

Elizabethian Ireland

Native and English

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UNTIL quite recently the reproach of want of knowledge of their country's history, levelled at Irishmen by Dean Swift, bore on the face of it such an impress of truth that it was held to be a national characteristic, and as such irremovable. Various reasons in explanation of this national ignorance have been given, not the least of them that the national history was for Englishmen to study, not Irishmen.

This old-time sophism has recently been revived, and though in the past it has done yeoman's service to the decriers of Irish nationalism, the present generation will ignore its harmful tendency if Englishmen, when acting on its advice, take as their guides other histories than those in which grace of style and purity of language have been made vehicles for the dissemination of political and racial misconceptions and antipathies.

The suggestion that to Irish people their country's history should continue a sealed book must have been made in the belief that nothing stimulative of true patriotism is to be found in its pages, or else, that what is recorded in them had better be forgotten. In either case a belief directly at variance with the best class of Irish thought.

Irish writers of the last century frequently insisted that if their countrymen ever became a nation it would be through a consciousness of their past history. There are unmistakable signs that this awaken-ing is taking place. What has been termed the Gaelic revival is firmly established all over the country, is influencing more and more the daily life of the people, and a-rousing a desire for a better know-ledge of the past. As this knowledge is acquired, what has hitherto passed for statecraft in their Governors and ruling classes will be closely scrutinised, and with the result future Governments will have to reckon.

The Empire has recently been engaged in a struggle of almost vital importance. In the course of it Irishmen repeatedly demonstrated they were quite as determined to preserve what their forefathers assisted to acquire as the other members of the British family were, thereby establishing both a claim to be considered at one with the other members of the Empire in all that makes for that Empire's advancement and permanence, and to a happier understanding with the remainder of the family.

With all sections of the nation in this unusually tolerant mood there can be no better time for re-viewing the much disputed events of a vastly interesting period. Other recent occurrences also render the present particularly suitable for a revisal of some previously accepted historical theories and beliefs. We have assisted at the making of history on a large scale, and have experienced the difficulty of arriving at an undisputed conclusion upon facts well within common knowledge. In an age of instantaneous publicity we have seen other nations deliberately misreading evidence, denying facts, and insisting upon the occurrence of incidents humanly impossible.

In addition to making us more liberal this experience should give us pause upon any subject of historical controversy. Fortunately, there is a tendency in this direction. Nothing now is taken for granted. We have become sceptical and hypercritical, and must have conclusive proofs. The fierce light of scientific research beating upon the historic as well as the human problem, upon the mud cabin as well as the throne, has taught the value of information hitherto undreamt of. Workers and thinkers in the great army of scientists are bringing to light currents of thought and influences which, followed up, may account for many of the incomprehensible vagaries of national action. In the theory of heredity we find that the key to many obscure individual characteristics is to be found in remote influences and environments long since forgotten or neglected. Cause and effect are as constant and undeviating in the nation as in the individual. May we not here find, if not a solution, at least a clue, to generations of ineffectual attempts to understand or make allowances for national peculiarities and prejudices.

In the belief that no correct or permanent solution of the Irish problem can be attained unless based upon a true knowledge of the people, their hereditary feelings and failings, their lines of thought, and the motives actuating them, the following pages are an endeavour to assist this enlightenment by im-

partially depicting (without claiming the dignity of history) the country and its inhabitants during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The historical importance of the Elizabethan period in Ireland is incalculable. It was the period when an alien Government, threatened by the growth of new and the rejuvenescence of old, dangers, deliberately determined upon imparting to the physical aspect of the country, and the political and social institutions of its people, the impress of their modern form. The period during which all the differences that for upwards of three centuries have plagued the country, and strained every interest connected with it, had their inception. Truly a seed time, of which subsequent generations have reaped the harvest.

In England it was an era of adventure and land hunger. A phase in the literary and exploratory activity of the time. Men's minds were inflamed by visions of an unattainable material prosperity, and possessed by a passion for new discoveries and the planting of settlements. Unfortunately for those to whom this planting of settlements meant removal from their ancestral homes, undisguised ruthlessness reigned supreme everywhere. Inhumanity was common to all nations and every sect.

Happily the present generation is scarcely able to comprehend the brutal savagery of the 16th century. That it is necessary to revive instances of it, if we are to understand the events they led up to or sprang from, must be accepted as justification for mentioning them. Instead of, on the one side, invoking the aid of casuistry to discover symptoms of religious zeal in the perpetrators of these horrors ; or, on the other, picturing them in the strongest possible light to the exclusion of all other events, we prefer to consider them as the ordinary recognised methods of the time. Only in this spirit of toleration is it possible to read dispassionately of the Elizabethan subjugation of Ireland. Wanting it, no matter how little of the Gael there may in our blood or sympathies, a feeling of hostility to the victors is engendered by their barbarity.

The period was, moreover, one when public faith and private truth were alike disregarded, when the honour of the soldier had ceased to imply an obligation or command respect, and the profession of a common religion overrode the claims of nationality.

In contradiction of the theory that national progress cannot take place in the absence of general private worth, the Elizabethan period was remarkable for an unprecedented advance in material prosperity and the arts. A growth not general throughout the country, but restricted to the Court, the capital, a few towns, and the country adjoining them. The outlying parts of the Kingdom were quite as benighted as many parts of Ireland. Therefore, when assessing the value of descriptions of Ireland by Spenser, and contemporary Englishmen, we must not forget they had been accustomed to Court, college, or town life in their own country. Forced to dwell near the bogs of Dartmoor, on the Yorkshire moors, or in the bleak Fell country, they would have been among a people equally strange in language, manners, and customs, with the wild Irish.

For depicting the social intimate life of the Elizabethan Irish we have but few of the sources of information fortunately available in the sister countries. State documents and chronicles, when condescending to notice such trivial details, did so perfunctorily ; so that we are forced to rely upon the descriptions and inferences of a few writers to whom the possibility of their writings becoming objects of national interest centuries afterwards never presented itself.

In State papers and contemporary official narratives, the authorities usually drawn upon by English writers for their knowledge of Elizabethan Ireland, we find public events portrayed with all the minuteness of recent and familiar occurrences, and invested with the local and periodic colouring necessary to their comprehension, by those who had exceptional opportunities for knowing them. Invaluable and indispensable as this material is, there is all the more reason when using it to recollect that the writers were influenced by current prejudices and similar causes to those which produced, or rendered possible, what they record. That, in many cases, they emanated from, or were inspired by, individuals whose reputation and interest depended upon the people they criticise being represented in the worst possible light. That, in fact, they are simply *ex parte* statements. "At a distance from the supreme seat of power, and with the advantage of being able to make such representations of the state of Ireland as they pleased, the English vicegerents acted with the less reserve." [1] In addition, to utilise the material provided by one side only, when material equally authentic is available from the other, is

the work of a partisan ; no matter upon which side engaged. To this practice, and the equally common one of presenting facts, divested of their surroundings and thus rendered misleading, many of the errors popularly received can be traced. Two of the worst offenders in this respect are Lord Macaulay and Mr. Froude. Though the most widely read, they were not the only travellers in a region of prejudice and malevolence. The early Victorian period was singularly prolific in matters inimical to an unbiassed consideration of Irish polemics, past or present. Catholic Emancipation and Repeal had induced feelings and created animosities particularly galling to the English public. Never before had the nation been bearded as they were then. Consequently the national resentment appears in every sphere of national activity, literature particularly. No serious writer of any notoriety escaped the infection ; and no writer whose opinions have been coloured by the literature of that period has escaped its poisonous influence. Macaulay—the Napoleon of historians—brings into the field of dispute an immense army of authorities ; his sentences move forward to their objective with the stately and rythmical tread of victorious veterans ; his command of large and beautiful similes enables him to launch them at the most vulnerable part of an opponent. Reason itself becomes prisoner to the force of illustration culled from all quarters and all branches of learning, and neither surprise nor doubt is felt at the conclusions reached. Nothing leads us to discover that the victory has been gained as much by what was left unnoticed as by what was proved. That, in fact, the gifted author is a partisan of partisans. In his descriptions of Ireland there is nothing in itself improbable. Granting that the poverty and condition of the country were as his authorities allege, they were not so for the reasons he gives alone. Had equal prominence been given to the fact that for nearly one hundred years previous to the Revolution, Ireland had been the theatre of a warfare compared with which the Thirty or Seventy Years' Wars resembled campaigns between mediæval Italian States, the backwardness and poverty of country and people would have been attributed to the right causes, and not, as now, quoted in proof that Irishmen were incapable, not alone of self-government, but even civilization.

Turning to the other offender, Mr. Froude, it is doubtful whether, despite his brilliancy of style, learning, and industry, his religious experiences did not unfit him to give an impartial description of the people now notorious for devotion to the tenets and professors of Roman Catholicism. To many readers his history appears to have been conceived and written solely in glorification of the English Reformation, a motive and treatment which at once puts him out of court as far as the Irish are concerned.

Modern histories dealing with the Elizabethan period, by Irishmen, are numerous enough. In literary-power and ability they are generally inferior to those of the other side, and the majority of them labour under the disadvantage of inability to separate the religious from purely mundane matters. In the critical faculty necessary to an historian, scholarship and style, the late Mr. Lecky furnishes a notable exception to this generalisation, and is worthy of comparison with any English writer. Unfortunately for the educative effect of his historical works, many of his countrymen entertain an idea that the former atmosphere of Trinity College, and too great reliance upon hostile authorities, have resulted in their perpetuating some of the erroneous conclusions writers of other nationalities have been instrumental in circulating.

One of the best, from the national point of view, summaries of Irish histories, but little known in England, is from the pen of O'Connell the Liberator. Dedicated to the late Queen, it contains nothing to which exception can be taken. The form certainly is unusual, and was, no doubt, selected with professional instinct as that in which the most telling advocacy could be brought to bear, in a very strong case, against the misgovernment of which O'Connell was so consistent a denouncer.

Unfortunately for Ireland, she has never numbered amongst her sons a writer combining Sir Walter Scott's scholarly knowledge of former times with his delightful power of story-telling. Nor has she, until very lately, been distinguished by the appreciation of Royalty. Had such been her good fortune, Elizabethan Irishmen might now be the lay figures round which a mighty pen had woven romances illustrating the tragedy and pathos inseparable from the imposition of a different civilization, laws, and religion, on a people accustomed for centuries to a code of laws, a faith, and society, primitive though not barbaric, eminently suitable to their country, mode of thought, and environment.

In the chapter on English policy the wholesale confiscations and spoliations of landed estates have been considered the keynote. Should any reader be inclined to doubt either cause or effect, a knowledge of the career of the great Earl of Cork (differing only in the magnitude of his acquisitions from scores of other English officials) will afford matter for hesitation, if no more. Morally indefensible

but politically expedient as was the policy of Queen Elizabeth's officials, after an interval of 300 years the Ministers of another English Sovereign have practically reversed it. The land is again being vested in the class from which it was originally taken, with the difference that the chiefs and nobles formerly personifying the State are now represented by the State itself.

THE COUNTRY.

PHYSICAL ASPECT.—Though from whatever direction Ireland is approached it presents a mountainous aspect, ranges of hills intersecting it on all sides, in reality the greater part of the country is an immense shallow basin with the mountains for a rim. On the east coast—that nearest to Europe—this hilly margin approaches the coast line. A natural feature which has proved of considerable importance in the history of the country, for all authenticated or recent invasions of any permanency, having started from that direction and secured a footing, were able to descend into the plains of the midlands at will.

Formerly these natural barriers, as well as the hill features away from the coast, were large and dreary highlands, boggy in character, of purple colour and wild appearance, assisting, with the heather-covered hills of the north and west coasts, to contribute to the diversified picturesqueness of the landscape, but furnishing little to the comfort of the dwellers on them.

A large and low watershed forms the central portion of the Island. From this numerous rivers and streams derive their source, and gain volume from the boggy hills, through gaps in which they find their way to the coasts. Prior to the seventeenth century the winter rains converted many of these streams into raging torrents, overflowing their erstwhile banks, and forming extensive lakes, large bogs, and morasses with great patches of rushes and long grass.

The frequent repetition of the Irish word for oak in place names, as in Derry, etc., and the reduced beds of most rivers, indicates in quite recent times much larger areas of forest than now exist. As late as the sixteenth century, several forests of enormous extent still remained intact. One large rectangular shaped wood covered the whole country between Limerick and Mallow in one direction, and Tipperary in the other. In the midlands the great forest of Devlin had not entirely disappeared, and Dublin was fringed with extensive woods. Others stretched from the east coasts across to Connemara. In Leix (Queen's County) a pass three miles long divided a forest of great timber mingled with hazel. Connaught and Ulster were covered with thick woods also. In all of them, mighty oaks with wide spreading boughs and gnarled trunks, reared their heads from amidst thick furze and bracken, and, with numbers of gigantic ash, alders, yews, and hollies, the latter, from their size, claiming to be forest trees, forbade access or rendered movement in any direction, except to those acquainted with the concealed paths, almost impossible. Wolves, wild hogs, red deer, and foxes roamed these forests, obtaining shelter and breeding grounds in the dense undergrowth and thickets, where the ground was always moist, and the noxious miasma exhaling from it effectually prevented the inroads of the natural enemy, man.

Distinctive and numerous as these wooded areas were, the presence of water in the large lakes, copious rivers, and streams meandering in many cases through extensive bogs, was an equally marked feature. Bogs also, whether in the low-lying ground or on the summits of the smaller hills, were equally noticeable. Ulster was said to contain six large specimens, while Connaught, between woods and bogs, was so impassable, that before Elizabeth's time it had not, to any extent, come under English rule. Other districts were but little inferior in both bogs and morasses. So much so that in the first attempt at land legislation they were, until improved, specially exempted from any taxation.

Many of these water-logged areas having been drained their place names now alone remain to prove their former existence. But in this, as in many other instances, it is still possible, from the preservation in MS. records as late as the seventeenth century of the old custom of deriving topographical nomenclature from physical and other features, to reconstruct the whole surface of the country.

Three hundred years ago, as a basis for taxation, it was computed there were more than ten million English acres of presumably cultivable land. In a recent official return, from a total of twenty million acres, fifteen million are similarly described. Assuming the areas from which these calculations were

made to be the same, it follows, that whereas half the total area formerly was wood, bog, barren mountain land, or water, now the proportion is but one-fourth.

In its entirety a land truly, though paradoxically, described as one of wood and water : where the sough of wind through trees, and sound of many waters, was seldom absent.

Beyond the well-wooded eastern and midland districts the country presented a more open appearance. On the islets of Carbery and the West, as on the rugged stony hillocks of the northern coast, there were fewer woods, deep yellow furze taking their place. But on all alike, mainland and islands, hills and plains, interspersed between marsh and bog, forest and furze, immense areas of rich pasture lands—waste deserts full of grass—silent evidences of nature's bounty, afforded ample sustenance to numerous herds of black cattle and swine, flocks of sheep and goats, and troops of the native horse.

Though not enclosed to the present extent, the large fields were variously fenced with ditches and banks, stakes intertwined with twigs or withes, thorn hedges, or rudely built stone walls. Too often, neglect or intentional destruction by removing all pretence from these fences of their original functions, whether as shelter for the domesticated animals, or bounds to their wandering, gave the land an unkempt appearance.

Indications of agriculture, husbandry, and fruit cultivation were to be seen on all sides. Faint in some places, varied in others by large tracts of desolate moor and upland, on which nature assiduously strove to remove all traces of man's destructive handiwork. As the century passed, all appearance of cultivation in the Irish districts practically disappeared, except in the neighbourhood of the walled towns and places dominated by the castles of nobles or chiefs. In the debatable land, neglected fields and meadows denoted English attempts at occupation long before the newly-built fort or garrisoned castle was perceived.

Wanting the red appearance of the newly-ploughed fields, or the yellow tinge of harvest time, the greater portion appeared dark and rugged, the prevailing sombreness relieved only by the radiance of lakes and streams. The exception was the Pale, or English territory, and that principally from contrast with the war-desolated lands fringing it. Later, this, too, lost the tilled and wealthy appearance Lord Deputy Sidney wrote in commendation of.

On the borders of the Pale the tops of the highest accessible hills were crowned with beacon fires, while through the length and breadth of the Irish districts other hill-tops, in the heaps of stones marking the electing places of Tanists and the Brehons' judgment seats, proclaimed the existence of an antagonistic state of society, rendering the beacon fires a very necessary precaution. Suggestive also were the crannogs, or lake dwellings, still existing on most of the lakes, conferring freedom from surprise by removing the wooden bridge connecting the crannog with the mainland, or, in other cases, by keeping all the boats on them.

Beyond the English districts were still evident the ruins of numerous raths or native forts, clusters of small stone cells (the primitive monastic establishments), and beehive-shaped huts, once the habitations of the churls, but now abandoned to herdsmen and their flocks or utilised as lurking places by troops of depredators and outlaws. Some of these ruins betrayed the hand of time ; others, in charred wood, blackened stone, and human skeletons, that of man ; but all, in common with ruined churches, devastated homesteads, and neglected fields, bearing mute testimony to the unsettled state of the times.

Ancient teampuls, shrines, and beautiful stone crosses, highly ornamented with the symbols of our faith and eternity, and as yet undefaced by the hands of mistaken zealots, were numerous in all parts, but especially north of the Pale. Equally suggestive of a long since forgotten faith were the round towers, then existing to the number of about 140. They appear to have been accepted without comment or curiosity, seldom exciting remark.

Towns, other than the mere collection of houses or farm buildings and out-offices usually dignified by that name, were less in number than at present. The largest and most important appeared, walled and guarded, isolated and solitary, like oases of English security in an ever encroaching desert of native unrest. Between them there were no large communities. Villages, in the English sense, did not

exist. Occasionally at cross-roads or places of resort, so-styled houses of entertainment of the very poorest material and construction were to be seen, but isolated dwellings and homesteads, except of the humblest description, became during the last quarter of the century rather the exception than the rule. Occasionally, also, round a sacred well or famous shrine, groups of houses, or rather cabins, had sprung up. These cabins, generally circular in shape, were constructed either of wicker-work (the interstices filled in with earth and moss and protected on the weather-side by rude boardings) or else of undressed stones laid vertically and tapered to a conical-topped roof of bracken and sods, the latter possessing the great advantage of security against fire.

Scattered over the country, approached by rude roads through bogs, or hidden in the recesses of woods, were the smaller castellated towers and houses of the inferior chiefs, and old and new Irish gentry.

Notwithstanding Ireland is essentially a stone country, and quantities of lime and other stones abound, the use of this material for building was not, for various reasons, general throughout the country in former times. Structures adapted to religious purposes and the castles of chiefs and nobles were almost the only exceptions to the employment of wood. Of the former—comprising cathedrals, churches, monasteries, and other conventual establishments—there was an immense number, many of them owing their erection to native chiefs, others to the Norman-Gaelic nobles. Judging from the ruins now or lately to be seen, and the descriptions by 16th century writers of those they knew, whether as ruins or in use, there can be no question that in beauty of design and workmanship they were worthy of their sacred character.

Exceeding the ecclesiastical buildings in number and size, and superior to them in actual importance, the castles and fortified houses of chiefs and nobles were the most prominent features of the country districts. Squatting grim and forbidding, on eminences commanding roads, fords, and landing places, they were land marks of serious import to friend and foe alike. Islands in rivers or arms of the sea were frequently utilised to locate castles on, many of those playing a part in Elizabethan warfare being constructed in these situations. Others, again, were built athwart a river. In the County Cork alone there were said to be one hundred and sixty castles of various descriptions ; and in other counties, especially the western ones, the relative numbers were not less.

In close proximity to the castles of superior chiefs would be found the long wooden dwellings of the classes dependent upon, and deriving their importance from, the chief families ; clusters of cabins tenanted by the lower orders surrounding these again.

COMMUNICATIONS.—As was only to be expected in a country such as we have described, the roads were usually neither numerous nor good. With the exception of the ancient main roads converging upon Tara, those existing appeared to have been constructed less with a view to facilitate intercourse than to confine traffic to certain defined routes which were easily and usually commanded and overlooked. The tortuous character of the native roads was probably due, in addition to this consideration, to the necessity for avoiding boggy ground ; whilst the disrepair and impassability so often said to be characteristic of them, originated in the conflict of laws and customs that restricted the enforcement of native methods of maintenance, without providing adequate means to perform the duties they had hitherto sufficed for.

The almost impassable nature of the country through the absence or inferior quality of roads, and the number and extent of woods and bogs, may be surmised from the constant repetition of orders to military and other officers to impress the common people for the purpose of constructing or maintaining toghers or causeways, roads, and passes, in districts lately acquired, or where military operations were contemplated. As a rule the opening out of the country by these means, and the erection of forts, was the first care of the English when a district came under their control.

Bridges were far from numerous, and, as a rule, of indifferent stability, constructed of timber, wattle, and gravel, needing daily repair ; or, merely planks removable at will ; the few stone structures there were being of comparatively recent introduction. The prevailing insecurity of the bridges led to the authorities granting lands to provide for the erection and maintenance of more stable and permanent structures.

Whether correctly or not, the Irish were believed to entertain an objection to bridges ; much preferring fords or ferries. An objection accounted for by the freedom from observation or pursuit the absence of defined routes ensured marauding parties. To combat these practices and the native objections, one Elizabethan official suggested the destruction of all fords, thereby confining every description of traffic to bridges and ferries ; the latter being generally maintained where small towns or religious establishments bordered a river.

CLIMATE. —There is no question, that in physical aspect and climate Ireland has changed to a greater extent within the last three hundred years than the sister countries. The continuous and extensive disforestation, draining water areas, arterial drainage, and the change in agricultural methods, by contributing to lessen the general humidity and consequent evaporation, have all assisted to effect this change. The summers appear to have become warmer and drier, and the winters less subject to pro-longed frosts.

In the opinion of those foreigners who concerned themselves with the country between the Norman invasion and the Stuart period, the climate was so temperate that infectious fogs or pestilential winds were unknown. —A flattering estimate, incapable of reconciliation with references to constantly recurring plagues and pestilences, unless these visitations were imported and confined to the towns and their vicinities. Nor does it agree with the recorded opinions of military men, necessarily more observant of weather than others. During the Earl of Essex's campaign, the climate was described as the enemy's friend, one that never failed them ! and it was customary to attribute to the malignity of it the diseases from which the English suffered when campaigning. Certainly, if the wearisome succession of wet and foul seasons, rains and bad weather, recorded by writers of the period was normal, they had some grounds for complaining of the climate.

The mortality usual amongst the English soldiers in Ireland was certainly excessive, but that it was due to climatic causes alone is more than doubtful. More probably the unaccustomed mode of living necessitated by the occupation of deep woods was the cause of it. Whatever the cause, and despite the humidity complained of, the climate was admittedly favourable to the natives and acclimatised foreigners, and to animal growth and vegetation.

PRODUCTS.—Before the Elizabethan wars, in addition to quantities of game, fowl, and fish, the whole country abounded in cattle, horses, and swine. Sheep and goats were relatively less numerous, whilst the omission of references to the ass or donkey, now so common a feature in country life, is particularly noticeable. Wool, hides, tallow, honey, and fruit were in general use, and plentiful enough to leave a surplus for exportation. Corn and other cereals were cultivated and also exported, and in the south and west a considerable quantity of fish was annually bartered for wines. Traffic in corn, particularly, was of considerable value.

That about the period of Queen Elizabeth's accession Ireland was fairly prosperous there is not a shadow of doubt. Spenser—who certainly had no reason to love the country—described it as most rich and plentiful, full of corn and cattle. Hollinshed, likewise, about the same period, that is before the wars, considered the Island populous, well inhabited, and rich, with plenty of corn and cattle. By Camden, Leitrim was said to contain one hundred and twenty thousand head of cattle, a prodigious number.

Departing from the usual stereotyped sources of information on this point, we are able to form a truer estimate of the economic condition of the country from similar incidents to the following.

Sir Fineen O'Driscoll, an Elizabethan Knight, supplied from his castle at Cape Clear all the provisions a fleet of English warships required for some time. On the arrival of the first Earl of Essex in the north, Sir Brian MacPhelim presented him with a herd of ten thousand cattle. A right royal present truly, indicating no scarcity of beeves. Among other proofs of fertility and plenitude, in districts un-affected by the war, we find the five Midland counties, in addition to ordinary requirements, were able to provision the royalist forces throughout the country. And towards the end of the century, English soldiers in some districts were receiving half victuals and half money in lieu of rations, so as in a measure to compensate for their depreciated pay.

The prosperous condition of the whole province of Munster was attributed to its numerous cities and walled towns, commodiousness of its harbours, and fruitfulness of the land ; and, in the case of part of Kerry, to its being furthest from English interference !

Making due allowance for the relative value of money, and its scarcity with the Irish, cheapness of food is undoubtedly a symptom, if not a proof, of abundant supplies. In the Irish camp at Connello a calf sold for sixpence, and a hog for a shilling. Prior to this the prices at which provisions for the troops and the Lord Deputy were taken under the cess throughout the country, were from two to three hundred per cent, less than the prices fixed by statute in England during the early part of Henry VIII.'s reign. And, although these prices were alleged to be greatly under the market ones, there does not ap-pear to have been any difficulty in obtaining the necessary quantities.

Not without reason did the author of the *Pacata Hibernia* complain that towards the close of the war the country was exhausted of men and victuals. The amount of "prey" claimed to have been captured by the royalists alone was in itself sufficient to have impoverished the best stocked country in Europe.

CHANGES.—With the introduction of the "Undertakers"[2]—virtually another, though slightly more peaceful, invasion—an approximation to English life and conditions set in. Embryo villages and towns were springing up. Homesteads and farm buildings were being planned, and individual efforts at farming cautiously attempted. At the same time, improved communications to facilitate the passage of troops were being utilised for trading purposes, and other indications of a progressive and less primitive civilization were common through-out the land. Tokens, unfortunately, again swept away or desolated in the great convulsion of the last decade of the century.

More potential than all these changes and transformations was the new factor in the national life then making its first appearance. In the summer, embellishing the fields with its strong green leaves and pretty flower ; in the autumn, the personification of decay, converting them into charnel houses of vegetation ; the potato plant was spreading all over the country.

In the nomenclature of districts, and formations of counties, changes had been effected also. The ancient names and bounds either disappearing or undergoing mutilation from time or new conditions. Offally and Leix Countries had become, in compliment to Queen Mary and her Consort King Philip, King's and Queen's Counties. The capital towns, Dingen, and Campaw or Porteloise, becoming Philipstown and Maryborough respectively. Curiously enough, long after both sovereigns had ceased to reign these towns were still known officially by their old names. Catherlogh or Carlagh became Carlow ; Annaly, Longford ; and Eastern Breffny, Cavan. The County of Uriel was beginning to be known as Louth and Monaghan, while the designation of Thomond was giving way to that of Clare. Meath had been subdivided, the part that with Louth was in the Pale retaining the old name, the remainder forming Westmeath. Waterford still occasionally appeared as Power's County, and Wicklow as O'Byrne's.

The shiring, as it was termed, of Munster, begun by Sir John Perrott, had not been generally adopted. Parts of West Cork and South Kerry were still known as Desmond or South Munster. Connaught and Ulster, until this period considered single Counties, were, on paper, divided as at present, by Sir Henry Sidney. This shiring, with other official acts of nomenclature equally illusory, had no foundation in reality. Much of it represented what the officials would have done had their power equalled their intentions. For all the effect it had upon the great Northern chiefs, and the countries concerned at the time, the Queen's servants might as well have shired the land in the mythical Atlantis.

[1] Leland.

[2] English Colonists.

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