

The hardihood of clan-Cas
The Story
Of
An Irish Sept
Their Character and Struggle
To Maintain Their Lands
In Clare

By

A Member Of The Sept.

[1896]

Slave-dealers given a free hand in Ireland, A.D., 1654—Cromwell orders Irish girls and boys to be captured and sent to Jamaica—Case of O’Carroll at Rathfolan—Charles II. receives a loan from Col. Macnamara—The King’s letter of acknowledgment—He cannot restore the Macnamaras to their estates—Teigie, son of Daniel Macnamara, of Rathfolan, subsequently of Ballinacragga, Burren—James II. in Ireland, A.D. 1689, his Parliament and Acts—Repeal of Act of Settlement—Macnamara appointed lieutenant of county, another high sheriff, and three others assessors of land revenue for co. Clare—Regiment of Clare or Yellow Dragoons : officers. Col. J. Macnamara and eight others of the same family—Battle of Lismarkea—Of the Boyne—Dragoons return to Clare under Col. Macnamara—Teigie holds Clare Castle—Confiscation of Lord Clare’s estates—His will—Many members of the Macnamara family pass over to the Continent—The Clare brigade in France—Vice-Admiral Macnamara—The King of France creates Henry Macnamara a Count—The order giving the king’s reasons for granting this honour—Treaty of limerick—The Penal Code created and enforced against Roman Catholics in Ireland—Due to rapacity of English, officials and merchants, who cared less for the religion than the lands of the Irish—Exportation of cattle prohibited from Ireland—The wool trade of Ireland suppressed, and all other agricultural produce, because it interfered with the interest of Englishmen—Condition of lower classes in Ireland—The middleman—The upper classes at the end of seventeenth century, and commencement of eighteenth century—Degradation of some of the members of the Macnamara sept

In consequence of the confiscation of their lands, and the coercive measures of 1654, some forty thousand young Irishmen left their country and entered the military service of France, Spain, and Italy. At the same time, English slave dealers were given a free hand in Ireland, and a number of boys and girls shipped to Barbadoes, and sold to the planters. [1] As many as 6400 men, women, and children were sold in Barbadoes by one firm of Bristol merchants. During the year 1655 England added Jamaica to her possessions, and the Lord Protector applied to Lord H. Cromwell, then commanding in Ireland, to secure one thousand “ Irish wenches” for the new possessions. Lord H. Cromwell, in reply, stated that there was no difficulty in executing this order, only “ force would be required to take them,” and Cromwell adds “ that in addition to the 1000 young women, 1500 boys of from twelve to fifteen years of age should be included, for,” he observes, “ they can be well spared, and might be made Christians.” This number of girls and boys were captured in Clare and Galway, and exported to the West Indies in October 1655. [2]

It was in connection with this proceeding that the rumours arose which are referred to by the Rev. P. White in his “ History of Clare” (p. 205). A daughter of Daniel Macnamara, of Rathfolan, had married a young Captain O’Carroll, and it is reported that in an attempt to rescue some of the poor

creatures who had been seized by Cromwell's soldiers, O'Carroll, having killed two of these Englishmen near Rathfolan, was himself shot dead. His young wife is said to have been seized, together with her little boy, and exported to Jamaica ; the lad, in after-years, passed over to America, and subsequently be-came a person of note in Virginia.

On the restoration of Charles II. the hopes of many an Irish family rose high, for most of them had loyally supported his father; but they were doomed to disappointment, for the king could not be troubled with Irish grievances, but he appointed a commission to inquire into their claims. Mr. Frost has given us an abstract of most of the work done by this commission, so far as their investigations in Clare extended. [3] The Crown benefited largely by the confiscations ; thus Charles II. bestowed no less than one hundred and seventy thousand acres of these lands on his brother James. [4] About two-thirds of the best lands in Ireland in 1641, which had belonged to Roman Catholics, in A.D. 1651 were made over to Protestants, most of them either Englishmen or Scotchmen. It seems that the commissioners appointed by Charles did their work in a very perfunctory manner, and three thousand cases were dismissed because there was not sufficient time to inquire into their merits. [5] But the slight amount of concessions made to the old landowners of the country produced intense excitement, and disaffection among the English and Scotch adventurers ; so much was this the case,, that Pepys, in his Diary, informs us that " a plot was discovered in the north of Ireland among the Presbyters and others to secure Dublin Castle and other places, and they debauched a good part of the army there, promising them ready money."

Some few of the Macnamaras managed to recover portions of their ancestral estates ; for instance, Colonel J. Macnamara, of Cratloe, in a petition to King Charles, proved that his grandfather was possessed of large estates, and that when in exile he (Colonel Macnamara) was well known to his Majesty. We learn from the following document, the original of which is in possession of Mr. John Macnamara, together with a piece of the king's hair, presented by Charles II. to Colonel Macnamara when he was in Paris during the year 1654. This document runs as follows :

" I thank you for the affection you showed in making me your debtor, one hundred pounds, and do assure you that when my condition shall change I shall not fail to requite you.

" Witness my hand and seal this 25 day of March 1654.

[Seal]

CHARLES REX."

In spite of this assurance, but little could be done for Colonel Macnamara. The greater part of his lands had been made over to Peter Creagh, an Englishman, so detested by the Irish that he had to be provided with a considerable part of the Cratloe property, because it was situated not far distant from the garrison of Limerick. [6] In spite, however, of the loss of most of his estates, J. Macnamara was elected a Member of Parliament for his county in 1689 ; he was also appointed High Sheriff of Clare. A relation of his, Florence Macnamara, of Dromad, was Member of Parliament for Ennis. [7] Some other members of the sept also secured portions of their former estates, as, for instance, J. Macnamara, of Creeragh ; Colonel Daniel ; and John, of Moyriesk. Teigie Macnamara, the eldest son of Daniel, of Rathfolan, was a distinguished officer in James II.'s army. Under the stipulations of the treaty of Limerick, he held the remnant of his father's property in lower Bunratty ; but having mortgaged these lands to Sir D. O'Brien, under failure of redemption, the mortgage was foreclosed, and the last ancient property of Rathfolan passed from the Macnamaras into other hands (A.D. 1703). The castle, which had only been completed by Daniel Macnamara's father, is now a complete ruin. [8] After parting with the remainder of his former estates, Teigie Macnara went to live at Smithstown, Burren, not far from Ballinacraggay where his father had settled some years previously. [9]

James II. appointed Tyrconnel as Lord Deputy of Ireland ; he was a Roman Catholic, and devoted to the king's policy. At the time of James' accession, the Irish army numbered some six or seven thousand men, all of them being Protestants. Tyrconnel, under the reserve or short service system of that period, increased the fighting men in Ireland to forty thousand, all of them being Roman Catholics, most of them descended from the old Celtic landowners. The Lord Deputy then dismissed all Protestants from the army ; he took the clothing of some four thousand of them, and sent them almost naked to gain a living as best they could. The disbanded Protestant officers, to the number of

three hundred, mostly went to Holland, and appeared in the ranks of William's army at the Battle of the Boyne, and at Aughrim. [10]

King James landed in Ireland in March 1689, and on his arrival in Dublin issued a proclamation, requiring his absentee subjects to return to Ireland. He expressed his determination to suppress any civil disturbance in the country, and to grant religious freedom. Lastly, he summoned a Parliament to meet at Dublin on the 7th of May. The Irish had never abandoned the hope of obtaining a repeal or mitigation of the Acts of Settlement and Explanation ; as late as 1686 they had sent agents over to England to seek the repeal of these Acts ; but these agents were attacked by the London mob, and were glad to make their escape back to Ireland.

The Dublin Parliament of 1689, from an historical point of view, is of the greatest interest, but unfortunately the official transactions and Acts were ordered to be burnt by William Prince of Orange, and it was not until 1740 the Bills passed by this Parliament were reprinted. This Parliament was presided over by its legitimate king, and its members were freely elected by the inhabitants of the country. The members of the Upper House were the descendants of some of the former Celtic chiefs of provinces and tribes, the O'Briens, and so on, together with the heirs of Anglo-Norman noblemen, such as the Burkes, Butlers, and many others. The Commons contained representatives of the old septs ; for instance, of the four members elected by county Clare, and its borough (Ennis), two were Macnamaras. Many of the members of this Parliament, who then possessed the power to legislate for the country, had five-and-twenty years before lost by far the greater part of their estates under Cromwell's Act, and one of the first measures brought before the Dublin Parliament was the repeal of the Act of Settlement, which legalised the confiscations made by Cromwell and his officers.

Under Act 4, of James II.'s Parliament, it was settled that all persons entitled to any lands or whose ancestors possessed such lands on the 2nd October 1641, shall and may take action for recovering the same. Commissioners were appointed to determine the claims, and have power to award injunctions for patting such persons as shall appear to them to have established their claims in possession of such lands. The former proprietors were thus to be restored to their ancestral property ; and " honest purchasers of lands under the Acts of Settlements" were to be compensated for the loss of their lands, from the lands held by persons in rebellion against their lawful Sovereign (James II.) since the 1st of August 1688 ; the commissioners were to allot and distribute such reprisals. If a purchaser had obtained lands in the province of Connaught, including county Clare, [11] other lands were to be provided from the estates of forfeited lands or otherwise. Tenants were not to be disturbed in their holdings by the change in the owners of their lands, unless in the case of the mansion-house of the old proprietor or his heirs and the demesne belonging thereto. The blot in this Act was that no provision was made for the families of these adventurers, who having been for twenty five or thirty years in possession, and residing on the estates they had purchased, had rights to citizenship.

Another Act of this Parliament was " The Act of Attainder," which, as Mr. Davis observes, must be condemned ; most of the persons attainted, and they formed a long list, were in arms against James II. Nevertheless, this Bill was on all fours with an Act introduced into the English House of Commons on the 10th June 1689, " to attain of high treason certain persons who are now in Ireland or any other parts beyond the seas, adhering to their Majesties enemies, and shall not return into England by a certain day." The Bill introduced into the Dublin Parliament stated that the rebellion had broken out in the north of Ireland to dethrone their legitimate king, and bring in the Prince of Orange, and that full pardon having been offered and refused by the insurgents, they were attainted of high treason, and to suffer its penalties unless before the 10th August they came and stood their trial ; their number amounted to 1270 individuals. By a second clause of this Bill, attainted persons who absented themselves from Ireland before or since the 5th November 1688, were to have all their goods and property confiscated.

Act 12 was an act for liberty of conscience and the representing of all acts inconsistent with the same. Acts 13 and 15 provided payment of tithes by Protestants to the Protestant Church, and by Catholics to the Catholic Church. But it is beyond my purpose to enumerate the thirty and more important Acts which were passed by the Irish Parliament of 1789-90.

There is one Act, however, we must notice, and that is Act III., in which it is laid down that —

Ireland is and hath been always a distinct kingdom from that of His Majesty's Realm of England, always governed by his Majesty and his predecessors, according to the ancient customs, laws and statutes thereof No act passed in any Parliament held in England were ever binding in Ireland, excepting such of them as by Act of Parliament passed in this kingdom were made into laws in Ireland.

It is necessary to bear this Act in mind, for it was the first expression of the opinion of the land-owners of Ireland on this important question ; influenced no doubt by Molyneux, who was about this time an active Dublin politician. The more carefully we study the Acts passed by James in the Dublin Parliament of 1689, the clearer it becomes that its members, most of them Roman Catholics and the direct descendants of the old landowners of Ireland, worked loyally, and strove to secure the rights of property and to do justice to all classes of society. The gentlemen comprising this Parliament were, however, no mere party politicians ; many of them were officers in local regiments, such as Colonel J. Macnamara, who subsequently raised and commanded the Clare (Yellow) Dragoons.

It was necessary for Parliament to secure ways and means by which King James might be enabled to support his position, and for this purpose it was determined that a land tax should be imposed ; and a Bill was accordingly brought into the Irish landlord's Parliament ; in the preamble of this Bill it was stated that, " as it would be hard on tenants to bear any proportion of this tax, considering that it is difficult for them to pay rent," it was therefore enacted that in all cases where a tenant paid a full value for his lands, that he should be allowed to retain from his rent the whole amount of the tax charged on his holding. If, however, the tenant paid half or less than half, the value of the land which he held, then, and then only, was he to be called upon to pay one-half of the tax, so that the tenant in all rack-rented farms, or in fact in any holding in which he paid anything above the half value of the land in rent, was not to be called upon to pay any land-tax. It was hardly possible to have devised better terms for tenants than those enacted by the Irish Parliament of 1689. Three of the Macnamaras were appointed assessors under this Act for their county. The members of the sept had been broken and brought very low in the world, as compared with their position up to 1654 ; but, though poor, their countrymen still respected and trusted them as their representatives in Parliament, and to act without appeal as land commissioners for their county. King James appointed Florence Macnamara Deputy-Lieutenant of co Clare, and John Macnamara of Cratloe, High Sheriff for the year 1689. [12]

A regiment of horse was raised, and also a regiment of infantry in Clare, for service under James II. Among the list of cavalry officers we find the names Colonel J. Macnamara (commanding), also Captain Fineen and a second John Macnamara. In the infantry were the names of Captains Donogh, and Teigie, and also Lieutenants John and Daniel Macnamara. These regiments were enlisted during the spring of 1689, and in July of the same year they were called upon to take the field and fight against Dutch and English soldiers, who had served in military operations on the Continent. Neither officers nor men of the Irish levies had the slightest knowledge of drill or the use of firearms ; they were raw recruits drawn from agricultural pursuits, and utterly unfit to fight on equal terms with veteran soldiers. But such as they were, the Clare, among other levies, were directed in July 1689 to join Lord Mountcashel's troops, and attempt to drive the English out of the north of Ireland. On July 30, a portion of these raw levies arrived within ten miles of Enniskillen, the force in that town being under the command of Colonel Wolseley, who sent Colonel Berry with a detachment of troops to watch the movements of the Irish army. Colonel Berry came unexpectedly on a large body of Irish Dragoons and infantry, he retired therefore towards a place called Lismarkea, sending off an express to Wolseley for reinforcements. Berry's road led him across a narrow causeway over a bog, at the further side of which was a quantity of thick brushwood ; here he drew up his forces, covering his men in the bushes to await the approach of the enemy, who were under the command of Colonel Hamilton. As the Irish advanced over the narrow causeway Hamilton and his second in command were shot down by Berry's men, and as a number of the Irish fell they retreated from their position and fell back on the advance guard of their army ; this movement on the part of the Irish was effected about nine o'clock in the morning. At eleven a.m. Colonel Wolseley arrived on the scene accompanied by a considerable force of cavalry and infantry. The Irish took up a strong position on the side of steep wooded hills, through which the road passed to Newtown Butler, in front of them was a bog crossed by a causeway which was defended by the artillery of the Irish army. Colonel Wolseley di-

vided his troops into three bodies, one being ordered to pass over the causeway, and the others to the right and left were to make their way across the bog ; this movement was effected with all the dash and steadiness of well-trained English troops in face of the enemy's fire. The Irish cannon were captured, the commander of their cavalry and several other officers were killed, and the Irish Dragoons then turned their horses homewards and galloped off the field of battle ; the infantry followed their example, but were pursued by the English horse, and the greater number of them were cut to pieces or drowned in attempting to cross a lake. [13]

In the following year we again hear of the Clare Dragoons, at the Battle of the Boyne. It is not easy to follow this action, or to make out its details clearly ; of one thing we may be certain, and that is, that William of Orange's force was thirty-six thousand strong, those of the combined Irish and French troops numbered only twenty-six thousand, of these six thousand were Frenchmen. [14] But what is more important, the English army included the pick of William's veterans, whereas, with the exception of the French, the Irish army was constituted of troops such as those before referred to. It is beyond my province to attempt at length to describe the details of the Battle of the Boyne, in which not a few of the Macnamaras were engaged, and Teigie, for one, seems to have distinguished himself.

On the 1st of July, 1690, the Prince of Orange at daybreak detached a strong force, consisting of the right wing of his army, to cross the Boyne some miles above the position taken up by James II.'s army, and if possible by a flank movement to occupy the king's left wing, and also the road to Dublin. O'Neil's cavalry did good work on the part of the Irish, and for some time he prevented the English troops from crossing the river ; but O'Neil ultimately fell back and retired towards the main body of the Irish army. They were followed by the English, who, after advancing over very rough ground, found themselves brought to a stand by a bog which intervened between them and the left wing of the Irish. O'Neil's troops crossed the bog over a narrow passage, but it was impossible for the English to follow in the face of a strong opposing force. It would appear that James II. was to some extent ignorant of the ground to the left of his position, and he put himself therefore, at the head of his French troops to oppose the advancing right wing of the English, which, as above stated had already crossed the Boyne some distance above the position occupied by the centre and left wing of die Prince of Orange's army. James II. having, like the English, arrived at the confines of the bog I have referred to, also came to a halt. After a time it would seem that the commanding officer of the English troops thought, as he could not advance, he had better retire, and this movement had an important bearing on the Battle of the Boyne ; for James imagined, when he saw his opponents leaving their position on the other side of the bog, that they intended to occupy the road to Dublin, and so cut off his retreat on that dty, and this he dreaded extremely.

While William's right wing and James' left were watching one another hard fighting had been going on between the centres, and right wings of the English and Irish armies. The old and famous soldier, Duke of Schomberg, commanded William's centre, and after a desperate fight managed to effect a landing on the opposite bank of the Boyne, in the face of the Irish centre. No sooner, however, had the Duke advanced from the river than his men were repeatedly charged by the Irish cavalry : the fighting between them and the Dutch infantry was very severe ; we are told the Irish charged down on the English and Dutch no less than eleven times. Duke Schomberg was killed, and his men at length fell back and commenced to recross the river. In the meantime William had well-nigh lost his life while fording the Boyne at the head of the left wing of his army. After hard fighting he succeeded in forcing back the Irish right ; they retired in perfect order ; and had they and the centre at this critical moment of the battle been supported by King James with his French allies, the English must have been driven across the Boyne. In place of this, James, fearing that his communication with Dublin was imperilled, marched from the field of battle to Dublin. The Irish were directed to follow and cover the king's retreat ; and this they did with unbroken ranks. But victory remained with the English, and James II. fled from Ireland a few days after the battle. In a memorandum, written subsequently to his arrival in France, the king stated that Lord Dungan, commanding the dragoons, was killed in one of the charges of cavalry at the Battle of the Boyne, after which this regiment could not again be brought to the charge ; and he adds, " Clare's did not do much better." The king, however, describes " the right wing of horse and the Dragoons" advancing with undaunted bravery, and charging William's centre again and again, " evincing a gallantry and determination which would have

done honour to the finest cavalry in Europe.” And this they subsequently proved themselves to be, for when they had passed over to the service of France they covered themselves with glory in many a hard-fought battle. Lauzun, describing the Irish soldiers two months after the Battle of the Boyne, states that they were the finest to be seen anywhere. [15]

Mr. Standish H. O’Grady has kindly brought to my notice an address, written in Gaelic soon after the Battle of the Boyne, by Andrew Mac-Curtin, to Teigie Macnamara. [16] Mr. O’Grady has not only given me a translation of this address but also leave to publish it ; he is of opinion that the Epilogue contains a key to the name of Teigie’s opponent at the Battle of the Boyne, which was no doubt plain enough to contemporaries. The word rendered “ relic,” Mr. O’Grady states, means also “ an oath” (such being commonly sworn on some relic) ; also it signifies “ a diadem” or “ coronet” Evidently a man of mark therefore is referred to but not named by MacCurtin in the following address :

“ (1) Triumphant, O Teigie, hath thine expedition been ; an easy task it is to speak of thy people : such their qualities, their excellence, their action, their violence [exercised] to protect the army. (2) [In thy house] many a feast, wine and music, habitually are under way with accomplished men ; much old folk, many a simpleton pauper, at one time and another quietly slip into thy mansion. (3) Thou hast the hardihood of clan-Cas : not feeble thy performance in slaughter’s execution ; wisdom in copious measure thou hast, and art a hospitaller that never basely turned back [from his function]. (4) What time the two kings were about to engage, thou wert a witness : numerous as were thy foe-men, thine exploit at the Boyme was notorious. (5) . . . [this quatrain wanting in MS.] (6) Till hand to hand by thee he fell in the mid-carnage (’twas sternly done) ; nor weariness nor slackness assailed thee, but amidst a host thou dealtst death to him. (7) On Thomond’s expanse again, thou wert the one to unremittingly check treachery ; the rightful camp thou didst relieve, and hinder the pursuit (8) Alas that every mettled warrior [that every stout fellow] of the crew was not as he ; [had they been so, then] neither Calvin nor his [brood] this day had been in the place of God’s populations. (9) [The deed was done on] the second day of July in that year (no perishing indication ’tis) one thousand six hundred and bare ninety—that without silence [*i.e.* I proclaim aloud] was Christ’s age.

“ Epilogue.

“ Many as are [the other] good points to be told of Ranna’s hero [there is this too : that], in his valour no debility is discovered, and that ’tis coupled with abundant sapience ; moreover, that the relic which for a season in Ireland the English had maintained in power, by his arm’s vigour and his members’ lustiness he slew.”

In December 1689 a part of the Yellow Dragoons were sent into Clare to recruit, and Sir J. Butler, writing to the Sheriff of the county regarding the return of the regiment, stated, that to avoid a repetition of the complaints formerly made against the troopers, he directs Sir D. O’Brien to take notice that “ dragoons cannot hope to keep their horses in proper condition on hay alone. The men were to be allowed to purchase their own beef, mutton, and corn which the landlords must see they are supplied with at a reasonable rate.” [16] From this it would seem that the previously allied misconduct of the troopers arose from the difficulty they had experienced in procuring proper food, and shelter for themselves and their horses. In the following April Colonel J. Macnamara was employed under Lord Inchiquin to draw up a list of those landowners in Clare who could supply horses for the Government ; and he was directed to make use of his dragoons to seize such persons as refused to comply with this order.

We must pass over the battle of Aughrim and the details of the second siege of Limerick. Suffice it to remark that Teigie Macnamara (of Rathfolan), after the Battle of the Boyne raised a troop of his own and with it garrisoned Clare Castle, which he held for King James until the capitulation of Limerick, under the provisions of which it appears that Teigie retained possession of a portion of the Rathfolan estates.

After the surrender of Limerick a third confiscation of Irish property took place. William had to serve his friends and followers, and he did so as his predecessors had done, by seizing such Irish lands as he could lay hands upon ; among these were Lord Clare's estates, to the extent of some 86,000 acres, which William gave to his friend, Joost Van Kepple, Earl of Albemarle. Lord Clare made his will in October 1690, and among other bequests we find the following : " I leave to my brother Colonel John Macnamara, two mares of the Neapolitan breed, and Whitefoot. I order that the widow of Daniel Macnamara shall be paid of my own cattle in as many as shall appear she had sorrowfully lost by me or mine" ; [18] he directed Thomas Macnamara to " pay twenty pounds a piece to the friars of Quin and Limerick, and fifty pounds to the friars of Ennis." [19] His eldest son, Colonel Daniel O'Brien, succeeded to the title ; but with his father ended the connection of the " Clare O'Briens" as they were called, with their native country, the family passed over to the Continent and settled in France. Many other families in Clare besides the O'Briens suffered for their loyalty to the man whom they regarded as their legitimate monarch ; and after the surrender of Limerick they found themselves despoiled of everything, with no prospect before them but exile or poverty. In 1700 when the Court of Claims sat in Dublin to hear petitions from persons claiming exemption from attainder, a number of petitions were sent in from families who had lived for many generations in Clare, and among them several of the Macnamaras. Mr. Frost has given an abstract of these petitions in his history of Clare (page 570 to 602). In but few cases was the decision of the court favourable to the petitioners, and the court having soon dissolved, the lands confiscated from James's partisans were put up for sale at Chester House, Dublin, in the year 1703. All hope of restoration to their property having thus been destroyed most of the gentlemen concerned left Ireland, and struggled to eke out a miserable existence in the army and navy of foreign countries. Those who remained at home mostly sunk into the condition of peasants, and for a hundred years, under the baneful operation of the penal laws led a life of slavery and degradation. [20]

Under the treaty of Limerick it was agreed that the Irish troops who had fought for James II. were to be allowed to leave their country at the Government expense. The greater number of the men of the Clare Brigade assembled at the cavalry camp under the walls of Quin Abbey, and from thence marched to Limerick and embarked for France, among their officers were eight of the Macnamara family, who, together with their followers, entered the French service. The residue of St. Ruth's unfortunate army were shipped to France (1691). In all it is computed that some 19,000 splendid Irish soldiers under the gallant Sarsfield embarked at Cork. [21] The history of the Clare Brigade has yet to be written, and a most interesting one it would be, not only from a military but also from a social and political point of view. In the last battle the Brigade fought under the orders of Lord Clare, the French army in Piedmont was under the command of Catinat, who, we are told, at the battle of Marsaglia (October 1693), " to support and animate his troops by the example of the Irish soldiers, placed in the right wing of the first line the King's and Queen's Irish Dragoons, numbering some 1400 men. Clare's infantry, three battalions strong amounting to 2000 men were placed to the left of the line, and the Limerick regiment, 2800 strong, in the centre. Prince Eugene attacked and routed three of the French regiments posted in the first line. These giving way, their place was taken by Clare's three battalions, with two of the French from the second line, who charged the Germans with such fury that they in their turn were obliged to fall back. The battle was thus restored on the left wing, and the Irish dragoons being equally successful on the right, the day seemed lost to the Allies, when Eugene led up his centre, and with such effect as to have regained what had been lost on the wings. As this critical moment Wauchope, who commanded the Irish regiments of the centre (the Queen's and Limerick), led up his men to the charge. Three times he charged the allied centre without breaking it, but Eugene, after four hours' fighting, led his men off the field of battle, leaving the victory to the French. Among those killed was Daniel, fourth Lord Clare." [22] At the battle of Fontenoy again the Irish Brigade under Lally retrieved, by their coolness and courage at a very critical moment of the battle, what appeared to have been certain disaster to the French army. [23] In addition to the members of our sept who entered the French army with the Clare Brigade others passed over to the Continent and took service under the King of France, one of them afterwards became Vice-Admiral Macnamara in the French navy ; he was a very distinguished officer and a great grandson of Sioda Macnamara, of Henry VIII's time ; he belonged, therefore, to that branch of the family at present represented by John, and his brother Arthur Macnamara. We learn something of the history of the Macnamaras, who took

service under the King of France, from the following letter patent of the title of Count in the kingdom of France, granted to Henry P. Macnamara, Captain of the King's ships, and Knight of the Order of St. Louis :

Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and of Navarre, to all salutation. Whereas it is right that a Sovereign should recognise the devotion and attachment of such of his subjects who unite to illustrious signal services, it shows his greatness to deck them with honours due to their highness of birth. Being informed of the distinction with which the late John Macnamara, Vice-Admiral of our kingdom. Commander and Grand Knight of our Order of St Louis, and Commander of our port of Rochfort. as well as his brother Claud Matthew Macnamara, captain in our navy and Chevalier of our military order of St Louis, have served in the navy and army of our most honourable grandfather, and being ourselves aware of the services equally distinguished which our well-beloved Henry Pantaleon Macnamara, captain of our fleet, and Knight of our military order of St. Louis, son of the said Claud Matthew, and nephew of the said John Macnamara, has rendered for a length of time, and yet continues to render to us great service ; knowing also their attachment, and that of their ancestors to the Roman Catholic and Apostolic religion, on account whereof the House of Macnamara has ever the greatest trials. This house descends from Cassin, the second son of Cas, King of Limerick and of Thomond, the year of Jesus Christ, 434. It has had for appanage a territory or kingdom of Thomond, called the Principality of Hy-Cassin, from Cassin, its chief. This principality has been since called the Principality of Clann-Cullin, after *Coilean*, a descendant of Cassin. Mac-Con Macnamara, prince of Clann-Culin, constructed and founded, about the beginning of the fifteenth century, the noble and magnificent monastery of Connyeh (Quin), for the Observantine Brethren, and the Bull of Engene IV. is seen bearing upon this point, under the year 1433. “ *Dileco filie nobito viro. Mac-Con-Mac-namara Duci de Clann-Cullyan, &c. &c.*, i.e., to “ His beloved son, to the noble man, Mac-con-Macnamara, Prince of Clann-Culin, Ac. &c.” This house hath never ceased to rule the Principality of Clann-Culin up to the middle of the sixteenth century, a time in which finding itself aggravated by the continuous incursions of the supporters of the English Reformation, and much enfeebled by the betrayal of its parent, the chief of the House of O'Brien to the common cause, in submitting himself as well as his estates to Henry VIII., and accepting from this Sovereign the title of Count of Thomond, it judged it prudent to submit likewise, as well as its principality, to Queen Elizabeth, and to receive from this princess the Investiture thereof, with this difference, that it had rather, without altering its illustrious character, to hand down to its posterity the title of chief of this ancient house, than to receive it anew from the English Court, which up to that time was to it a stranger. At all times this illustrious house has made sacrifice of itself for the support of religion, and for the maintenance of the power to which it hath been attached, many of whose members have lost their life and their property in the service of Charles I., decapitated in 1649, for whom they raised two regiments at their expense. They made the same efforts for James II., and passed with him into France, where James III gave them an authentic testimony of their services, and the antiquity and nobility of their birth, by a patent dated at St. Germain en Laye, the 7th of April, 1704. They have exhibited in our regards the same sentiments of honour and love for us personally ; in a word, ever since that period of time, they have served us with the same zeal and distinction. Wishing therefore to give on all occasions the testimony of our satisfaction of the signal services which the brave Irish nobility has rendered to the kings who preceded us, and which it still continues to render to ourselves, we have resolved to adorn our well-beloved, the said Henry Pantaleon Macnamara, or Macnemara, with the title of Count of our kingdom, reversible for ever to the chief of the branch of this house, established in our said kingdom, as a distinctive mark due to his high nobility. For this purpose, &c. [24]

Hency P. Macnamara's eldest brother John was one of King Louis' pages from 1752 to 1754, and was then made “ Page Dauphin,” whence he passed into the French Navy, and was killed on board die *Theseus* in November 1758. His second brother, Claud, was also an officer in the French navy, and was killed in action on the 8th of September 1758.

We must, however, return to the Treaty of Limerick, for it had an important bearing on the history of the remaining families of our sept in Clare, and in fact on a large majority of the inhabitants of Ireland. Under this treaty, which was ratified, and signed by the Lords Justices of Ireland, on the part

of their Majesties William and Mary, it was stipulated that Roman Catholics should enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their religion as they possessed in the reign of Charles II., and their Majesties undertook to summon a Parliament to endeavour to procure the Catholics of Ireland such further security as should preserve them from disturbance on account of their religion. The oath to be administered to Catholics was to be that of allegiance only, and no other oath ; but no sooner had King William died than a series of measures, called the Irish Penal Code, were enacted, placing the Roman Catholics in Ireland under stringent coercive laws.

Mr. W. E. H. Lecky has classed their penal enactments under three heads : [25]

1. Those which were intended to deprive Catholics of all the advantages of civil life.
2. Those which were intended to reduce them to a state of brutal ignorance.
3. Measures taken to destroy the domestic happiness of Irish Catholics.

Under the first of these heads it was decreed that no Roman Catholic should be allowed to sit in Parliament; they were deprived of elective suffrage ; they were not allowed to become magistrates, or members of the bench or of the bar ; to enter the army, navy, or any of the Government services. They were not allowed to be employed as constables or as gamekeepers ; in fact to possess guns or other such weapons, and were liable at any time to have their houses searched. No Roman Catholic might possess a horse worth more than £5, and any Protestant offering him that sum might take possession of his neighbour's steed.

Under the second set of enactments it was ordered that Irish Roman Catholics were to be excluded from the ministry ; they were not to be permitted to be the guardians of a child, keep a school, or act as schoolmasters ; they were prevented under heavy fine and penalty from sending their sons abroad to be educated.

Under the last set of enactments of the Penal Code, Roman Catholics were prevented from inheriting or buying any land ; if they held land in mortgage for more than thirty years, on an information being given to that effect by a Protestant to the prescribed authority, the Roman Catholic was doomed to hand such land over to the informer. Many other enactments of this nature were ordered, setting children against their parents, and neighbour against neighbour. But sufficient has been cited to demonstrate what fearful penalties were imposed in the reign of Queen Anne on at least three-fourths of the population of Ireland, for this was about the proportion of Roman Catholics to Protestants in that country.

Beyond all this the law of banishment against Roman Catholic priests still continued, and a vigorous effort was made to educate a large proportion of the children of Roman Catholics in the doctrines of the Protestant faith. Schools were established by Protestant clergymen with the object, it was alleged, of “ rescuing the souls of thousands of the poor children from the dangers of Papist superstition.” These children were to be educated as Protestants, and were mostly taken from the homes of half-starving parents ; after being thus removed the children were prevented from communicating with their parents, and were brought up as Protestants ; a law was passed depriving Roman Catholic parents of the control of such of their children as had been brought into these chartered schools ; the Government expended £112,200 on this venture, which it is needless to say failed, and did a vast deal to raise bitter feelings in the minds of the poorer classes in Ireland against their rulers. [26] Beyond this sum paid to the chartered schools, A. Young informs us that the amount given to Protestant bishops out of the ecclesiastical revenues of Ireland amounted to £74,000 per annum, and no less than £150,000 a year derived from the ancient endowments of the country was given to the clergy of a very small minority of the inhabitants of Ireland. [27]

As before explained, the Roman Catholic members of our sept, from the time of signing the agreement with Henry VIII., had remained loyal subjects, they had supported Charles I. and James II. as their lawful Sovereigns, and during William's reign no cause for provocation or for uneasiness was given to the Crown either by the Catholics of Clare or any other part of Ireland. Subsequently, in Queen Anne's reign, and that of the first two Georges, the Roman Catholics of Ireland were not only

loyal subjects, but in 1715 the English Government sent troops raised in Ireland to quell rebellion in Scotland. [28] And so again in 1722, and in 1747, England called to her aid Irish soldiers ; the penal laws therefore enacted against the Catholics of Ireland cannot be said to have been the result of disloyal or treasonable action on their part Mr. Lecky is of opinion that “ the penal code as it was actually carried out, was imposed much less by fanaticism than by rapacity, and was directed less against the Catholic religion than against the property and industry of its professors.” [29] This was also the opinion of A. Young, who was well acquainted with the Irish of the last century, he observes : “ I have conversed on the subject with the most distinguished characters in the kingdom, and I cannot after all but declare that the scope, purpose, and aim of the laws of discovery as executed, are not against the Catholic religion, which increases under them, but against the industry and property of whoever professes that religion.” [30]

In spite of their political, religious, and social disabilities, it is a remarkable fact that the population of Ireland increased from eight hundred and fifty thousand people in 1652 to a million in 1672, and that immediately before passing the Acts of 1664 (by the English House of Commons, and not by the Irish Parliament [31]), by which the export of cattle and of agricultural produce was prohibited, the revenues of the country had increased threefold. The walled towns were growing in size, the woollen manufactories were becoming famous, and signs of prosperity were visible in every direction. [32] It seemed natural that, in these circumstances, England would have been disposed to have given Ireland encouragement, and even help ; but we find the reverse was the case, and Sir Richard Davenant, a well-known financial authority of the eighteenth century, gives us the reasons why Englishmen should, in his opinion, insist upon a crushing export duty being levied on Irish cattle and all agricultural produce. Sir Richard argues that because living and labour were cheaper in Ireland than in England, and as the Irish had an abundance of cattle, they could afford to send stock over to England and undersell the farmers of that country. Rents in England had already begun to fall in value, and so this authority insisted on the necessity of preventing Irish cattle being sent either to England or to any of her dependencies in America or elsewhere ; for the same reason, in subsequent Acts, Irish bacon, butter, cheese, and other articles of consumption were practically prevented from being sent out of Ireland. [33]

At the time these Acts were passed, Irishmen had no possible means of obtaining a living unless by their cattle. This source of income having been cut off, they took to breeding sheep, so as to increase the production of wool. Thousands of Irishmen were employed in various branches of this trade, and their industry was rewarded, for we find in 1702 the balance of Ireland’s revenue amounted to no less than £419,442. This bright ray of prosperity was destined, however, to be extinguished, for reasons precisely similar to those which had ruined the cattle trade of the country. English noblemen, and merchants combined to urge on the King and Parliament the damage they were suffering from the importation of better and cheaper wool from Ireland than English farmers could produce. And so, in 1703, prohibitive taxes were placed by the English House of Commons [34] on Irish wool, and these taxes extended to the export of wool, not only to England, but to all her dependencies, and also to Flanders and other parts of the Continent. [35]

At the time these measures were passed against Irish trade, Englishmen were drawing annually no less than £732,000 in rents from that country, every penny of which would, under the old order of things, have been spent in Ireland. Beyond this, the Duke of Bedford estimated that in the year 1759 Ireland paid every year £85,591 to the Civil Pension List, most of this being granted to Court favourites and dependants of the first three Georges. [36] It is true that, six years after passing the various Acts referred to, and when the Government found that a vast number of the Irish people were in a starving condition, an effort was made to introduce the cultivation of flax into the country, the linen trade at the time being of no commercial value to England. The growth of flax, however, was a work of time, and was only suited to certain districts of Ireland. [37]

There would, therefore, seem to have been sufficient grounds for the indictment laid by Mr. Lecky, Arthur Young, and other authorities to the effect that the misery and suffering of the Irish in the latter part of the seventeenth, and first half of the eighteenth century was due to the hard, and selfish policy imposed by Englishmen on Ireland. Apparently without the slightest compunction the English com-

mercial classes combined to destroy the trade of Ireland because it lowered their own profits. In the same way, and for similar reasons, the lands and woods of Ireland had been confiscated because they were of value to Englishmen, and the Irish were unable to resist the dominant race.

It may be well here to refer to the effects of this wrong on the inhabitants of Ireland, and first with reference to the poorer classes of landholders, or “cotters,” as they were called, a specific and almost unique product of Irish industrial life. [38] Throughout Clare, and in the greater part of Connaught and Munster, the poorer classes were, to a man, Roman Catholics, and consequently under the penal code, and so without any educational advantages, and unable, unless by stealth, to engage in the offices of their religion. As a rule, the cotters possessed a pig or two, it may be a cow and some poultry ; otherwise they had no property of any kind, and they depended Entirely for subsistence upon what they could grow on the few acres of land which they rented. Eviction from this land in too many cases meant starvation, so that the cotter clung to his holding, and often paid a rent far beyond its value for the simple reason that he was helpless in the matter, and was, from his circumstances, compelled to give whatever rent was asked. The cotter got no agreement or lease ; he was a tenant at will, and, as a rule, the landlord gave his land to the tenant who promised to pay him the highest rent. As Professor Cairnes observes, these cotters got no help from their landlords ; they had to construct their own huts, half-naked, half-starved, utterly destitute, and ground to the dust by three great burdens : rack-rent paid, not to the landlord, but to the middle-man ; tithes paid to the clergy, often absentees of a church to which the cotter did not belong ; and lastly, dues paid to their own priests.

Bishop Nicholson, who seems to have been a hard, selfish Englishman, and not disposed, therefore, to spare much sympathy on the Irish, writes of the cotters as he saw them in the year 1728 ; he observes : “ I never beheld, even in Picardy, Westphalia, or Scotland, such dismal marks of hunger and want as appeared among the poor of Ireland.” The bishop states that one of his horses died on the road to Tuam ; the carcass was immediately surrounded “ by a number of poor Irish cotters, struggling desperately to obtain a morsel of flesh for themselves and their children.” All this, be it remembered, occurred before the years of actual famine in Ireland 1729-40, and '44. Nicholson dilates on the evils springing from the practice of the middleman, and from rack-rent ; he dwells on the starved, naked cotters in their mud cabins, unfit even for a pig to dwell in, much less a human being ; but there the matter ends, they were Roman Catholics, and Irish men and women. Arthur Young states that the cotter “ spoke a language that is despised, they professed a religion which was abhorred, and being disarmed, find themselves in many cases slaves even in the bosom of written liberty. The cotter is punished with the cane or horsewhip with perfect security, a poor man would in Ireland have his bones broken if he offered to lift his hand in his own defence.” [39] Can we wonder at people in these conditions growing deceitful or untruthful ? Young was an Englishman who had visited every part of the Continent, and has left as one of the most valuable works on Ireland ever written.

The absentee English landlord necessitated the introduction into Ireland of what are called middlemen, a class of individuals who are described by a writer of the period as “ a band of tyrants who were formerly unknown in Ireland, and consists of a multitude of agents to absentee landlords ; they take farms, and squeeze out a forced kind of profit from the land by re-letting their holdings in small parcels to cotters.” [40] Poor as the tenants were, the middleman demanded from them personal service of a far more grinding nature than that enacted by the Irish landowners in days gone by.

Arthur Young found these middlemen not unfrequently the masters of a pack of miserable hounds, with which they wasted their time and money ; they were the hardest drinkers in the land, “ and were the most oppressive species of tyrants that ever lent assistance to the destruction of a country.” [41] They were relentless in collecting the rents from the tenants to whom they had sub-let holdings ; and in case of failure to pay had no more compunction in turning the unfortunate cotter out on the road than they had of expelling a pig from his sty. These were the men who in Clare had largely supplanted the heads of the various families of Macnamaras and other septs living under a system such as that referred to previously to 1641. Nor does this description of the state of things complete the picture, for we must bear in mind that the rule of these middlemen was exercised over a highly sensitive people, full of retrospective imagination, and pride of race and land. Arthur Young states, with truth, that many of these cotters were the “ lineal descendants of great families, once possessed of vast

property, but now in the lowest situation, working as cotters for the great-great-grandsons of men, many of whom were of no greater account in England than these poor labourers are at present, on that property which was once their own." Young continues : " So entire an overthrow and change of landed possession is, within the period, to be found in scarcely any country of the world. In Ireland families were so numerous, and so united in clans that the heirs of an estate are always known ; and it is a fact, that in most parts of the kingdom the descendants of the old landowners regularly transmit by testamentary deed, the memorial of their right to those estates which once belonged to their families."

- [1] " History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century," by W. E. H. Lecky, vol. ii p. 104.
- [2] Thurloe's " State Papers" vol. iv. p. 1000, and " Cromwellian Settlement," p. 92.
- [3] Frost's " History of Clare," pp. 391, 526.
- [4] " The English in Ireland. by J. A. Froude, vol. i. p. 141.
- [5] Lecky's " History of Ireland," vol. i. p. 15.
- [6] White's " History of Clare." p. 267.
- [7] " The Patriot Parliament of 1689," by Thomas Davis, edited by Sir C. Gavin Duffy, p. 159.
- [8] " John Macnamara of Rathfolan" (Frost), pp. 239-416 ; and authenticated pedigree.
- [9] The details above referred to have been collected from the original MS. papers of Mr. J. Macnamara, of Brighton, and the late Col. J. D. Macnamara, of Ayle. See also Frost's " History of Clare," note. p. 416.
- [10] " The Life of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough," by General Viscount Wolseley. K.P, vol. ii. p.96
- [11] Connaught and Clare, as we know, had by Cromwell been set apart for Roman Catholic land-owners from other parts of Ireland, who were innocent, that is, who had not joined the Confederate army.
- [12] Frost's " History of Clare," p. 568.
- [13] Rev. A. Hamilton : " The True Relation of the Action of Inniskilling men." published 1699 ; also " Memoirs of James. Duke of Berwick," written by himself, vol. i. p. 62.
- [14] General Viscount Wolseley's " Life of the Duke of Marlborough," vol. ii p. 136.
- [15] " Lauzon's Letter of 3/9/1690 to Loavois" (Ranke), vol vi p. 143.
- [16] MacCurtin was an Irish poet and was born in the parish of Kilmorry. Co. Clare ; he died in the year 1749. He belonged to the famous literary clan bearing his name, and who lived in and wrote of Thomond. He was the hereditary ollamh to the O'Briens, and a great authority on the pedigrees of the families of Munster (" Dictionary of National Biography," article signed by Norman Moore, M.D.).
- [17] " Diocese of Killaloe." by Canon Dwyer, p. 377.
- [18] Frost's " History of Clare" p. 609.
- [19] The following note from the " Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland" is from the pen of Mr. T. J. Westropp :
- " *The Last Friars of Quin, co. Clare.*—Quin is one of the few Irish mediaeval fraternities which prolonged its existence to the present century. Despite the execution of so many of its leading monks in 1651-2, the community had reassembled by the reign of Charles II. We find an ex-communication, 7th April. 1670, in the names of Eugenius Callinan and Bonaventura Bruodin, guardians of Meelick and Ennis, against four friars who had rebelled against Moriartagh Ogrypha and Thady Broudin, guardians of Quin and Limerick priories (MSS., T.C.D., F. 4, 14), and later on, 18th November. 1689, Thady O'Brien, of Coolreagh, near Scariff, leaves by his will (now at Coolreagh), ' unto Father Daniel Macnamara, towards praying for the salvation of my soul, 5 shillings ; to the friars of the Abbey of Quin 5 shillings' ; and Daniel, Viscount Clare 20th October, 1690, bequeaths ' £20 to the friars of Quin.'
- " The burning of the Abbey by Colonel George Stamer, and his brother Henry, dispersed the monks, but at the time of Lady Chatterton's tour one of them still meditated, prayed, and wrote ' beautifrd lines' to Lady O'Brien in the desolate cloister. I have known two persons who remembered the last monk, whose tombstone, a plain slab of limestone, in the east cloister walk, bears this inscription :

“ ‘ HERE LIES THE BODY OF THE | REV. JOHN HOGAN OF DRIM | WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
A.D. 1820 | AGED 80 YEARS, THE LAST OF THE FRANCISCAN | FRIARS WHO HAD THEIR
RESIDENTS (*sic*) | AT DRIM THE PLACE OP THEIR REFUGE | WHEN DRIVEN FROM THE ABBEY
OF | QUIN. HE WAS SUPPORTED BY THE | PIOUS DONATIONS OF THE FAITHFUL | AND SERVED
AS AN AUXILIARY TO HIS | NEIGHBOURING PARISH PRIESTS | IN THE VINEYARD OF THE
LORD. HE | KNEW HOW TO ABOUND AND HOW TO SUFFER | WANT AS THE LORD WAS
PLEASED TO | SEND. HE DIED IN HOLY POVERTY | RESPECTED FOR HIS STRICTNESS IN
RELIGIOUS DISCIPLING (*sic*) | AND VENERATED | BY ALL. ‘ QUI SEMINAT IN LACHRYMIS
EXULTATIONE METET.’ | REQUIESCAT IN PACE, AMEN.’

“ THOMAS J. WESTROPP,
“ *Hon. Local Secretary, Royal Irish Society of
Antiquaries, North Clare.*”

- [20] Frost’s “ History of Clare,” p. 603.
[21] “ Life of the Duke of Mariborough” by Viscount Wolseley,” vol. ii. p. 239.
[22] J. D’Alton’s “ Illustrations, Historical and Genealogical, of King James’s Irish Army,” p. 154.
[23] “ Historical Memoir of the O’Briens.” by J. O’Donoghue. p. 347-354.
[24] Authenticated copies of these documents are among Mr. John Macnamara’s MS. collection of family papers ; also in MS. Royal Irish Academy, 24 c. 20.
[25] “ History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century” vol. i. p. 147 ; also A. Young’s “ Tour in Ireland” vol. ii. p. 271.
[26] Sterne’s “ On the Chartered Schools of Ireland.”
[27] Young’s “ Tour in Ireland” vol. ii. p. 112.
[28] “ Memoirs of the Duke of Berwick.”
[29] Lecky’s “ History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century,” vol i. p. 152.
[30] “ A Tour in Ireland” by A Young, vol. ii. p. 66.
[31] “ The Case of Ireland” by W. Molyneux. p. 73 (edited by the Very Rev. Canon O’Hanlon).
[32] “ Life of Sir W. Petty” by Lord Fitzmaurice, p. 239 ; also p. 140.
[33] Hely Hutchinson : “ Commercial Restraints of Ireland” p. 161.
[34] This Act was not passed by the Irish Parliament, but by the English House of Commons (“ The Cause of Ireland,” p. 74).
[35] Hely Hutchinson : “ Commercial Relations of Ireland.” p. 94.
[36] Young’s “ Tour in Ireland.” vol. ii. pp. 117, 273 ; note, p. 114.
[37] Hely Hutchinson : “ Commercial Relations of Ireland,” p. 94.
[38] Professor Cairoes’ “ Political Essays.”
[39] See also Hely Hutchinson : “ Commercial Relations of Ireland.”
[40] “ Inquiry into Causes of Popolar Discontent in Ireland” ; also Professor J. E. Cairnes’ “ Political Essays.”
[41] A. Young : “ Tour in Ireland,” vol. ii. p. 27.

The story of an Irish sept : their character & struggle to maintain their lands in Clare (1896)

Author : Macnamara, Nottidge Charles, 1832-1918

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