

ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

THE continued disorders of Ireland, the continued bitterness of her people against England and Scotland, may well astonish observers in other countries. They perceive that questions of race and nationality which had produced insurrections, sometimes successful, sometimes harshly repressed, have been, one after another, settled in various parts of Europe. Italy has been liberated from the Austrians and from her own anti-national princes. Poland has sunk into silence. The Hellenic and Slavonic subjects of the Sultan have most of them been delivered from the Turkish yoke. In all these cases, the difficulties of a solution seemed far greater than in the case of Ireland; yet in all these cases a solution, whether good or evil, has been found. It is now more than fifty years since, in emancipating the Roman Catholics, the English Parliament proclaimed its willingness to grant full civil and political equality to all classes of Irishmen, and to make them, in every way and for all purposes, citizens of the United Kingdom, eligible to the highest offices, entitled to share in its prosperity and freedom. Ever since then, the wish of most Englishmen has been to deal fairly with Ireland, and to repair, so far as may be, the faults and errors of the past. The circumstances of Ireland are not like those of any other oppressed nationality to which history can point. The press is free, and attacks the Government with a vehemence which English newspapers do not employ in the most exciting crises of English politics. Members are chosen who not only proclaim their hostility to the English crown, but tell the House of Commons to its face that their object is to bring it into contempt, and paralyze it by systematic obstruction. Yet, at the same time, Ireland—that is to say, the majority of the Irish people—feels herself a subject country, repels the overtures of England, demands sometimes a separate Parliament, sometimes complete independence. The English, though annoyed and impatient, listen to the complaints made, and go on passing laws intended to remove Irish grievances. These laws, however, are not received with satisfaction, and breed, not contentment, but fresh cries for further concessions. Meanwhile, political agitation is backed up by private crime; and a people proverbially warm-hearted and generous, among whom ordinary crimes are, or till quite recently were, less

frequent and less revolting than in England or France, sympathize with and screen the perpetrators of murders and other outrages which excite the horror of the world.

The two peoples speak the same language, live under the same laws, have been brought into the closest relations by commerce and intermarriage for many generations; yet today a leading Irish politician tells his countrymen that the English in Ireland are a gang of brigands; and an English politician who was Irish secretary under Lord Beaconsfield's government says to his constituents: "Irish ideas of government are generally murder, sedition, and treason. Whatever is most anti-British will always be most popular in Ireland." The emigrants who settle in the United States, and often prosper there, retain the bitterest animosity to England, and many of them subscribe from their weekly wages to keep up the anti-English agitation. England is forced to keep thirty thousand soldiers and as many police as a garrison in the island within sight of her own shores. The problem is one which Americans can consider more fairly than Englishmen, who are themselves one of the parties concerned. But even Americans must find it so hard, in the midst of the cloud of recrimination and misrepresentation which covers the subject, to discover what is the real state of Ireland, and what are the true relations between her people and the English, that they may be willing to have a dispassionate statement laid before them, intended neither for Irishmen nor Englishmen, but to explain, so far as the writer can, what grounds of complaint Ireland still has; what are the obstacles to their removal; why these seem different to English and to Irish eyes; what part feeling and sentiment play in creating misunderstandings; what obstacles have delayed and still delay a settlement.

There are two opposite errors regarding Ireland into which observers in other countries are apt to fall, and one of which receives countenance in America from the somewhat too harsh judgment (if I may be permitted to express an opinion) which the part played by Irishmen in American politics has led many Americans to form of the Irish at home.

One of these errors is that the Irish are now simply vexatious, worrying England for the mere pleasure of worrying her; that the Irish parliamentary Nationalists are selfish

agitators who "have their own axes to grind," and who trouble the waters that they may the better fish in them; that the mistake of recent English policy has been in not dealing stringently enough with sedition and obstruction. This view errs by ignoring both the wretched economical condition of a large part of the Irish peasantry—a cause quite sufficient to produce discontent—and the substantial grounds of complaint which, as I hope to show, Ireland has had in the neglect of her affairs and the ignorance of them evinced by the English Parliament.

The other error lies in assuming, as those American politicians who, in the United States, take the chair at Irish meetings usually do, that Ireland is an oppressed country. She is not, in the ordinary sense of the word, oppressed. She has freedom of speech and equal laws, subject, no doubt, to certain temporary restrictions which Parliament has been repeatedly forced to sanction in order to protect life and property, and prevent insurrectionary movements. The freest governments are obliged to defend themselves; and though I do not deny that Parliament sometimes goes too far in granting these exceptional powers (it did so in 1881, and again [though in a less objectionable form] in 1882), it has done so reluctantly, and the executive has carefully forbore (in the case of the Act of 1882) to use several of the powers which it in fact received. To compare Ireland, as regards the conduct of her administration, with Poland under Russia, or Italy under Austria, is either dishonest or absurd. Rhetorical commonplaces about liberty and nationality have little application to the Ireland of to-day; the problem she presents is far too complex to be treated in this prompt and airy way.

The commonest explanation of the Irish difficulty is given by disparaging the Celtic race, and insisting that they are incapable of freedom and order. The doctrine of the natural inferiority of a race is the contemptible resource of indolent prejudice, which will not take the pains to examine historical problems to the bottom, or forgets in how many instances races which seemed inferior have risen, and those that seemed more gifted have sunk. It is a confession of ignorance, and needs no further discussion. Nor can much more be said for the theory that the misfortunes of Ireland are due to her physical character, her isolated position, and the dampness of her climate—a theory half humorously expressed by Disraeli when he said that the Irishman is discontented because he lives beside a melancholy ocean. In other parts of the world, disadvantages far greater have

been overcome, and natural conditions far more favorable have not brought prosperity in their train. The true solution is obviously to be found in the history of Ireland, which has acted on her people, made them what they are, created their present relations to England and the rest of the world. But for the unhappy turn which the history of the island took, the Celts of Erin would have been long ago, like the Celts of Strathclyde, largely modified by Teutonic immigration, while also modifying the English, and both the people and their institutions would have so dealt with the country as to make the most of those natural resources, considerable in their way, which it possesses. In an article like this it is impossible to present even an outline of Irish history. But some salient points must be noticed, because on a comprehension of them depends the comprehension of the present feelings and aspirations of the people.

It is often said, particularly by the Irish themselves, that the sufferings of Ireland arise from her being a conquered country. This, however, might be said of nearly every country in Europe, for nearly all have been overrun by some invading race which has established its dynasty, perhaps also its laws and its language, among the aboriginal inhabitants. England herself has been in this way thrice conquered. It would be more true to say that the misfortune of Ireland was to have been only half conquered, and even that not till a late date. The so-called annexation in the time of King Henry the Second was merely the establishment of a small English colony or garrison on the east coast of the island; for the Welsh and Norman adventurers who gained lands in other districts soon became assimilated to and absorbed in the native population. Not till the days of Elizabeth and James the First were Ulster and Munster reduced under English rule, and the operation was so imperfectly performed that it had to be repeated by Cromwell with a stern thoroughness which nothing but success could have justified. Nor did success follow. Elizabeth and James had reduced about half the island into a sort of order. Cromwell subjugated still further, attempting to drive the untamed mass of aborigines into the wilds of Connaught, and parceling out the rest, or such parts of it as lay at his disposal, among English colonists. But when the Stuarts returned to England, in A. D. 1660, this settlement was in great measure overthrown. The native proprietors did not, indeed, regain all their former estates. But the dispossessed people flowed back to their former seats; the fabric of order was

loosened, and the country relapsed into confusion till the final conquest, thirty years later, under William the Third.

With that final conquest the catalogue of wrongs and blunders which we call modern Irish history begins. Up till this time the only serious grievance had been the land seizures of the English settlers, and the extinction of ancient Irish land-rights and customs by the feudal law of England. There was little or no feeling of Irish nationality or of loyalty to their faith among the chieftains who resisted Elizabeth; they were fighting for their territories, for their personal sway, for the pleasant lawlessness of a half-barbarous life. But, during the fierce civil wars of the seventeenth century, feelings of race hatred and religious hatred grew up, which were deepened, strengthened, justified, by that system of penal laws which was intended to bind the Protestant and Saxon yoke forever upon the necks of the native population. Race hatred left to itself might have subsided, and the sense of land robbery, when the chance of recovering lost property had died away, might have become first a sentiment, and then a memory. But the penal code which subjected the Roman Catholic to the Protestant in every relation of life was a constant sore, which he could not for a moment forget, and which wounded his pride as well as his interests. Religious divisions need not destroy national unity. Even in the last century, English Roman Catholics were patriotic Englishmen; and in Germany religion had ceased to be a source of bitterness. It was the way in which the penal code made Protestantism a source and a badge of legal and social supremacy, excluding the Roman Catholic from a whole variety of private civil rights as well as political privileges, that embittered the minds of the aborigines, made them feel themselves a distinct nation and an oppressed nation, sanctified their hatred of England and English law and the dominant race by giving it the color of a loyal devotion to the faith they professed and the priesthood which witnessed to it under persecution. When the law provided that the son of a Roman Catholic father should, by embracing Protestantism, dispossess his father and exclude his Catholic brothers from inheritance, it gave to political hostility that far keener bitterness which private and family wrongs implant. There was thus erected a fourfold barrier between the native Irish and their English conquerors—first, the race hatred of the Celt for the Saxon; next, the resentment of the ejected landowner against those who have dispossessed him; thirdly, the indignation of one

debarred from political rights against his fellow-subject who enjoys them; and lastly, the animosity of the Catholic against the Protestant.

These feelings had three generations of Irishmen to work on before the relaxation of the penal laws began. They operated primarily in Ireland itself to make out of her inhabitants two distinct nations, practically distinct in blood, but legally distinguished by religion. Meanwhile other causes were exciting the wrath and bitterness of Irishmen of both these two nations against England regarded as a foreign power. The English Parliament framed its commercial legislation with a view to prevent Ireland from competing with English manufactures; duties were laid upon Irish products coming to England; Irish revenues were jobbed away in finding places or pensions for political adventurers or personal favorites too bad to be provided for even in the corrupt England of that day. Galling disabilities were imposed on the Presbyterians of Ulster, the most industrious and progressive part of the population, and hitherto faithful to the English connection. These same Ulster farmers complained bitterly of the exactions of their landlords who had, it was alleged, broken the understanding on which they had migrated from Scotland; but no redress was attainable from England, whose Parliament cared nothing for Irish affairs. Meantime, the Irish Parliament was impotent, being unable to legislate except with the consent of the English Government. The ignominious position of a subject country in which they found themselves thus began to exasperate even the Protestants of Ireland. Having now ceased to fear the Roman Catholics, they became disaffected toward England; they agitated for political and commercial equality.

Partly because she was pressed by her war with the United States and France, partly from a sense of the injustice she was maintaining, England yielded. In 1782, freedom was granted to the Irish Parliament, already illustrated by great orators like Grattan and Flood; and the life it enjoyed during the next eighteen years was vehement enough to rouse the country to a sense of national existence. It seems curious now that this sense should have been first evoked by that Protestant and Saxon garrison which now holds so tightly to the union. Meantime other forces were at work to create difficulties and disorders. The sufferings of the peasantry, and their knowledge that no relief could be had from the law which was framed and administered by the dominant landlord caste, had created an epidemic of crime and

outrage over many parts of the south and west; Whiteboys and other lawless bands made their appearance; secret societies—a plague that has never since ceased—were organized for objects which it is hard to condemn, however mischievous the means employed. The Scoto-Irish Presbyterians of the north, after an unsuccessful rising, had begun to emigrate to North America, particularly to the Middle States, and were among the hottest foes of England in the War of Independence. At last these three elements of disaffection,—the Nationalists among the educated class, the discontented northerners, and the wretched peasants, led to some extent by their priests,—joined, under the impulse of the French Revolution, to form the great conspiracy of the United Irishmen, which burst into flame in the rebellion of 1798.

We all know the story of that unhappy insurrection, condemned from the first to failure by the want of leaders and of cohesion, and by the apathy of France. It would have been better for both Ireland and England had it been either more or less formidable. If it had succeeded so far as to hold the English for a time at bay and obtain recognition as a belligerent force, peace would have been ultimately settled on fairer terms, and Ireland might have escaped another generation of servitude. If it had been feeblé and more easily suppressed, the ruling caste would not have taken so ferocious a revenge. Catholic emancipation, which Pitt had desired some years before, would not have been so long delayed, the union with Great Britain in 1800 would not have been hurried through under such odious auspices. For the next nine-and-twenty years,—till O'Connell extorted political rights for the Roman Catholics,—the condition of the island was deplorable. Outrage had now become the familiar resource of the peasantry, harsh coercion acts which established martial law or suspended *habeas corpus*, the weapon of the government, while the apparent representation of Ireland in the British Parliament was a mockery, since only Protestants could elect or could sit, and even the members chosen were too few and personally (of course, with some brilliant exceptions) too unworthy to exercise any influence for their country's good. The British Parliament and the English law seemed to govern; but, in reality, the island was ruled by the same insolent, reckless, thriftless caste of landlords and their dependents, who were all that men may be expected to become when ignorance and violence are checked neither by law nor by any opinion from beyond their own circle.

It was a strong race, that of the Irish Protestants, and it has produced some remarkable men. Its faults were largely due to its position and surroundings. But they have proved fatal faults to the country.

With the passing of the Emancipation Act, in 1829, a new era seemed to open. England had repented of her past wrong-doings; justice and friendship were henceforth to guide her. Unfortunately, the worst often comes after efforts to make things better have begun, partly because it is not till then that the results of previous error are fully seen, partly also because the revengeful feelings of those who have suffered oppression do not find vent till they feel themselves stronger and freer. England expected that the Irish would be grateful for her tardy act of justice, and has not yet got over her surprise at finding that they are not in the least grateful, but more troublesome than they were before. The events of the last fifty years, since a reformed Parliament has had to deal with Ireland, are in everybody's knowledge, so that no historical outline of them need be given. What has been said may have been enough to show how long a time it had taken to form Irish feeling as it stood on the morrow of Emancipation,—and how many different springs of tears and blood had combined to make it bitter. There was the resentment of the priesthood first, and also of their flocks, against the Protestants who had appropriated the ancient churches, and forced them to pay tithes to heretical pastors. There was the feeling, perpetuated in a dim, dull way from generation to generation, that the land which the Saxon now owned had been the land of the natives; that the right his law gave him to turn the tenant off was a wrong not less foul because it was old. There was the memory of countless acts of insult and tyranny perpetrated by the landlord class,—not so much by the large proprietors, for they lived in England or in Dublin, as by their relations and dependents, their agents and bailiffs,—and all that loose throng of idlers that hung round the Irish squire of sixty years ago. There was, among the better educated, shame and wrath at the misery and squalor and ignorance in which the great mass of their countrymen lived, and which, not quite justly, but not unnaturally, was laid to the charge of a government which neglected its humble dependency. And lastly, there was just springing up, but destined to grow far more potent and terrible, the feeling of Irish nationality,—the desire to be a people, an independent people, one among the nations of the world, and not the mere satellite of stately and contemptuous England.

All these sentiments, acting some upon one class only, some upon all, have gone to form the present temper of the bulk of the Irish people, of those whom one may call the aboriginal nation, as distinct from the Anglo-Scottish immigrants. But it was some time before they fully revealed themselves. At first, the people were too depressed, too little conscious of the new position they had attained, to express their feelings or give effect to them, whether by agitation, or by electing representatives after their own heart. The sentiment of nationality, which was comparatively new and feeble in 1832, has wonderfully developed itself since then under the example of its successful assertion not only in Italy, in Germany, but even in small peoples like the Bulgarians or Roumanians, or in remote regions like Iceland. And the habit of obedience to the ruling caste was so rooted that it was not until the Ballot Act, passed in 1872, had set the voter free from his fear of the landlord, that members began to be returned who belonged to a new type,—men in whom the vindictive bitterness that had accumulated during past generations found expression more vehement than the bulk of the people would really have given to it, but which by its expression intensified that bitterness and further stimulated the anti-English sentiment.

All the elements of hostility which I have enumerated have been steadily converging to make up the present nationalist Irish party. The Tithe war of 1831 was purely a social or economical movement among the peasantry, with hardly a political side. The Repeal movement under Daniel O'Connell, the Young Ireland movement under Davis, Duffy, William Smith O'Brien, John Mitchell, were political movements purely. The latter more particularly was largely sentimental, and had little root among the people. It was led by enthusiastic men of literary tastes, who found their fellow-countrymen too ignorant to enter into their views, too unorganized to give them substantial support; while the priesthood were indifferent, seeing no gain to their religion from these republican demonstrations. Some sixteen years after the abortive rising of 1848 came the Fenian movement, wider and more dangerous, because conducted by persons who more largely belonged to the humbler class, because based on a system of secret societies which ramified through the towns of England as well as of Ireland, because largely organized from America and by men who had gained some experience of fighting in the American Civil War; finally, because it promised a tangible gain to the peasantry in the expulsion

of the Saxon colonists and the redivision of the land. Next followed the Home Rule agitation, comparatively moderate in its aims, constitutional in its methods, supported by many persons of good social standing, Protestants as well as Catholics, conservatives as well as liberals, yet of course drawing to itself some sympathy from those revolutionary men who welcomed every attack upon the English connection. But the different elements of the Home Rule party soon fell asunder. Two extreme sections began to act for themselves. The one, consisting of a small group of members of the Parliament of 1874, enlarged to more than thirty in the Parliament of 1880, devised, or rather developed and extended (for it had been invented by some English Tories in 1872) the system of parliamentary obstruction. They continued to arrest the progress of English and Scotch business in the House of Commons in order to force the legislature either to devote itself to Irish business, or else to make over Irish business to an Irish Parliament. The other section, perceiving that no agitation could be really formidable which did not enlist the peasantry by appealing to their material interests, and to that interest which was the oldest and deepest in their minds, founded the Irish National Land League. Its programme, "the land for the people,"—whether that mean merely fixity of tenure at a reduced rent or the extinction of landlords altogether, with every farmer the owner of his farm,—was far more seductive than any that had been publicly proclaimed before.

While the more moderate Home Rulers found themselves drawn toward the English Liberals, an alliance was effected between the Land League—strong among the masses—and the extreme parliamentary party. The stream of political agitation was swelled by the turbid torrent of social revolution. These were the steps by which the position of 1881 was reached, when, under the influence of passionate scenes in Parliament and agrarian outrages reported from two-thirds of Ireland, the crisis took place which produced the Coercion Act and the Land Act, on the morrow of which, not yet knowing all that they will bring forth, Ireland and England now stand.

During these fifty years, however, while Irish discontent was gathering force, and its streams were uniting into one channel, that policy of reconciliation which had begun with Catholic emancipation had not ceased to be applied. The tithe grievance was dealt with in 1833. Several bishoprics of the Established Protestant Episcopal Church were suppressed in 1833. A system of national education was

established while England as yet had none. The Queen's Colleges and Universities, intended to supply unsectarian university education, were created, and Maynooth College founded for the education of the Catholic priesthood. In 1869, the Protestant Episcopal Church was disestablished and partly disendowed, against the vehement opposition of the Church of England and influential sections of English society—a large concession to make to principles of abstract justice. In 1870 another act was passed, which recognized rights in the tenants to the good-will of their farms, rights whose existence up to that time the Legislature had constantly denied, and which seemed, to many English land-owners, to endanger the security of English landed property. All these, it may be thought, were so many messages of peace and amity sent by the British Parliament to Ireland. Why have they not produced more effect—why not, at least, some effect? Why did they not mollify the feelings of the Irish, assure them of the good disposition of Britain, suggest to them a policy of temperate constitutional agitation, such as any class or interest in Great Britain pursues when it conceives itself aggrieved by some defect in law or administration? Have all these acts of justice been thrown away, and might Britain have equally well, for her own comfort and security, turned a deaf ear to every demand that reached her across St. George's Channel?

The obvious answer is that feelings which it has taken centuries to implant are not forgotten in a few years, even under the best influences. If you have been scolding and beating a child ever since it left the cradle, you must not look for affection and confidence as soon as the stick has been thrown away. But this answer, which people in England have grown tired of, does not explain the whole matter. There must be other reasons for the continued misunderstandings of the two countries—for the unsoftened asperity of the Irish National party. Take an act like the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Bourke last spring—an act unparalleled in the previous history of Ireland—unparalleled, one may almost say, in the history of modern Europe; for the victims of political assassination in Russia, or Spain, or Italy, or even Turkey, have been persons against whom some personal animosity might be felt, who were either, like the Czar Alexander II., the emblems and heads, or at least the active agents and ministers of a hated system, who might have concentrated its obloquy upon themselves by some official act. But here the principal victim had and could have had no personal enemy; he had not entered on his

duties; his mission was to open the prison-doors, to conciliate by gentleness. The crime is indeed not to be charged on the nation, but on a few fierce and misguided men. But there were large classes in Ireland whose satisfaction was scarcely concealed, and many in America who openly applauded. Such an event is only the most conspicuous illustration of a state of feeling between the countries, or rather among the Irish Nationalists toward England, for which reasons must be sought in the present as well as in the past.

If we attempt to discover these reasons, we shall find some of them in the character and attitude of the people and Government of Great Britain; others in the temper and imagination of the Irish. I will begin with the former.

The English government of Ireland is still practically a foreign government. The English may say that it ought not to be so, cannot be so, because after all the two islands form one kingdom, owe allegiance to a queen who is as directly queen of the one as of the other, are governed by a popular assembly, in which representatives of Ireland—representatives more numerous than her population and wealth entitle her to—sit and vote and speak freely, and more than freely. Nevertheless, people in Ireland still think of and talk of the Government, not as their Government, but as "the English Government." It seems to them an external power, set in motion by forces they do not control, conducted on principles which may or may not be good, but which are not their principles. The Irish peasant or small tradesman feels it foreign just as Hungarians and Italians felt the Government of Austria foreign, five-and-twenty years ago; as the upper classes of Poland feel that of Russia still. You may tell the Irishman that the Government is his own, conducted by his Parliament: he thinks it foreign none the less. The English do not understand this, do not believe it. They go very little to Ireland, but when they do, they hear a language the same as their own, see the same soldiers, and in the larger towns the same constables, enter the same law-courts, pay in the same coinage, travel on the same railways, pursue the same field sports, meet at dinner persons of their own class with the same prejudices and tastes, and remark little difference between the two islands, except that the people are (as they say) more ragged, more amusing, more untruthful. They do not see why Ireland should not be just as loyal as Scotland, where they feel themselves perfectly at home, although the laws and religion are different. The Englishman has hitherto always assumed

that he and his habits and ideas and laws are the normal and natural ones, and has applied them accordingly. The laws of Ireland, and nearly the whole (for of course there are some differences) of her administrative system, have been transplanted bodily from England, where they had naturally grown up, and been set to work in a country whose conditions were originally quite different, and have never yet adapted themselves to the English exotic. The English law of land, the Anglican Protestant Church Establishment, were only the most salient instances of the method pursued in governing Ireland according to English ideas; and though these two are gone, there remain other institutions ill-suited for Ireland, and which she would never have created for herself.

But this is not the only ground on which the Irish allege that they are governed from abroad. The two heads of the Executive—the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary—are nearly always Englishmen, or if, as in the case of Mr. Chichester Fortescue, Irish-born, yet Englishmen to all intents and purposes, by education, by connections, by ideas.* I do not contest the reasons which might have been advanced against the appointment of Irishmen to these posts of late years, though however few the suitable Irishmen, none could well have been more unsuitable than two of the Englishmen who have served as Chief Secretaries within the last twenty years. I only observe on the fact, which Irishmen fairly point to as a proof of subjection. However, the chief ground of complaint is found in the British Parliament. It is the Parliament of Ireland as well as of England. Irishmen make laws for England and Scotland with as full a right as Englishmen and Scotchmen for Ireland. The vote of an Irish member is as effective to turn out a ministry as that of a member for Manchester, London, or Edinburgh. Where, then, is the grievance? In this: that the Irish members are a comparatively small minority, whose votes have no more weight upon Irish affairs than those of any English or Scotch member who knows nothing and cares little about those affairs. If the Irish members were ever so united (not that they ever are united), their wishes could be easily overborne by a minister who need only call in his English and Scotch majority. Ireland requires, say the Irish, almost the whole time of Parliament. There is so much misery among her people to be remedied, so many abuses in her administration to be exposed, so many changes in her laws to be made, that whole sessions ought to be devoted to

* The nobility and the upper gentry of Ireland, it need hardly be said, are substantially English.

her. But the English and Scotch members will not give the time. "Ireland," the English say, "has less than one-sixth of the members of the House of Commons, only one-seventh of the population of the two islands. Why should she engross more than the same proportion of the time of Parliament? During the last six years Ireland has certainly had far more than her fair share of the public time. But this has been owing partly to her disordered state, partly to the systematic obstruction of a section of Irish members. Until that obstruction began, she was disgracefully neglected. English members were bored by Irish questions, about which they knew nothing, and of which nothing seemed to come. They lounged into the lobbies, and flocked back at the sound of the division-bell to vote as their party leaders told them; they were always willing to stifle an Irish debate.

This state of things galled the Irish members, and its existence is some justification for the obstruction which they have practiced. It was, of course, impossible for the House of Commons to submit to such a perversion of its rules and interruption of its business; but without obstruction, the Irish members might never have got the Land Act. Irish questions would have been thrust aside as they had been so often in time past. Nor is it only the indifference; it is also the ignorance of the British Parliament that is arraigned. Acts are passed for Ireland, administrative policies are adopted in Ireland and defended by the Government on the floor of the House of Commons, which those who know Ireland know to be mistakes, sure to end in failure. If they related to English affairs, English members would be interested; one could talk to them in private, one could appeal to them in debate; the newspapers would be used; public opinion would check an erring ministry. But where the mistake relates to Ireland this cannot be done. Since they do not understand Ireland, the English and Scotch majority deliver their votes into the hands of the Government, the Government delivers itself into the hands of its Chief Secretary, and even if an English member here and there is found who, knowing something of Ireland, can protest against the blunders he sees the Chief Secretary committing, he protests in vain, for he finds no more support in English public opinion or in the press than he does from his uninformed brother members.

Thus a great deal of the government of Ireland, and most so in troublous times, is government by one man, Lord Lieutenant or Chief Secretary. He is usually an able

and a conscientious man (at present, we have exceptionally high-minded and capable men filling both these places); but, after all, this is not free government or self-government, such as England boasts to have taught the world. It is not the way in which England or Scotland is governed. It is the rule of a dependency through an official,—responsible, no doubt, but responsible not to the ruled, but to an assembly of which they form only a sixth part. When any grievance is felt in England, be it by any part of the country or by any class, or trade, or profession, a clamor is soon raised. Deputations wait on the ministry, and members are plied with letters by their constituents. Public meetings are held and reported. Some leading newspaper is sure to take the matter up and make the political world familiar with it. Those who suffer are all around those with whom the remedy lies, and can approach them and influence them in a hundred ways. So, when the matter comes before Parliament, the declaration of a minister is not accepted as conclusive. Members vote as their convictions, or their fear of their constituents, decide them; and the ministry yields or is defeated. Some years ago, the English trades-unions complained of the common law of conspiracy, which, as they said, pressed harshly and unjustly on them. At first, the Government and the upper classes generally turned a deaf ear; but, by persistent agitation out of doors, for they had at first little parliamentary support, they carried their point, and had the law changed in their favor. Neither members nor ministers could afford to ignore the trades-unionists, in the midst of whom, so to speak, they lived. But the Irish peasantry are far away in a different island; their complaints, their sufferings, their aspirations, have not touched the English members directly. They have at most been read about, as one reads the stories in a book of travels.

“It is to this same cause,” pursue the Irish, “that we trace the vacillation, the uncertainty, the want of consistent principle, which has marked the policy of English governments and parliaments toward Ireland. Your ministry coquets with the Roman Catholic hierarchy, believing that by keeping it in good humor,—that is to say, by making constant concessions to its claim to control education,—you can best keep the country quiet. But every now and then Parliament takes the matter up, refuses the concessions which have been virtually promised, creates a general sense of insecurity. At one time you are severe, passing stringently repressive acts; at another you let these acts expire, and give a tacit encouragement to sedition. These are

just the kind of changes which one must expect in the foreign policy of a State, because Parliament and the nation cannot be always attending to foreign policy, and when they return to it after an interval, are apt to think and command in a different spirit from that of some years before. But it is not what ought to happen in domestic policy. Your Irish policy is, therefore, more foreign than domestic in its character. You are not governing yourselves, but a people outside yourselves, in short, a dependent country. Say what you will, there are two nations, not one nation. Every debate in your Parliament shows it, and most of all, a debate in your House of Lords, where there is not a single exponent of the ideas and sentiments of the great mass of Irishmen. Yet the House of Lords has the power of rejecting measures intended for the benefit of Ireland which nearly every Irish member in the House of Commons has approved. It does not fear to exercise that power. It exercised it in 1880 by rejecting the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, a rejection from which all the subsequent disorders of the country have sprung. How would not the Liberal party in England have resented such a piece of audacity on the part of the Lords, if the bill had been for the relief of English sufferers! You would have threatened the House of Peers, you would have sent the bill up again, and dared them to reject it. But as Irish tenants were the victims, you took it coolly. Mr. Forster fired some shots in the air against the Lords, the Radicals cheered him, and there was an end of it. But not an end of the mischief, for from that hour agrarian outrages began to increase. The essence of a constitution and government like that of the United Kingdom is, that the governed, the people, are also, through their representatives, the governors, so that whatever evils they feel in the one capacity they can rectify in the other. This is why free government, good government, self-government, are synonyms of one another, because experience has proved that no man, or assembly, or nation, can be trusted, in the long run, to govern others so well as they will govern themselves. Now the government of Ireland by English ministers, by a Parliament one house of which is entirely, and the other five-sixths, English and Scotch, is not self-government. Hence it is that we still feel your legislation, even when it is liberal and well-intentioned, to be foreign legislation, and ourselves your subjects.”

I have endeavored to state the case as a fair-minded Irishman, rather than as an Englishman, would state it. Unquestionably there is much truth in such a view. One

need only listen to an Irish debate in the House of Commons to recognize it. And one must further admit that the English are not merely foreigners, but by no means gracious and agreeable foreigners, to deal with. In spite of their many virtues, partly because of some of their virtues and especially of their passion for improving people and things, the English do not make themselves liked by other nations, not even in India, where they are honestly doing their best for the natives. They are too stiff, too dry, too unsympathetic, too much disposed to make their own notions and customs the universal standard of right. Toward races which they think their inferiors they are less often cruel and far less often unjust than most European peoples. But they are contemptuous, or at best, condescending. They do not allow the subject to forget that he is not only a subject but an inferior. Their very indifference to his opinion of them is the most constant evidence of their pride. Between them and the Irish there is a sort of incompatibility like that which exists between the German and the Slav. It is true that they do not hate the Irish as the Germans hate the Slavs, and as the Lowland Scotch hated the Celtic Highlanders, even so recently as in the days of Thomas Carlyle's youth. An Englishman is not sensible of any antipathy to an individual Irishman; and it need not be said that an individual Irishman has every chance, and uses it, of success in England. In the professions of arms and law and medicine, in the church, in literature and science, many of the leading men of modern Britain are Irish by birth or education,—real Irishmen with their Irish quality, perhaps even their Irish speech betraying them. But for Ireland as a whole, or for any group of Irishmen associating themselves as Irishmen, the English have a feeling which, if not dislike, is at least distrust, and which, though hardly to be called contemptuous, is certainly not respectful. An Irishman who is content to be even as an Englishman is received on the same footing. But Irishmen who obtrude their Hibernian character and nationality are ill-regarded. Then local patriotism is thought ridiculous. "What have they to be proud of?" says the Englishman; "why cannot they leave that nonsense alone, and be satisfied to be citizens of this great United Kingdom? They are not fit for self-government, and would go to ruin if left to themselves. They must be treated like children. Why cannot they be happy, with such a kind friend as England to look after them; why are they not more grateful for all she is doing for them?" The restlessness, the vehemence in language,

the exaggerativeness of the Irish temperament, its instability compared with his own, even its gift for coaxing and pleasing,—all repel the ordinary Englishman. He cannot conceal his distrust, and the Irish take his distrust, as it is often accompanied by brusqueness, to mean more than it does mean. They are irritated by the English want of suavity in a way which surprises the English, sensible of their good intentions and not understanding how much mere manner counts for, between nations as well as between individuals. A patriotic Irishman, even if he has nothing to complain of personally, becomes indignant on behalf of his nation; feels the English foreigners, resents their interference just because it is that of foreigners, and nurses his nationality more than ever, as an ardent mind is most loyal to a friend just when the world runs him down. I have heard Irishmen who were themselves bitter opponents of the so-called National party, hot Tories and Protestants, confess that they hated the English, and would like to be rid of them, were it not that they knew that in an independent Ireland their own party and religion would be overpowered. The sense that England treated them *de haut en bas* was intolerable. No wonder then that this feeling among the less educated masses, who have been fed for years with denunciations of England, and told that all their misfortunes are due to her, makes them think and call the government which is carried on in the name of the Queen and Parliament a foreign government.

If it were only this, if it were a purely English government, the case might be better. Foreign rule, such as was the rule of the Austrians in Italy, need not wound men privately, but publicly only. So far from setting class against class, it has a tendency to bring classes together, by giving them the bond of a common national feeling against the stranger. But the so-called English government in Ireland is the rule not merely of England, but of the English part of Ireland,—of a dominant caste, English by origin, Protestant by religion,—who in time past enjoyed a monopoly of political and civil rights and so abused it as to bring the people's hatred, not on themselves only, but on England also whose power they were suffered to wield. To the mind of an Irish peasant or tradesman, the Government is not a distant abstraction, which, in return for a light tax, gives him the protection of the law, not an imposing embodiment of the unity of the nation; it means the squirarchy, the land-owning and locally dominating class, to whom he pays rent, who are justices of the

peace, who are connected by social or family ties with all the other powers that be, and who are still able to influence those powers for his evil or good. In time past, the peasant had much insolence and much oppression to suffer from the squires and their dependents, there being no such sympathy and friendliness between him and them as in England gives a genial character to the relation of landlord and tenant. He knows that things have changed now. The Irish landlords are nearly always Tories, and since 1870 great has been their bitterness against the Liberal party which disestablished the Protestant Church and altered the Land Laws. The peasant sees that those who were once secure in their strength are now angry and alarmed. He perceives that there is a power above the squire which no longer supports him as of yore. He thinks this change is due to agitation, to the fears the English have begun to entertain, and he is encouraged to assume a bolder attitude. But the Government is still identified in his mind with the class through which it approaches and deals with him,—the class which furnishes the paid as well as the unpaid magistrates, the judges, the bulk of the officials. The rancor which he feels toward this class—a rancor stronger now than it was when they deserved it far more (because brutality is less resented by a serf than arrogance by a man swollen by newly won equality)—extends itself to the Government, and England has the misfortune to incur a double inheritance of hatred, that of the foreign power which has conquered, that of the ruling caste which has tyrannized at home over the poor. That she has identified herself with this ruling caste, legislated in its interest, allowed it to make her odious, all this belongs rather to the past than to the present. The existing generation of Irish landlords are far better than their ancestors, and have suffered heavily for the sins of those ancestors; much of their power is gone and yet more may be lost. But the English Government cannot rid itself of the association with them which the people have formed, because most of those who combine education with loyalty to the English connection belong to that caste, and are therefore the inevitable officials. Herein, therefore, England can hardly be blamed. Nor is it the fault of the present generation of Englishmen that Ireland has to be governed as if her people were one with the English, when history has made them different. That which may be charged as a fault on the English is that they have not, in the fifty years that followed Catholic emancipation,

known or cared to know the truth about Ireland, and that when this truth has been brought before them, they have usually ignored or forgotten it. When Parliament has bent itself to Irish questions, it has done so because the pressure from Ireland—sometimes the increase in agrarian crime, sometimes the prospect of each successive insurrection, sometimes obstruction in the House of Commons—forced it to do so. Every concession has been extorted, has come too late, because the demands of the agitators have already gone further, has lost grace, because not spontaneous, has been incomplete, because always mutilated by the House of Lords, has seemed due not so much to reason and justice as to fear and weariness. On each occasion, over and above any arguments in favor of the measure on its merits, the argument has always been heard, and has been most really potent, that Ireland is so full of discontent and sedition that something must be done to appease her. Thus agitation has been encouraged, and the Irish have been taught that the true way to fix England's attention is by outrage and sedition. Every time their demands are granted they are warned that this is the last time; but they do not believe the warning, it has so often been given before. For this neglect as well as for that strain of haughtiness which stings the Irish, England will doubtless incur the censure of history. But what England? There are two Englands as there are two Irelands, though less embittered against each other. Liberal England (I speak generally, for the view is the view of all Liberals, though that which predominates in this party,) admits many of the principles for which the popular party pleads, has little sympathy for the landlord caste, and still less for Orangeism, is willing to go a long way toward granting every demand which is not inconsistent with the unity of the empire. Tory England (again speaking generally) holds that all our Irish difficulties are due to our weakness, that consistent firmness would have quelled long ago a disaffection which feeds and thrives upon concessions. Discontent is due to agitation; agitation is due to the indulgence it receives from Liberal ministries, who find it easier to grant than to refuse, who think that the masses are always right, and the landowners always wrong. When a Tory Government yields—which it sometimes does—it alleges that the behavior of its Liberal predecessors has compelled it; when a Liberal measure proves insufficient, the defence is that the Tory party or the House of Lords mutilated it in its passage. Between the two sets of views, alternately mounting into

power, as the majority shifts this way and that, English policy toward Ireland loses vigor and definiteness, and effects neither what persistent firmness might do, nor persistent liberality. Each party finds in the Irish policy of the other a field for political attack, and under a system of party government, what else can be expected? Yet no one can doubt that as the resistance to Irish demands has always come chiefly from the Tory party, so it is the great strength of that party which has made the successive acts of concession so tardy and so incomplete. A leading Nationalist member said not long ago, that if it were not for the Tory party, the Irish question would be settled in a session. This is going too far. But it is unquestionably the existence of a landed aristocracy in England, allied to and naturally sympathizing with the landed aristocracy of Ireland, that has made England generally take her ideas from, and espouse the cause of, that ruling caste which the Irish masses hate.

So far I have tried to set forth those elements of mistrust and difficulty between the Irish and England which are due to the position or character of the latter, and to the incidents of her government. Let us now look at the matter from the other side, and see what England has to complain of in the present or recent temper and conduct of the Irish. What is there in them which prevents a *rapprochement*, an understanding by which the peoples may get on amicably together? The Irish would not themselves deny that they are hard to deal with, and American readers will not require much proof of that proposition. But in what way and for what reasons?

They are, in political matters, unpractical. Considering what an active part they play in American politics, not to speak of their parliamentary feats in England, it may seem absurd to call them an unpolitical nation. But they do want some of those qualities which have made the English and the Americans succeed in working free institutions,—self-restraint, moderation, a sense of the relative importance of different aims, a willingness to see what can be said on the other side, a preference of solid men and solid objects to brilliant declaimers and seductive visions. It is no reproach to them to be in these respects deficient, for few races have possessed these gifts, and even in England and America it is by a long experience of freedom that they have been developed and matured. The Irish people had no chance of forming habits of self-government before 1829. Till then politics meant, for them, conspiracy. Since then, while the habit of conspiracy has

unhappily survived, open agitation has been added. For the present generation, politics have consisted in agitation, in perpetual opposition, complaint, denunciation. No popular leader has held any official position, has been called upon to put forward a positive scheme, has learnt by experience what the difficulties of legislating and governing are, has had himself sobered by the sense of responsibility. The Irish ideal of a leader has been an orator, who will worry and vex and terrify the ruling powers, not a constructive statesman whose plans will restore prosperity to the country. Hence, as the mass of the people have had no training for local self-government, so the leaders have had nothing to do but criticize, and have given little or no help to the English Government by any practical suggestions. They would answer that this is not their business, but that of the Executive, and that suggestions from them would be ill received. Nevertheless it is a serious obstacle to any progress with the pacification of Ireland. Those who claim to speak on behalf of the disaffected majority make vague and large demands, which English opinion holds inadmissible. They do not show how these demands could be satisfied by framing any scheme of government which would work. They declare that nothing less than their demands will be accepted, and generally refuse to cooperate in arranging some practicable compromise.

Some among them irritate even those Englishmen who desire to aid them by the unmeasured vehemence of their language and by their efforts to insult whatever the English respect. And thus, while they deprive the Government and Parliament of that help which the representatives of the country ought to render, they confirm the notion of the ordinary Englishman that the Irish, high and low, orator and peasant, are unfit to be trusted with their own affairs,—that an Irish assembly would be a place of endless and purposeless wrangling. He finds the Nationalist members unreasonable and impracticable. He complains that they insist on all or nothing; that they will not combine with those who are really their friends; that they are ostentatiously detached,—hostile to every English alliance. "Why not," he exclaims, "when you have a man like Mr. Gladstone, who has given so many proofs of his sincerity, who obviously desires to go as far in your direction as English public opinion will permit, and is constantly charged with yielding to you—why not recognize his good intentions (aye, and his good performance), facilitate his progress, show that his measures tend to pacify Ireland, instead of

agitating against him and denouncing his Government just as you denounced the Tories? It looks as if you wished to keep up irritation, to prevent reconciliation, to persuade your countrymen that England is still the same hostile foreign power she was seventy years ago. Perhaps your hope is that you will make England give you up in despair as irreconcilable, and at last part with you, not from any conviction that it will benefit you, but out of sheer weariness and disgust. You may think you are right; but you mistake the English people. They are now, under a popular constitution which expresses the feelings of the middle and working classes, more just and friendly to Ireland, more anxious to do what is right, more regardless of the English landlord garrison, than they ever were before. But they are as proud and resolute as ever, and you greatly err if you think you have more to gain from their fear or their exhaustion than from their love of justice and freedom."

What answer the Nationalist would make to such an appeal every one knows. But it is most true that the Irish do now misconceive the English people just as the English misconceive the state of mind of an Irish Nationalist. The English, who have forgotten the scorn and the misdeeds of their ancestors, assume that the Irish have forgotten all that too. They live in full light under conditions daily becoming more democratic; they do not know how much of the past darkness broods over the mind of an Irish peasant; they expect from the nation as a whole a reasonableness, a friendliness, a comprehension of our time which does not yet exist. The Nationalist, on the other hand, does not realize the change in England; he sees in her still the harsh and haughty master of 1798. The one expects too much; the other gives credit for too little.

Another reason for the apparent implacability of the Irish opposition, a reason insufficiently grasped in England, is to be found in its internal divisions. It is composed of different sections, and the more moderate are forced to play up to the more extreme. I have already remarked that the gravity of the crisis since 1879 has consisted in the union of several hitherto distinct currents of anti-English feeling. But the coincidence of these parties has been, not a fusion, but only an alliance. Behind the parliamentary Nationalists—who in the main confine themselves to constitutional agitation, and who have not formally demanded anything more than a separate Irish parliament—stands the Fenian party, whose object is complete independence, its methods, conspiracy, and insurrection. This

party has never submitted itself to the parliamentary opposition, and is quite capable of breaking with the more moderate men, of denouncing them, even of turning its weapons against them. There is no reason to believe it numerically strong, but it is desperate; it receives sympathy from many who hesitate to join it; it professes to control the contributions of the Irish in America, and has no doubt some support there. In a struggle between Jacobins and Girondins, the latter are apt to come off worst. Now the Fenian party will not hear of conciliation or compromise, and to accept a compromise would be to break with them. There is also what may be called the agrarian party among the peasantry and small shop-keepers, the local politicians and members of land leagues, or of the old Riband lodges,—the men who have hoped to get the land for nothing, who have been excited by the promises of agitators, by the success which attended the Land League movement, by the mere pleasure of conspiring and finding themselves powerful. This party was far from including the whole of the western and southern peasantry. The numerical majority of the people have probably been either neutral or inactively sympathetic. But it has been well organized, and it is strong just because there is no other party among the masses to confront it—no sentiment of friendliness to England, or attachment to the law. The parliamentary leaders cannot neglect it, for it is to its support that they mostly owe their seats. And it would regard with suspicion and disappointment any arrangement which gave it less than the whole of what it has been taught to demand. That it is easier to raise the devil than to lay him, is a maxim whose truth popular leaders have often had to ponder.

The necessity of keeping in good humor these extreme sections of their party must have been an enormous difficulty for the Nationalist chiefs, and one which English opinion has perhaps insufficiently allowed for. They have been severely judged by those who fail to perceive that it requires an altogether exceptional moral courage and strength of character for a leader to avoid being pressed on by the eagerness of his followers into a position which his judgment disapproves. Nothing so hard as to retire, or to counsel moderation, when you expose yourself to the charge (however groundless) of timidity or treason. A leader so placed may honestly, though erringly, think that he better serves his country and the world by remaining at the head of a movement, even when forced to go too far and say too much, and thus holding back the men of violent means and hopeless aims, rather

than by abandoning its guidance to desperate hands. I speak from no special knowledge of the inner state of the Nationalist party, about which I know no more than any other member of the general public. But no one who has watched its course during the last few years can help perceiving that its chiefs have repeatedly felt obliged to take steps and hold language they would not have taken or held of themselves, in order to please and keep up the excitement of their supporters in Ireland or America, people not only less informed but more violent and reckless than themselves. It were needless to show how much this increases the perplexity of English statesmen in dealing with such leaders. What is the use of convincing them if they are not free to act upon their own convictions, but must gratify a fierce faction whom no arguments or appeals from England can reach? What is gained by conceding their first demands, if new demands are immediately to be sprung upon you at the bidding of men who want nothing less than absolute independence? The agrarian party and the insurrectionist party expect from the parliamentary opposition only one thing—unremitting hostility to any English Government; and the parliamentary opposition is thus being always forced further than its cooler heads approve.

“What is it, then,” it may be asked, “that makes the agrarianists and the insurrectionists so strong? They are not numerous; they are inferior in every way to the parliamentary leaders; why should they be obeyed?” This brings one to the kernel of the mischief. They are formidable, partly because there is no pacific party among the masses to oppose them, but mainly from that capital misfortune of Ireland, the severance of its upper from its lower classes. The natural leaders of a people ought to come from its higher class; that is to say, from the men of education, intelligence, social position—those who are naturally looked up to either in their own neighborhood or by the country at large. Their higher social standing, their wider intellectual outlook, gives such men not only a greater aptitude for politics, but a sense of responsibility which, when it is found among those who want these advantages, is due to the presence of quite exceptional natural capacity and virtue. I am far from saying that good leaders may not spring from the least cultivated classes; I observe only that a leader from among them has certain obstacles to overcome, certain grave temptations to encounter, which are less formidable to the person who starts from a higher platform of rank and knowledge. Now in Ireland these natural leaders are almost wanting. The popular party

counts among its numbers few persons of rank, or wealth, or education; few who correspond to men like Mazzini, Daniel Manin, Poerio, Saffi, d'Azeglio, in the Italy of thirty years ago; few like those who led the commons of England in the struggle against the tyranny of the Stuarts, or like the heroes of the Revolution in America. The upper class in Ireland is mostly Protestant and Tory. The Protestant Liberals of Ulster stand (as a whole) aloof from the Nationalist movement; so, too, do the Catholic gentry, among whom there are indeed Home Rulers, but very few who desire separation. If they are not active friends of the present system, they dislike it less than the tactics of the revolutionary party. Thus it comes that nearly all the local leaders of the Nationalist movement, and many of their parliamentary leaders, belong to the peasant class, share its animosities, its narrow horizon, its incapacity for grasping the difficulties of the problem, its tendency to yield to mere feeling instead of taking a large and sober view of the situation, and seeking to reach the practicable best. These men are dangerous because they are swayed by those very prejudices which a leader ought to rise above and correct. They stimulate the people but do not enlighten it. One of them, at any rate, is a man of a high stamp, who has sought to check outrages, but he cannot exercise the sort of influence which the joint action of a group of enlightened men, however extreme in their views, might possess. Among the parliamentary leaders of the party there are several who, either by birth and position, or by education and culture, belong to the upper class. These things help a man even in a revolution. But such leaders stand almost alone. They have no local leaders of the same type behind them. They are generals in an army where there are hardly any trained officers, but only a vast rank and file, not indeed stupid, for there is always plenty of cleverness in Ireland, but ignorant and impatient. Hence they have not the requisite authority. They have not that body of opinion round them of their own class which, while it strengthens, steadies and controls. They have to appeal to the passions, or the bare material interest of their supporters, when the situation calls for a high and statesman-like tone. It may seem a paradox, but it is not the less a truth, that the Irish problem would be easier to solve if the so-called English garrison, if the whole of the educated class, belonged to the Nationalist party. For then the education and wealth of the country would recognize the advantages of maintaining some sort of connection with England, and would make their policy accepted by the masses; while English statesmen would have firm ground to tread upon,

people to deal with who could take a practical view of things, and hold to a bargain once struck.

As it is, the English Government finds itself on a quicksand. With whom is it to treat? Whom is it to accept as the exponents of the popular will? It may seem to have been assumed in the previous argument that the Nationalists are the nation. But, so far as parliamentary representation goes, they can claim less than half the Irish members. One may reckon them loosely at forty, though not all these follow implicitly one standard. Of the remaining sixty-four—Ireland having in all one hundred and four members—about twenty-seven are Tories, nine Ulster Liberal Protestants, and the rest nominally Home Rulers and for the most part Roman Catholics, but practically (with a few exceptions) supporters of the present Liberal Government, and therefore regarded as foes by the Nationalists themselves. These sixty-four represent technically more than half the country; substantially, no doubt, they represent less; for if a general election were now held, it is probable that the extreme party would obtain a majority, and come back with sixty or seventy members. However, at the lowest computation, more than a million Irishmen are opposed to the Nationalist programme, and this million includes nearly all the property and education of the island. A minority like this cannot be ignored. So the Irish who hold to England may fairly ask whether the wishes of the nation are to be learned and estimated solely from the more extreme party. "How is justice to be done to the majority without doing injustice to the minority, especially as this minority includes the most industrious and prosperous people in the country, the *Scoto-Irish* of the North? Is not England bound in honor, if she holds that in any sense the people of the whole United Kingdom are one people, to protect the religion and the property of such a minority from the consequences of separation?"

England has now something more important still to protect in Ireland—life and personal security. The difficulties we have hitherto been considering are political difficulties. But the deepest-rooted evil in Ireland is the existence of private crime, agrarian in its origin, but perpetrated not on landlords and agents only, but on whoever ventures, in three of the four provinces of the island, to disobey that unwritten law of the people which forbids a tenant to be expelled from his farm. Not merely the evicting landlord, but the new-comer who takes a farm whence another has been removed, even if for good cause, and the very laborer or herdsman who serves him, incurs the anger

of the peasantry and stands in danger of his life. These habits of crime began in the last century, when the law was harsh and landlords were wont to use it harshly. It was the only remedy the peasants had—the only vengeance they could take for their wrongs. It was so far effective that it prevented many evictions which would otherwise have taken place; and, horrible as it seems, one must remember that it was often provoked by an unrighteous abuse of the landlord's power. The people came to forget its criminal character altogether, and looked on it as a sort of private war, and on any one who set himself against it and revealed the murderer as a traitor to his class. Hence the sympathy which surrounded the offender, the unwillingness to give information, to bear witness in court, to convict even on clear evidence. The immense difficulty of the Government in Ireland all this century has been to detect and punish these agrarian crimes, because the whole country-side, even if it does not applaud the particular act, is against the law and for the offender. A wife is banned if she gives evidence against the slayer of her husband, or a son of his father. A distinguished physician told me that he was once summoned to attend a man—the bailiff, I think, of some land-owner—who had been shot in an agrarian quarrel. The man knew who had shot him, and by a word could have brought his murderer to justice, but he would not speak that word during the three days he lingered, and he died without giving a clue.

This tacit league against the law has two fatal effects. It incenses the English, and gives them a bad opinion of the people, who seem to them more than ever unfit for self-government. And it forces every English administration, be it Tory or Liberal, to have recourse to coercive legislation, to suspend the ordinary law, and obtain extraordinary powers for seizing and trying offenders. The exercise of such powers is felt as a grievance in Ireland, and further exasperates the anti-English feeling. Even their legitimate use may be galling to ordinary citizens, nor can it fail to happen that they are sometimes misused. Exceptional legislation is taken as another proof that Ireland is treated differently from England. Yet what is a government to do which finds itself baffled by undetected criminals? It is even drawn on to apply these same exceptional powers to political offenses which are to modern sentiment less odious, and thus it commits the mistake of strengthening in the Irish mind the association between any sort of crime and patriotism, as being both directed against the foreign power.

This struggle against agrarian crime, forcing the best friends of liberty to assume a

sort of despotism, is the greatest difficulty which governments have to face in Ireland. But it is itself only a part of a larger phenomenon. The movement in Ireland is a social revolution. The volcano has been smoking and glowing under its ashes for more than a century, and now the lava-floods have rolled forth. This is no isolated thing in Europe. Most feudal countries have to pass through such a phase. The French peasants effected their social revolution in the end of the last century. The French workmen have repeatedly attempted one in our own time. In North Germany, the timely reforms of Stein averted a struggle among the agriculturists, while the spread of Socialism in the towns and the repressive measures of the Prussian Government show how serious the danger is in the artisan classes. In Russia we have been hearing the first mutterings of the storm. England has so far escaped, for her trade and manufactures have given unprecedented prosperity to the towns-people, while the agricultural laborers are not numerous enough, nor perhaps wretched enough, to be ready for a *Jacquerie*. And in England there has happily never been any sharp line between classes, nor any social rancor. But in Ireland all the elements existed—a redundant population, very miserable, very ignorant, with no resource but tillage, ruled by a caste alien to them in religion, in feeling, and, till recently, in language; a caste which had lived upon them in idleness, insulted them, neglected them. Who can wonder that when such a population is suddenly delivered from the fear that held it down, it should be intoxicated by the opportunity and should seek to possess itself of the land it has always thought to be rightfully its own? To any one who looks at the contrasts of misery and wealth in the world, and at the ignorance of economic laws which accompanies misery, it will appear surprising, not that the needy sometimes rise against the rich but that they do not rise more often. The Irish landlords of to-day are to be pitied, for they suffer for the sins of their predecessors, and some of them have bought their estates lately, thinking all danger over. They complain that England has not stood by them and has been generous to the tenantry at their expense. But their lot would have been far harder but for the proximity of English power which has broken the brunt of this revolution, protected their persons, averted that utter ruin which otherwise might have overtaken them. It is the conjunction of this social convulsion with a perplexing political problem that has taxed so severely the resources and the courage of English statesmen, and that made the crisis of 1880–82 the

greatest Ireland has seen since 1798. Fortunately, England has been guided by a minister gifted with a courage and resource such as have not been applied to Irish questions since William of Orange's conquest made her first the disgrace and then the difficulty of English statesmanship.

England might crush this social revolution by an exercise of her physical power, as social revolutions have been crushed before now in Europe. She might, but she will not, because the masses in England have too much sympathy with the sufferings of the Irish peasantry, and because England altogether has become too tender in feeling, just as the Americans of the North were toward the defeated South, to use the stern methods of last century. There might be a fit of severity, but it could not long be maintained. On the other hand, England cannot bring herself to accept the social revolution and to let the numerical majority of Irishmen carry out their will, whatever that may prove to be; for England holds herself responsible for whatever happens in Ireland. If Ireland were cut adrift, a civil war might possibly have to decide the issues between the aboriginal nation and the Anglo-Scottish or Protestant colony, or rather (since the distinction of parties does not closely follow the difference of blood) between the tenants and laborers of the South and West, and the upper classes. Whichever faction triumphed, whether by arms or by votes, would abuse its power and trample on the rights of the other. England feels unable to tolerate this. If Ireland were left independent, and a civil war followed, England could not stand by and see excesses like those of the Communards and the Assembly at Paris in 1871 without interfering. If, a connection of the countries being maintained, domestic Irish legislation were committed to an Irish Parliament, and that Parliament used it to dispossess land-owners without compensation and establish the Roman Catholic church, England would be irresistibly moved to interfere. Therefore she clings to the idea that the United Kingdom is one; and, when the idea of cutting Ireland adrift presents itself, asks whether that would not be treason to those inhabitants of Ireland who do belong to the British rather than to the Irish nation, and to whom her faith seems so deeply plighted. She is in the difficulty of trying to combine two inconsistent plans of government. You may govern a nation as you would a boy—consider yourself in the light of a father, and rule it for its own good, but according to your own views. You may treat it as having attained its majority and let it govern itself, badly perhaps, but in

its own way, so that it may at last learn by its own experience. England does neither of these things. She attempts to combine the system of self-government, expressed in the parliamentary representation of Ireland, with the system of paternal government, expressed in the decisive voice which England retains. And she does this because she repeats in the same breath that Irish and English are one nation, and yet that Ireland must be governed according to Irish ideas. It is illogical, it is self-contradictory; yet the contradiction is in the facts. For the Irish, according as you look at them from this side or from that, are and are not a part of the British nation.

What the future has in store for Ireland; into what new phases the present crisis will pass; how far the Land Act will raise and pacify the peasantry; by what means the demand for self-government is to be satisfied without breaking up the United Kingdom; whether a separate Irish parliament might not rather aggravate than diminish the difficulties of the situation, and almost necessarily lead to a final severance of the two islands; whether such a severance would be any loss to England, however serious an injury it might be to Ireland,—these are questions of practical politics with which this article is not intended to deal. My only object has been to present to American readers, as fairly as I can, the conditions of the problem toward whose solution England and Ireland are struggling. Fortunate it is for America that, having settled a still larger and more formidable question, she can now look on calmly and sympathetically, judging both parties more fairly than either can yet judge the other. It would be rash to predict that the solution will come soon. Probably the English popular party must first gain a more distinct predominance in England than it now possesses; but come it will if only England patiently maintains that calm and friendly temper which the bulk of her people have shown since this last crisis began.

Things are, after all, far better than they were at the time of Catholic emancipation, or in 1848, or during the first Fenian outbreak. Though the element of secret crime is still formidable, the agitation is far more open, public, directed into a constitutional channel, than it was before. Obstruction is an improvement on conspiracy. The Nationalists are free to utter all their complaints, and do not spare to use this freedom; the English have learnt to listen quietly, and consider what they hear. The bulk of the English people,—the middle and working

classes, who have less arrogance and more sympathy than the classes that formerly ruled, and which, in virtue of their sympathy, their love of justice and liberty, have also a kind of wisdom which aristocratic arrogance is shut out from,—this mass of the English and Scottish people honestly wishes to do right by Ireland. It does not quite know how, but it is willing to trust those statesmen whom it believes to be governed by its own wholesome instincts. In all questions of conduct there are two elements needed for success—the desire to do what is most just to and best for others as well as one's self, or, in other words, the right moral end, and the insight which enables one to see what is the course which will attain such a right and happy issue—in other words, the skillful choice of means. England now seems to be reaching the first of these two requisites for success. She is no longer thinking chiefly of herself and her English garrison in Ireland: she is thinking of and seeking what is really best for the Irish people and all sections of them. To discover this really best; to ascertain how Irish national aspirations and the legitimate demand for more control of their own destinies can be gratified without throwing back the forces that work for progress and civilization in the island, without creating matter for fresh disputes, without placing an industrious and educated minority at the mercy of a less enlightened majority—this is a hard task. Many efforts may have to be made, some failures encountered, before it is accomplished, before peace and unity are secured for Ireland, whether as a part of the United Kingdom or in a more or less independent position. But it is not, after all, more hard than what England has already done, when one compares her sentiments and conduct now with the sentiments and conduct of 1798. The Irish people themselves, with their quick and sensitive minds, can hardly fail to feel and appreciate the change. When they feel it and begin to regard England with some measure of confidence and good-will, the problem will have been more than half solved. The one point on which everything seems to turn is the perseverance of England and Scotland in their present temper, whatever disappointments or provocations may tempt them from it. A faith in justice and liberty is a new doctrine in the political relations of the stronger and the weaker, and it has a better promise of the future than any force that has been heretofore employed.

James Bryce.