Harvey, and election of Rev. Philip Roche in his stead. Harvey's weak command had, however, done so much to demoralize his men that Roche found almost insurmountable difficulties in the way of restoring order and discipline. Numerous skirmishes occurred, notably one at Castlecomer, County Kilkenny, between the rebels and a large force under Sir Charles Asgill and the Earl of Ormonde. The Irish defeated and their leader, Captain John Brennan, killed. The imported English miners in the Castlecomer collieries lent their aid against the rebels.

June 9—Battle of Arklow, County Wicklow. Several hours of severe fighting, resulting in a drawn battle, the insurgents running short of ammunition and retiring in good order. The rebel leader, Rev. M. Murphy, killed by a cannon ball. The Irish, firmly entrenched, repulsed a night attack with heavy loss.

June 12—Defeat of the insurgents at Borris, County Carlow. Skirmish of Tinahely; the Irish victorious.

June 19—Second fight of Three Rocks mountain. The insurgent division of Colonel Thomas Cloncy surrounded by a far larger force of British regulars, succeeded in cutting their way through the red coats; and when pursued, suddenly faced about and routed the enemy with considerable loss.

June 20—Heavy defeat of the insurgents after four and one-half hours of severe fighting at Foulkes Mills. Arrival of second body of British reinforcements from England and Wales.

June 22—Battle of Vinegar Hill. British fully armed and numbering 20,000 men, surrounded the Irish forces, which consisted of only 2,000 men with firearms and less than 1,000 with pikes and scythe blades. General Lake commanded the British; Rev. Philip Roche and Esmond Ryan the Irish. The fight was long and bloody, but such great superiority and strength told in the end. The insurgents were forced to abandon their position and retreat. The defeat broke the back of the rebellion. Commander Roche and a number of others were slain.

June 23—A remnant of the insurgent army crossed the river Barrow into Kilkenny county. Battle of Goresbridge, in which the Irish under Rev. John Murphy won a temporary victory.

The rising in the south closed with the capture of Rev. John Murphy, Beauchamp Bagenal Harvey and many other of the insurgent chiefs. Most of them, including the two mentioned, were summarily executed.

All this time the French, with whom Wolfe Tone had formed an alliance on behalf of the insurgents, had been delaying their descent upon the Irish coast. At last they ventured, during the early autumn, to land at Killybegs, in Sligo, under General Lambert, with Tone himself as missionary general. For a time the invasion prospered and a large force of British was routed at Ballina; but Lord Cornwallis's superior forces obliged Lambert to surrender. The French officers captured were sentenced to death.

Thus ended the Irish rebellion of 1798—a struggle remarkable, indeed, when one considers the brave stand made by a handful of badly armed volunteers against a large, well-equipped and well-ammunitioned army of trained soldiery. Truly there is no reason why an Irishman should "fear to speak of '98."



PROF. JOHN KELLS INGRAM, S.E.

I. Who fears to speak of Ninety-Eight?
Who blushes at the name?
When cowards mock the patriot's fate,
Who hangs his head for shame?
He's all a knave, or half a slave,
Who slights his country thus;
But a true man, like you, man,
Will fill your glass with us.

II. We drink the memory of the brave,
The faithful and the few,
Some lie far off beyond the wave,
Some sleep in Ireland too;
All, all, are gone—but still lives on
The fame of those who died,
All true men, like you men,
Remember them with pride.

III. Some on the shores of distant lands
Their weary hearts have laid,
And by the stranger's heedless hands
Their lonely graves were made;
But though their clay be far away,
Beyond the Atlantic foam,
In true men, like you, men,
Their spirit's still at home.

IV. The dust on some is Irish earth,
Among their own they rest,
And the same land that gave them birth
Has caught them to her breast.
And we will pray that from their clay
Full many a race may start
Of true men, like you, men,
To act so brave a part.

V. They rose in dark and evil days
To right their native land;
They kindled here a living blaze
That nothing shall withstand.
Alas, that might can vanquish right,
They fell and passed away,
But true men, like you, men,
Are plenty here to-day.

VI. Then here's their memory! may it be
For us a guiding light,
To cheer our strife for liberty
And teach us to unite!
Through good and ill, be Ireland's still,
Though sad as their's your fate,
And true men, like you, men,
Like those of Ninety-Eight!

Shamrock of '98.

Sent with affectionate and grateful remembrance to their Irish friends abroad.

By the Sisters of Charity, Ballaghaderni Co. Mayo, Ireland.

O thou across the sea,
Go—bring afar with thee
Erin's fond memory,

Shamrock of '98!

Go—for thy country plead!
Say, that true love indeed
Shines in the hour of need,

Shamrock of '98!

Bear o'er the Ocean's foam
Where'er her children roam,
Kind thoughts of love and home,

Shamrock of '98!

Tell them with garner's full,
"Blest are the merciful!"
Christ's Hand their alms shall cull,

Shamrock of '98!

Plucked from the mossy sod,
Childhood and youth have trod,
Where dear ones sleep in God—

Shamrock of '98!

Say—to their sunny skies
Turn Erin's weeping eyes,
Brother to brother cries,—

Shamrock of '98!

Sprinkled with heroes' blood,
Gathered where Saints have stood,
Type of the brave and good,—

Shamrock of '98!

Bid them of scanty store
Share with the poorer poor!
Christ's hand shall lend them more,

Shamrock of '98!

Fresh through the Summer's glow,
Green 'neath the Winter's snow,—
One hundred years ago,

Shamrock of '98!

Tell how the widow's mite
Weighs in her Maker's sight
As gold and jewels bright,—

Shamrock of '98!

Exiles—they sighed for thee,
Outlaws—they cried for thee,
True men—they died for thee,—

Shamrock of '98!

O'er the wave speed thy bark,
Angels thy course shall mark,
Dove from the sinking Ark,

Shamrock of '98!

Go—tell across the main,
Famine and hunger's pain
Smite the old land again,

Shamrock of '98!

Go—and bring back with thee,
Plucked from Hope's olive tree,
Kind help and sympathy,—

Shamrock of '98!

St. Patrick's Day, 1898.

S. C.

Ireland's Patriot Priests.

A '98 HERO WHOSE MEMORY HAS BEEN NEGLECTED.

Fathers John and Michael Murphy, Father Philip Roche and other brave patriot priests led their people right well "over many a noble town and many a field of dead" when Wexford's peasants were driven to insurrection in 1798. But neither of the Wexford priests had been a member of the Society of United Irishmen; as a matter of historical fact, there were very few Catholic clergymen in Ireland who, however they might have sympathized with the movement and its objects, actually joined the ranks of the organization and pledged themselves to actively aid in carrying out the programme of Tone and Fitzgerald, McNevin and Oliver Bond. Father James Coigley was an exception to the rule. He had been in the confidences of the leaders of the society before he started on the fatal journey which ended on the gallows near Maidstone; and, though he was hanged on insufficient and tainted evidence, it may fairly be taken for granted that the brutal English crowd who looked calmly on while the brave priest swung from their scaffold on Penenden Heath saw the death of a persistent and determined enemy of the domination of their race over the fate and fortunes of our country. Father Coigley died for the cause of Irish freedom as truly as did Father John Murphy or Father Philip Roche, and his name should be honored with theirs by all who are reviving and celebrating the memories of '98, says the Dublin Weekly Freeman.

Some doubt exists as to the place of Father Coigley's birth; but though his name is closely associated with the county of Louth there is reason to believe that he was a native of the city of Belfast. His last thoughts, at all events, were with the people of that city. As the spirit of '98 is nowhere more active than among the Nationalists of the northern capital, it may be well to remind them that one of the latest wishes expressed by the martyr was a desire that a simple stone bearing his name should be erected to his memory in the city which he loved, and of whose people he wrote in terms of sincere, indeed enthusiastic, admiration while waiting for death at the hands of an English hangman. Surely 1898 will not be allowed to pass away without seeing this modest wish complied with.

During his tenure of the office of Catholic chaplain at Dundalk prison Father Coigley seems to have been specially singled out as the victim of Orange persecution and insult. Secure in the favor and protection of the government, the members of the newly-created Orange Society lost no reasonable opportunity of fulfilling that section of their amiable vow which bade them "wade knee deep in Papist blood." A Catholic priest was a fair quarry for these beasts of prey, and we may well suppose that the tortures and persecutions to which Father Coigley and his family were subjected had much to do with his action in identifying himself with the men whose broad, tolerant and statesman-like policy was freedom and equal rights for all Irishmen who lived on Irish soil. At all events, we can feel assured of one thing—Father Coigley was a United Irishman.

Lord Cloncurry was one of the priest's closest and best friends and he maintains that Father Coigley's fatal mission to France, which was interrupted for ever at Margate, was not connected with the politics of the period. The peer, in his "personal recollections," states that the persecutions of the all-powerful Orange body in Dundalk forced his friends to accept an offer of a professorship at the famous Catholic University of Douai, where so many young Irishmen found the education denied at home during the penal days, and that he was on his way to France, on such a peaceable mission bent, when he was arrested, tried, convicted and hanged. In view of events which certainly occurred, this theory, however, can hardly be accepted in full.

Lord Holland agrees with Lord Cloncurry to a great extent, and between them they frame a charge of incredible meanness and treachery against Arthur O'Connor which hardly tallies with the character and career of that eccentric but daring United Irishman. Their story is that the connection between the Munster organizer and the Dundalk priest was purely accidental; that the latter, being in dire distress, consented to travel Francwards as the former's secretary; that when the arrests were effected at Margate the priest voluntarily offered to sacrifice himself that O'Connor and the others—Binns, Allen and Leary—might go free; and that O'Connor accepted the sacrifice. The entire transaction was mysterious and we can only record the broad ascertained facts.

Father Coigley left Dublin during the third week of January, 1798, as "Captain Jones," and accompanied by a faithful servant named Leary. He went via Manchester, and on arriving in London was soon received as the guest of the London branch of the Society of United Irishmen, officially known as the "London Correspondence Society." This organization had its headquarters in a few rooms in a court off Fetter Lane, Fleet street, where Father Coigley, his companion and another Irishman named Allenlay were for several days. Arthur O'Connor, also on his way to France, had been in London some weeks before Father Coigley arrived.

But O'Connor was well known in London. He was of aristocratic blood and belonged to the predominant faith; the leaders of the Whigs were his attached friends; in every respect he occupied a different position from that of the banned and hunted cleric who had identified himself with the national movement. Spies and informers were busy, and O'Connor's sources of information soon enabled him to realize that the agents of the government were on the track of the Irish revolutionary emissaries. Flight was resolved upon, and John Binns, a relative of the secretary of the London society, was despatched to Whitstable with instructions to secure a boat in which the fugitives could embark for the friendly French coast. He started on Feb. 21, and after a series of negotiations succeeded in hiring a vessel at Deal. Back he came to London with the good news, only to find that Father Coigley, Arthur O'Connor and their followers, Allen and Leary, had just left the metropolis, doubtless aware that their fates were hot on their track. We need not detail the series of adventurous journeys which followed this flight from London to the southern English coast. The exiled Irishman, Binns, was indefatigable in his efforts to save the suspects. He followed them with all speed, and joined the priest and O'Connor on the road between Canterbury and Whitstable. The arrangements seem to have woefully miscarried, and we bring the narrative to where O'Connor and Father Coigley were arrested at a Margate inn after the latter had made a desperate resistance. Their arrival had been noted by some Bow street officers who happened to be in the seaport town, and an examination of their luggage revealed the possession of several documents which, as English law stood, justified their detention and subsequent commitment to the Tower of London. Allen and Leary were captured at the same time.

That Father Coigley was on intimate terms with several leaders of the United Irishmen and a confidential friend of Lord Edward Fitzgerald was shown by some of the letters and papers found on his person; but there is good reason to believe that the really compromising document—a letter from the "secret committee of England" to the French executive—had been placed in his luggage without his knowledge in London. His persistent denial of any knowledge of this letter gives some color to the theory that his journey to France was primarily unconnected with politics. Be this as it may, the four prisoners were brought to trial at Maidstone on May 21. No material evidence was produced against Allen and Leary; the heads of great English families came to testify on behalf of Arthur O'Connor, and his acquittal on the charge of high treason was secured; but the priest of the Catholic church was doomed. It may be not unfairly said that he was practically left to his own poor resources in providing his defence, and whether justifiably or not, Wolfe Tone never forgave O'Connor for his part in the transaction. Father Coigley was sentenced to death; and the death sentence was duly carried into effect a mile outside Maidstone on June 7, 1798, at about the hour when General Henry Joy McCracken was massing his forces for the assault on the town of Antrim that began so well for the patriot army and ended in a disastrous and irretrievable defeat.

The scene on the scaffold was awful and trying. It seems that the hangman was nervous, and he blundered and bungled with his apparatus for several minutes, while the heroic Irish priest stood bravely on the death trap, waiting for his fate with "the courage of his race," and with the calm fortitude of a true Christian conscious of being at peace with his Maker. At last the deed was accomplished, and one more was added to the long list of martyrs to the cause of Irish freedom. Father Coigley's name is not known and honored in Ireland as his heroism deserves. It was not his fate to die, as his brethren in Wexford did, leading the people in the fight for their country, their altars and their homes; nor yet was his last sigh breathed on Irish soil, within reach of hearts that sympathized, even though the hands were powerless to save. His young life was given for the old land and the rabble horde of an English town—but it was given freely and bravely. He lived and died as an Irishman, and the record of his life and death should rank amid the dearest and most precious of our memories of '98.

Life says that Napoleon made many men prominent—among others the Duke of Wellington.

The season of the spring poet has now arrived and in consequence the paper mills are running on full time.

Formerly in the spring a young man's thoughts ran to love and other similar things, but now he is more likely to be interested in his '98 wheel.

While discussing the rate war with a Washington correspondent, recently, Sir William Van Horne gave utterance to a very true statement: "War between the United States and England would result in the dissolution of civilization." Sir William is right in this instance; such a happening would be a dire calamity too terrible to even dream of.