

# The Period Of Redestruction

1689-1700.

The economic history of Ireland in the seventeenth century

George O'Brien  
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IRELAND was now destined to suffer the third of those great upheavals of her national life which took place within a single century, and which were such fatal bars to her orderly progress along the normal lines of economic development. We have seen that the last quarter of the sixteenth century was a period of absolute destruction of all forms of Irish wealth, during which the country was reduced to a condition of depopulation and poverty from which it gradually emerged during the first forty years of the seventeenth century. The great Rebellion then broke out, and during the next twenty years everything which had been built up in the beginning of the century was destroyed. After the Restoration the rebuilding process began again, and, as we have seen, the country developed rapidly and satisfactorily under Charles II. and James II. But its further development towards affluence was now to receive a rude check ; in 1689 the Williamite war broke out ; and in a few months the country was again denuded of thousands of its people and of the greater part of its wealth.

The loss which the population suffered during this out-break was very serious, quite apart from the emigrations which followed. The course of the campaign has been told in many narratives which are familiar to all, and, although the various historians differ diametrically in their sympathies, and frequently in their accounts of what occurred, they are all agreed on the fact that the losses among King James's followers were very great. As usual, the war was accompanied by a plague, [1] and great numbers also perished from famine. A writer who observed the state of Ireland in the middle of the war was of opinion that, if things continued as they were going, two-thirds of the population would probably be wiped out by the sword, famine, plague, and emigration. [2]

This destruction of human life was accompanied by an equal, if not greater, destruction of property. One writer calculated that the losses of cattle incurred by the Protestants alone would amount to eight million pounds ; [3] vast hordes of sheep were also destroyed. " The Irish tenants looked on the great sheep flocks with unfriendly eyes, and the first thing they did in the war was to destroy as many sheep as possible to make room for farms." [4] So great was the havoc wrought amongst the live stock of the country that Ireland, which for the previous twenty years had supplied Europe and America with provisions, was driven in 1692 to import cattle for its own use ; [5] at the same time corn was so scarce as to be well nigh unprocurable. [6] The country was let run wild ; tillage was rendered impossible by the fact that a great many horses had been seized for military purposes by the soldiers. [7] " There was destroyed in all parts of the kingdom above a million pounds of cattle besides corn and horses twenty years of perfect peace could not restore the kingdom." [8] " English and French soldiers have already quite ruined this country, especially the latter by stealing and taking away of the country people's horses ; the crops now rot in the ground for want of cattle to get them in... The peasants, where the soldiers are lodged, have hardly anything for themselves." [9]

Towns and houses which had been rebuilt after the Restoration were razed to the ground. " Since the late troubles the condition of the country is much worse ; many fair houses and some towns were burnt, and a great number of the people destroyed, so that of course manu-

factures must be impaired and lands untenanted.” [10] The Lord Lieutenant, when opening Parliament in 1692, referred to “ the almost utter desolation of the country caused by the Revolution.” [11] “ It will be impossible for the Irish to subsist if they have not speedy provisions from France, as the country is so harassed and the cattle driven away that the husbandmen have not enough cattle to plough the grounds.” [12] In this general destruction of material wealth the woods suffered further damage. [13]

“ The destruction of property which took place in a few weeks,” wrote Macaulay, “ would be incredible if it were not attested by witnesses unconnected with each other and attached to very different interests. All agreed in Dublin that it would take many years to repair the waste that had been wrought in a few weeks. Any estimate which can now be formed of the value of the property destroyed during this fearful conflict of races must be necessarily inexact. We are not, however, wholly without materials for such estimates. The Quakers were neither a very numerous nor a very opulent class ; we can hardly suppose that they were more than one-fiftieth part of the Protestant population of Ireland, or that they possessed more than one-fiftieth part of the Protestant wealth of Ireland. Yet the Quakers computed their pecuniary losses at one hundred and fifty thousand pounds.” [14]

The damage which the country suffered during the revolutionary war was, therefore, very great, but was as nothing compared with what it suffered during the peace, or rather the “ war after war,” which followed. We have seen that, after the Elizabethan and Cromwellian wars, in the course of which the country had been reduced to a state of extreme misery, things began to recover rapidly as soon as the war terminated ; indeed, this was so marked a feature of Irish life as to attract the attention of many historians and to lead them to the conclusion that Ireland was possessed of some peculiar powers of recuperation. But if such power of recuperation still existed, it was given no chance of operating after the Williamite war, which was followed by a period of untiring persecution of the Catholics by the Protestants, and of Ireland by England. The great diminution of population which the country had suffered during the war was followed up by a still more serious diminution due to the emigrations after the war. After the siege of Limerick the greater part of King James’s army went to France ; the number of emigrants on this occasion was calculated to amount to fourteen thousand ; [15] and this was but the beginning of a continuous stream of Catholic refugees who poured from Ireland to the Continent for many years. In 1692 we read that great numbers of Catholics were still emigrating, [16] and in 1694 the stream was still flowing. [17] An attempt was made to renew the Cromwellian system of selling the Irish as slaves, and shipping them to the colonies, and numbers of Irish boys and girls were transported in this way. [18] It was calculated that, between 1691, when the tide of emigration first commenced, and 1745, no less than four hundred and fifty thousand Irishmen had died in the service of France alone ; [19] and great numbers were also to be found in the Spanish, Austrian, Neapolitan and other continental armies. [20] After 1699 another stream of emigration began as a result of the prohibition of the export of woollen goods in that year, when large numbers of Protestant artificers were driven abroad through lack of employment at home.

The lot of the Catholics who went abroad, however, was much less terrible than that of those who remained at home, as the period was now beginning when the Catholic population of Ireland was to be ground down and degraded by the infamous system of penal laws, which have done more than anything else to injure the industrial character of the Irish people, and therefore the industrial wealth of Ireland. This orgy of religious intolerance was not only odious in itself, but was doubly odious, inasmuch as it was an express breach of the terms of the Treaty of Limerick, which provided that the Catholics of Ireland should be allowed the same religious liberty which they had enjoyed in the time of Charles II., and that they should be guaranteed against any disturbance on account of their religion. [21] The first step in the direction of the penal code was the British statute excluding Catholics from sitting in the Irish Parliament, [22] which thus transformed that body into an exclusively Protestant assembly. It

is possible that the earlier measures of the penal code may have been dictated by a genuine fear of Papal domination, but, as measure after measure of totally unnecessary violence was enacted, it became apparent that the Irish Parliament was animated not so much by fear as by hatred, and that, as Burke thought, the code was based not on the insecurity of the Protestants, but on their security.

“ All the penal laws of that unparalleled code of oppression were manifestly the expression of national hatred and scorn towards a conquered people whom the victors delighted to trample upon and were not at all afraid to provoke. They were not the effect of their fears, but of their security. [23] “ Intolerance,” as Dr. Murray remarks, “ largely prompted by political exigencies, becomes by indulgence an animating principle, much as infirmity of temper, beginning as a disease, passes into a vice.” [24]

It is not necessary here to give any account of the penal laws themselves, as they have been frequently described in detail in other books, and as they more properly belong to the history of the eighteenth century. Suffice it to say that they were such as to degrade the Catholics in every way, by taking away from them the property they had, and preventing them from acquiring more ; by closing to them all the more estimable occupations and employments ; and by depriving them of education. No Catholic was permitted to acquire any freehold interest in land or any leasehold interest of more than twenty-one years, and those who were already possessed of such interests were liable to be deprived of them at any moment by the defection of third parties. No Catholic could hold any civil or military office, nor could he practise any of the learned professions. In the sphere of trade, Catholics were discouraged by the regulations which prevailed in the corporate towns. In short, every road to prosperity was closed to them by an unparalleled code of laws which were designed “ to make them poor and to keep them poor.” Unfortunately, the code succeeded in attaining this object for over one hundred years. [25]

The penal code was primarily intended to deprive Catholics of the ownership of land, which was the chief wealth of the country, and we naturally pass from the laws against Catholics to a consideration of the changes which were wrought in the land system in the ten years following the Revolution. It may be objected that no mention has been made so far in this book of the land legislation attempted by the Patriot Parliament, but the reason that this has been omitted is that, whatever its significance may have been from a political point of view, it is of no importance to the economist, for the simple reason that it was never carried into effect. Much abuse has been showered on King James’s Parliament for its attempted dealings with the land, and, indeed, nobody will deny that it was a foolish and ill-advised proceeding to attempt in the midst of a civil war to revolutionise the existing land ownership in the country. But it must be remembered that the members of that Parliament had been brought up in a school where scant attention was paid to rights accruing from long possession. They were the sons of the men, frequently the very men themselves, who had been violently dispossessed by Cromwell, and cheated of their right of restoration under the Act of Settlement, and they can hardly be blamed for attempting to apply to their opponents the same principles that had been applied against themselves. Moreover, it must also be remembered that the Act repealing the Act of Settlement was in two respects more enlightened and just than previous dealings with Irish land had been. In the first place, it made provision for the compensation of those who in the interval between the Acts of Settlement and the Patriot Parliament had acquired purchasers’ interests in the land ; and in the second place it expressly preserved the rights of all tenants who had taken leases of the confiscated lands. [26]

The Williamites after their victory showed themselves no more scrupulous in dealing with vested interests in landed property than the Jacobites had been. Enormous tracts of Catholic property were confiscated as a result of the revolutionary war ; there is no necessity here to

examine the exact amount of land which changed hands at this period, about which there is some doubt ; it is sufficient to say that in the year 1700 the total quantity of Irish land which still remained in the hands of Catholic owners was not more than one million English acres. [27] That this quantity could never be increased, but would almost certainly, in course of time, be diminished, was rendered certain by the penal laws. Any Protestant lady being heiress to or in possession of any real property who married a Catholic lost all her lands ; [28] any Catholic whose eldest son became a Protestant became but a tenant for life in his estates ; and a Catholic's land, descending by intestacy, descended not to his eldest son but to all his sons equally. [29] These laws tended to diminish the quantity of land in Catholic hands, while, by other statutes, it was also provided that that quantity should at no time be increased. [30] When the confiscated lands were put up for auction in 1701 the Irish were prohibited from becoming purchasers of more than two acres even as tenants. [31]

Simultaneously with the confiscations of the Catholics' lands the rights of tenants were attacked. We have seen that, in the course of the seventeenth century, various customary rights between landlord and tenant had been recognised, and that the tenants felt so secure in their reliance on these customs that the taking of long leases was rather the exception than the rule. It is probably correct to say that the majority of the tenants in Ireland held their lands, not under any lease, but relying on "the custom of the country." In 1695 was passed what Dr. Sigerson describes as "a remarkable degrading Act, which precipitated immense numbers of formerly estated tenants into the dependent and serf-like condition of tenants at will." [32] By this Act, all leases and other interests in land made by livery of seisin or by parole and not put in writing were declared to be merely tenancies at will, with the exception of leases not exceeding three years, of which the rent should be two-thirds of the value of the thing demised, or dealings in interests of copyhold or customary tenure. [33] The effect of this Act was to put the old protected tenants of the country at the mercy of their new landlords. The exception in favour of short leases at high rents is significant, as it shows that the objection was not to unwritten leases but to low rents. This Act undoubtedly was the first step towards the ultimate abrogation of tenant right, and furnished a convenient weapon to grasping and hostile landlords and their agents. It had the effect of turning the greater part of the tenantry of the country at one blow into the position of mere tenants at will, and it is significant that shortly after the passing of the Act it was necessary to pass another Act dealing with the suppression of agrarian outrages. [34] A similar Act had been passed in England in 1677 with the avowed intention of extinguishing numerous small holders at customary rents, and this Act did much to abolish the yeoman farmers of England. [35] If the Act was felt as a hardship in England, how much more of an evil must it have been in Ireland where the landlord class looked down upon and hated their Catholic tenantry, and where the law was administered by partial and bigoted tribunals ?

The fatal ten years with which we are now dealing, which witnessed the emigration of so many thousands of Irishmen, and the dispossession and degradation of so many more who remained at home, were also marked by the beginning of the systematic war waged by England on Irish industrial prosperity. In Ireland itself there was a genuine desire on the part of the Government to increase the country's industry and trade. The Committee of Trade was still in being, and was so occupied with projects and suggestions that sub-committees had to be appointed to consider the various matters submitted to it. [36] William III. was also anxious to advance Irish trade, and sent instructions that the fishing, linen, and provision trades should be encouraged as far as possible. [37] No discouragement was intimated in any speech from the throne in the Irish Parliament during these years. "Their Majesties," said Lord Sidney in 1692, "being in their own Royal judgment satisfied that a country, so highly favoured by nature, and so advantageously situated for trade and navigation, would want nothing but the blessing of peace and the help of some good laws to make it as rich and flourishing as most of its neighbours ; I am ordered to assure you that nothing shall be wanting on their parts that may contribute to your perfect and lasting happiness." [38]

The attack on Irish trade, however, did not come from any party in Ireland ; on the contrary, all the inhabitants of the country were naturally anxious to increase its prosperity. The attack on Irish trade was an attack directed from England. We have seen, when dealing with the land and the penal laws, that considerable energy was devoted by the Irish Protestants to impoverish the Irish Catholics, but now the oppressors were themselves to be the oppressed. The cat had enjoyed the bird, but it was now the dog's turn to relish the cat. It must be constantly borne in mind when considering this question that the attacks made by the English Parliament on Irish trade were attacks made, not on the Catholics, but on the Protestants of Ireland, who, by their own oppression of the Catholics, had succeeded in securing for themselves most of the industry and trade of the country. It was on this account that the Protestant interest in Ireland so bitterly resented these attacks ; and, indeed, it was this commercial oppression which first gave rise to the Irish Protestant nationalism which afterwards became so strong and so patriotic in the later eighteenth century. These attacks must have appeared to the Irish Protestant as something in the nature of a stab in the back. They who had been at pains to subdue Ireland, as they thought, in the Protestant interest, now found themselves in process of being subdued in the English interest. " The measures against Irish trade," wrote Archbishop King, " will be particularly ruinous to the Protestant English interest of Ireland ; inasmuch that they tend to alienate the affections of the King's subjects from his Majesty's and discouraged them from their vigorous prosecution of popery whereby Ireland might be effectually secured to England without danger of rebellion. . . . The principal losers will be the English gentlemen and tradesmen." [39] That the injury inflicted by the trade restrictions was principally confined to the Protestant interest in Ireland is also apparent from every page of the political writings of Swift and Hely Hutchinson, neither of whom had any desire to benefit any of the inhabitants of Ireland except Protestants ; and from the course of the free trade agitation of 1779, the principal actors in which were bitterly opposed to any measures which would improve the position of the Catholics.

The attack on the woollen industry was particularly calculated to injure the Protestants, as this industry was almost altogether in their hands. In 1695 it was said that the manufacture of wool was " not spread amongst the Catholics of the country at all," [40] and in the same year it was said that there were twelve thousand English families in Dublin and fifty thousand in Ireland engaged on the woollen manufactory. [41] Indeed, the Protestants bitterly resented the intrusion of any Catholics into this industry, as appears from a petition which they presented to the Irish House of Commons. [42] The Catholics, for their part, were not ill pleased at the check to the woollen manufacture ; they regarded the sheep as occupying their place upon the land. This explains why, in the Revolution of 1689, they destroyed huge flocks of sheep. One of the results of the destruction of the woollen industry was that Catholics began to be reinstated as tenants on lands, which had theretofore been devoted to sheep pasture. [43] The Protestant woollen workers, on the other hand, were driven from their employment and forced to emigrate in large numbers. [44] The folly of this legislation was clearly seen in Ireland at the time : " Make Ireland rich and they will be your bees and bring honey to your hives ; keep them poor and that kingdom will provide nothing but wasps to sting you ; the English will leave the country, and then it will fall into the hands of the Irish." [45]

The explanation of this commercial policy is to be found in the victory of the Parliament over the King in the Revolution. Under the Stuarts it had been the constant policy of the English sovereign to raise a large revenue in Ireland with which to render him less dependent on Parliamentary support in England, and on two occasions Irish troops, paid for out of Irish taxes, had actually been brought to England to fight against the popular party. The Parliament of William III. was determined that no such power should ever be exercised by the King again, lest Ireland should become a danger to England. " In the days of Charles I., troops from Ireland had landed in order to aid an absolute monarch. Irish troops had also pitched their camp on Hounslow Heath to aid an absolute monarch's despotic son .... the English

realised that they must avert such risk, and the plain way seemed to be systematic depression of industries in that land if her interest in any way conflicted with the interests of the country.” [46] The importance of this consideration is emphasised by Dr. Cunningham. [47] “Unfortunately, the economic jealousy with which Englishmen regarded Irish progress was universally stimulated by considerations of a constitutional character. The English Party was keenly suspicious of anything that might tend to increase the royal powers. Charles I., Charles II., and James II. had all suffered from the distrust of their subjects ; and William III., even though he had been invited to come over, did not succeed in inspiring confidence. As is well known, he bitterly resented the treatment he received. Since Ireland was an independent kingdom, the English House of Commons had no direct control over its affairs ; and there was constant uneasiness lest any power which the King acquired in Ireland should be used without the concurrence of the English Parliament, or even against English liberties. Twice within the seventeenth century serious attempts had been made to develop the resources of Ireland by Strafford, and under Charles II. and James II.; in both cases the result had been that the King had found himself in possession of power that seemed to menace his English subjects. Under these circumstances there was the strongest political reason for dreading any development of the wealth of Ireland that took place at the expense of England, since this really implied an increase of the influence of the Crown at the expense of that of Parliament. Traces of this feeling were found in 1779 and later, as, for example, in speeches by Lord Shelbourne, [48] and by Fox.” [49] The same policy was dictated by the further motive of fear and hatred of France, which had been the political ally of Ireland in the Revolution, and which might be in a position to aid Ireland materially at some future date, if Ireland were rich enough to pay for such assistance. [50]

These were the two most powerful motives which induced the English Parliament to adopt a policy of systematic hostility to Irish interests in trade, but they were strengthened by trade jealousy, and the fear that Irish prosperity might injure England. Such jealousy was common at a period dominated by mercantile ideas, but additional force was given to it at the moment because in the opinion of the English Parliament English commercial prosperity must be maintained at all costs in order to enrich England in its great struggle with France which was then proceeding: “ England was waging a vital struggle with a wealthy opponent, and, if her commercial resources were impaired, her chance of ultimate success were to that extent destroyed.” [51]

In order to carry these hostile intentions into effect, it was necessary that the political status of Ireland should be reduced from that of a kingdom to that of a colony. The essence of successful mercantilism was that the country struck against should not be in a position to strike back, and, therefore, the power of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland was insisted on during this period, and the independence of the Irish Parliament was undermined. Whatever had been the relation of Ireland to England before the Revolution, its position was now clearly defined as that of a colony, the interests of which in all things commercial must be subordinate to those of the mother country. Ireland, therefore, took its place in the colonial fabric of the British Empire, and its interests were dealt with by the English Parliament in exactly the same way as were the interests of America. This was the age of the growth of the Imperial conception, by which it was hoped that the productive power of the Empire as a whole should be utilised with the greatest possible effect. “ In theory one form of production would be assigned to America, another to Ireland, another to England. In practice, England took what was convenient or agreeable to herself ; Ireland and the colonies had the leavings in Ireland there was worse abuse than restriction—the destruction in the interests of England of existing industries.” [52]

The degradation of Ireland to the status of a colony had been foreshadowed in the Navigation Acts, and it was now fully and completely carried into effect. The first duty of a colony in those days was to produce raw material for the manufactures of the mother-country. This

principle was applied to Ireland in 1695, when the duties in England on bar iron unwrought imported from Ireland were taken off, [53] and also by the whole course of dealing with the export of Irish raw unmanufactured wool, which, as we have seen, was designed to reach no destination but England, whose woollen manufacture it was designed to feed. Some years after the Revolution the colonial theory was laid down in full form. “ An inscription of the purpose following should be always set up in the Irish House of Commons to be read the first thing every day of the session : ‘ Let us always remember that this island is a colony ; that England is our mother country ; that we are ever to expect protection from her in the possession of our lands, which we are to cultivate and improve for our own subsistence and advantage, but not to trade to or with any other nation without her permission ; and that it is our incumbent duty to pay obedience to all such laws as she shall enact concerning us. ’ ” [54]

The application of the colonial theory by England to Ireland involved peculiar injustice, because the two countries had reached almost the same state of industrial development, and both produced the same commodities for export. It was one thing to prohibit the exportation of worked-up commodities from America, where practically no manufactures existed ; another to prohibit their exportation from Ireland, where industrial activity was beginning to develop.

It is not surprising that this campaign against Irish industry was preceded and accompanied by a campaign directed against the legislative independence of the Irish Parliament, as the former would have been unsuccessful but for the latter. It was in the years immediately following the Revolution that the right of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland was for the first time strenuously advocated and definitely insisted on, in spite of the strong opposition of Molyneux and other Irish writers, who saw the significance of this new development and guessed in what direction it was leading. [55] The first blow in this campaign against Irish industrial prosperity was, as might be expected, aimed at the woollen industry, which was the most considerable industry of that date. Although this industry had been encouraged and, indeed, for all practical purposes, brought into being by the action of England in prohibiting the importation of Irish cattle, it had always been a subject of considerable jealousy amongst those who had themselves produced it. As early as 1676, petitions were presented in England for the forbidding of all Irish manufacture ; [56] and in the following year an Irish writer prophesied that, as the import of Irish cattle to England had been looked on as a nuisance, and the export of raw wool from Ireland as a felony, in a few years the erection of a woollen manufactory would be regarded in England as nothing less than treason. [57]

But, however jealous the English woollen merchants might be of the growing Irish trade, they were unable to suppress it before the Revolution. After that event their jealousy became much more marked. In 1691 it was urged that it would be a wise measure to exchange the woollen manufacture for the linen in Ireland “ to furnish against even the remotest possibility of detriment” ; [58] and English jealousy was given full voice in a pamphlet which appeared four years later : “ That Ireland is now destructive to the interest of England I think will admit of little dispute ; for so long as that people enjoy so free and open a trade to foreign parts, and thereby are encouraged to advance in their woollen manufacture, this must consequently lessen ours, than which they cannot do us a greater mischief, being the tools whereon we trade. When they sink our navigation sinks with them. Now the advantage Ireland hath above England in making the woollen manufacture will soon give them opportunity of outdoing us therein, first as it produces as good or rather better wool, and next as it furnishes all provisions cheaper to the workmen, which renders them able to live on easier terms than ours can here, and this will, in short time, give invitation for many more to remove thither.” [59] “ With this end in view, the act of prohibiting cattle should be repealed.” [60] The campaign was waged with more violence than logic ; any argument was good enough to use against Ireland, even if it contradicted the writer’s own previous argument. For instance, one of the reasons advanced by Gary for the suppression of the woollen industry was that it was a benefit only

to the trading class, and not to the landowners, who were the real supporters of the English interest ; but a few pages later he urged that the Cattle Acts should be repealed, in order to benefit the English woollen industry, which would be productive of the greatest gains for the landowners of England. Thus the industry should be destroyed in Ireland because it was of no benefit to the landlords, and encouraged in England because its growth would benefit them so greatly.

No doubt, the flame of this jealousy was fanned by the increasing prosperity of the Irish woollen industry after the Revolution, owing to the fact that many of the Irish Protestants who had emigrated during the Jacobite wars had learned the trade in the West of England, and, when the war was over, had brought their knowledge back to Ireland. [61] The attention paid to the interests of the woollen industry in the Irish House of Commons shows that it must have been of considerable dimensions and worth much consideration. [62] The quality of Irish woollens must have been acquiring a reputation abroad; in 1702 hangings of Irish woollen stuffs were used in the palace at Copenhagen. [63] In 1698 it was said that there were twelve thousand Protestant families in Dublin, and thirty thousand in the rest of Ireland engaged in the woollen trade, [64] and, while this is probably an exaggeration, as Dr. Murray has pointed out, it shows that the industry was certainly widespread. [65]

It is obvious from these tables that, though the woollen manufacture was growing, Ireland was still importing more woollens than she was exporting, and could not have been a serious danger to the English industry. Indeed, it is quite clear from the petitions of the English wool workers that the danger apprehended was more in the future than in the present. [66] “ The apprehensions of England seem rather to have arisen from the fears of future, than from the experience of any past rivalry in this trade.” [67]

Nevertheless, in spite of the remoteness of the danger apprehended, the alarm in England was great. Numerous petitions were presented to Parliament by the woollen manufacturers complaining that many English weavers were emigrating to Ireland where goods could be produced much cheaper than in England, and that the result of this would undoubtedly be that English woollens would be undersold in the foreign market. [68] The House of Commons itself petitioned the King in the same sense : “ We cannot without trouble observe that Ireland, which is dependent on and protected by England in enjoyment of all they have, should of late apply itself to the woollen manufacture to the great prejudice of the trade of this Kingdom .... we humbly implore that you will make it your royal pleasure for the discouraging the woollen manufacture and encouraging the linen manufacture in Ireland.” [69] The King promised in his turn to do all that he could to injure the Irish woollen industry, and a message to this effect was conveyed to the Irish House of Commons by the Lords Justices at the beginning of their new session. As a result, an Act was passed in Ireland imposing for three years an additional duty of four shillings per pound on broadcloth exported and two shillings per pound on new drapery made or mixed with wool. [70] This Act, however, was not sufficient to satisfy English jealousy, and in the following year an Act was passed in the English Parliament prohibiting perpetually the exportation from Ireland of all goods made or mixed with wool except to England. [71] The exception in favour of exportation to England was really a nullity, as the heavy protective duties imposed in 1660 were still retained. The results of this measure were disastrous in the extreme, but, as they did not show themselves until the eighteenth century, we are not concerned with them here.

It has been frequently argued that the conduct of England in suppressing the Irish woollen industry should be excused on the ground that the linen industry was established instead. To this suggestion there are two answers, first, that an unjust deprivation is not rendered any less unjust because some compensation is offered for the thing taken away, and secondly that the consideration in this case was not in any sense adequate. The first of these propositions requires no elaboration. The English Parliament had no constitutional or legal right to impose

any law forbidding the exportation of goods from a country not under its jurisdiction ; and the illegality of its proceedings on this occasion was rendered doubly unjustifiable, inasmuch as they were dictated by selfish and jealous motives. It had no more right to direct Irish capital into the linen industry than it had to divert it from the woollen. Indeed, the essence of the injustice was the interference with the livelihood of a people by a body in which that people was not only not represented, but was regarded with hostility and contempt. It may or may not be desirable that my neighbour should possess a gun with which he may possibly injure me in the distant future, and in a combination of circumstances which has not yet arisen ; but it is quite plain that I am not entitled to deprive him of that gun by main force and give him a feather in its place.

In any event the encouragement of the linen industry was not an adequate compensation for the destruction of the woollen industry. The latter was a manufacture peculiarly suitable for Ireland ; raw material was produced in the country in great quantities and of excellent quality ; and the foundation of its success had been laid by the labour and enterprise of many years. The linen industry, on the other hand, was concerned in the working up of a material which was never produced in Ireland as successfully as elsewhere ; it had attained to whatever position it held at the time by reason of much artificial encouragement and support ; and, as we now know, it ultimately failed to spread to more than a small part of Ireland. The exchange was one of a certainty for an experiment.

It must also be remembered that the successes of the two industries were not mutually exclusive ; there was no reason why they should not have both advanced together. Indeed, there is little doubt but that they would have done so, had they been allowed. The period of Grattan's Parliament was marked by an extraordinary revival of the woollen manufacture, and the same period also saw an unprecedented expansion of the linen manufacture. [72] If the two industries were capable of progressing side by side in 1782, there was no reason why they should not have done so in 1699.

To promise to give Ireland a linen industry was really to promise her something which she already had. The fact that her linen industry was smaller and of less importance than her woollen is beside the point, as the two had probably grown in dimensions proportionate to their respective suitability.

We have seen the progress which the linen manufacture made under Charles II., and this progress was maintained after the Revolution. It is true that the export of Irish linen did not attain any considerable dimensions; the total exports in 1700 only amounted in value to £14,112. [73] It is also true that a venture to increase the manufacture had failed in 1698 ; but this failure was caused by the stock-jobbing and insufficiency of capital of the English company which had control of the enterprise. [74] As against this, it must be remembered that the growth of the industry in Ireland attracted the attention of all contemporary observers ; in 1691 it was said to be one of the most considerable of the manufactures in the country ; [75] and it sprang up simultaneously at Dublin, Drogheda, and in many parts of Ulster. [76] The Scotch settlers made great quantities of linen cloth, which they exported to England: " The commonalty of them are so intent upon this kind of manufacture that the very husbandmen and their servants, when they return from their labours abroad, do employ themselves by their firesides in this kind of work, and sit reeling of linen yarn while their women are busy spinning ; and by their constancy and diligence that country produces great quantities of good linen yearly." [77] In 1695 all kinds of flax and hemp were permitted to be imported from England, duty free, [78] and we may deduce from this permission that there was a considerable demand for these materials in Ireland. In the following year, Molyneux wrote that looms and bleaching yards were being widely established, and that much fine linen was being produced. " I have as good diaper made by some of my tenants near Armagh as can come to a table, and all other cloth for household use." [79] Linen head-dresses were used by the

major-ity of Irish women. [80] Finally, it must be remembered that Crommelin and his followers had settled down at Lisburn some years before the English Parliament promised to give Ireland the linen manufacture in exchange for the woollen.

It is a matter of some difficulty to form an opinion as to the dimensions of the linen industry in Ireland in the years immediately following the Revolution. The statements on the subject are contradictory, and reliable statistics are not to be obtained. However, whether the industry was large or small is a matter of no importance in considering the justice of English policy towards Irish trade. If the industry was small, then Ireland was being forced to exchange a certainty for an experiment ; if it was large, then the pretended consideration for the destruction of the woollen industry was no consideration at all.

In the general convulsion of Irish affairs which accompanied and followed the Revolution, the Irish revenue also suffered. In the period from 5th June, 1690, to 29th September, 1692, the revenue was £277,217, and the expenditure £879,966. [81] The succeeding years also showed deficits, which were made up partly by remittances from England, partly by borrowing, and partly by increased taxation. The remittances from England were not continued longer than was absolutely necessary for the military safety of Ireland, and, as soon as it was possible to do so, the Irish people was made to bear the expenses of the augmented army which was being maintained. In the year 1692 the Government raised 33,050 by a loan at ten per cent, secured on the quit rents. [82]

The bulk of the additional expenses were met by the imposition of increased taxation the “ additional duties.” The first of these were imposed in 1692, when an additional excise duty of 1s. 6d. a barrel was put on beer worth more than 6s. a barrel, threepence on beer of less value, and threepence a gallon on aqua vitæ and strong waters. [83] The increase of revenue produced by these duties did not balance the increased expenditure, and it was consequently necessary to impose further taxes in 1695. On this occasion resort was had to a poll tax, which provided that a shilling should be paid by every individual in the country, with the exception of the wives and daughters of day labourers living with their parents, labourers’ sons under eighteen, widows excused from paying hearth money, and those living on alms. In addition to this universal tax, all persons of station or possessed of property had to pay a further tax at a graduated rate. It is interesting to note that the principle of the taxation of bachelors was recognized by this Act, which provided that a double tax should be paid by traders who were not freemen, and by bachelors over thirty. [84] In the following session this poll tax was continued, but the amount payable was doubled. [85] This tax was calculated to bring in a large revenue, but it must have been very carelessly collected, as the total amounts produced were very inconsiderable. [86]

In spite of all this additional taxation, the revenue still proved unequal to the expenses of the Government, and in 1698 the experiment of a land tax was tried. [87] £120,000 was to be raised by four half-yearly payments of £30,000 ; to each of these payments Leinster was to contribute £10,050, Munster £8,940, Ulster £7,000, and Connacht £4,010; and each barony was to bear the proportion at which it has been assessed by the presentments of Grand Juries at Assizes and Quarter Sessions.

The only other additional duties which remain to be mentioned are a small additional excise on tobacco to defray the cost of building and repairing military barracks, [88] and the additional duty to which we have already referred on the export of woollen goods. [89] This last duty was not imposed for the purpose of increasing the revenue, and any chance which it had of doing so was prevented by the prohibition in the following year of the exportation of woollens from Ireland.

Thus, the period following the Revolution was characterized by increased taxation, together with decreasing wealth, a thoroughly unsatisfactory condition, unfortunately not unfamiliar to those acquainted with Ireland. “On a review of the Parliamentary events which occurred in the reign of William III., particularly in the department of finance, there will be found but few periods in the annals of our country which appear with so much disadvantage.” [90]

We have now completed our review of the economic condition of Ireland in the seventeenth century. In the ten years following the Revolution, which form the subject of the present chapter, was sown the terrible crop which was reaped in the eighteenth century. The event which may be taken as marking the close of the period we have studied was the suppression of the Irish woollen manufacture, which in many ways was the most important land-mark in the whole economic history of Ireland. It certainly did more to shape the course of Irish economic life in succeeding years than any other single event, and was the most fruitful source of the dreadful distress that characterised the eighteenth century.

It is necessary, however, to qualify this statement in one respect, as too much emphasis has been laid by some writers on the suppression of the woollen industry in itself. The fact is that the prohibition of the export of Irish woollens was attended with such disastrous consequences, not so much because of the prohibition itself, as because of the condition of Ireland in other respects. The suppression of the woollen industry was attended with disastrous consequences, because it practically destroyed all manufacturing industry in Ireland, and therefore threw the whole population on the land for subsistence. It is conceivable that, had the land system of Ireland been based on a foundation of equity, and regulated by just laws, the whole population of Ireland might have succeeded in deriving a comfortable livelihood from the pursuit of agriculture alone ; but, as it was, the many evils which characterized the Irish land system, chiefly the prevalence of absenteeism, the universal existence of rack rents, the encouragement of pasture at the expense of tillage, and the penal laws, operated to produce a state of affairs in which the land afforded only a bare subsistence to the vast majority of those engaged in its cultivation. It was, therefore, by placing the whole population in a position in which it was exposed to the evils of the land system that the suppression of the woollen industry produced its disastrous effects. It may be remembered that Bishop Berkeley suggested in the *Querist* that the importance of the suppression of the woollen industry was generally exaggerated by the economists of his day, but he did not indicate, possibly because he failed to see, the means which the landowners of Ireland could have taken to minimise the ill-effects which that measure had undoubtedly produced.

Subject to this qualification, however, and bearing in mind the importance of understanding that the suppression of the woollen industry derived its chief importance from the circumstances of Ireland in other respects, it may be safely stated that the suppression of that industry was the most important event in Irish economic history. It certainly formed the dividing line between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It terminated the era of hope, and inaugurated the era of despair.

The seventeenth century in Ireland was characterized by periods of economic progress nullified by political cataclysms. The century opened on a spectacle of ruin, resulting from the prolonged and devastating wars of Elizabeth's reign; for forty years a determined and, on the whole, successful effort was made to evolve order out of chaos ; but the progress of forty years was undone by the ravages of the Rebellion years. Once more Ireland passed through a period, of which the economic history may be summarised by saying that those who escaped death from war, famine, and disease, succeeded in sustaining life at the bare margin of sub-

sistence by the fitful and often interrupted cultivation of the soil. After the Restoration Ireland was blessed with thirty years of peace, during which extraordinary progress was made, in spite of discouragement in many directions. It looked as though a stable and prosperous country were going to be built up at last, but all the efforts of a generation were again frustrated by another political upheaval. This outbreak, though itself not so destructive to life and property as the previous wars had been, was attended ultimately by far graver consequences, as the peace which followed was not peace, but rather the “war after war,” of which we hear so much at the present day. Thus, three times in the course of a single century, the orderly and normal economic progress of Ireland was interrupted by political cataclysms.

The extraordinary recuperative power which Ireland displayed after the Elizabethan and Cromwellian wars attracted much attention at the time, and has been commented on by many historians. No such recuperative power, however, showed itself in the period following the revolutionary war, and its absence shows more strikingly than anything else could have shown the profound change for the worse that had come in the condition of Ireland between the beginning and the end of the seventeenth century. It cannot be suggested that the character of the people had changed, or that the natural resources of Ireland had diminished, and we must therefore conclude that the change had its origin in some external circumstance. The fact is that a profound change had taken place in the Irish policy of the English Government. The Stuart Kings were always anxious to develop the resources and to increase the wealth, and consequently the revenue of Ireland, with a view to rendering themselves less dependent for financial support on the English Parliament. With the overthrow of the Stuarts, Parliament was supreme in England, and was quite determined that it would not risk any assault on its prosperity by allowing the King to obtain a large revenue from any source outside its control, as for instance he might have done from Ireland. This point has been made so frequently in the above pages that it is not necessary to do more than to mention it here. It is true that the schemes for the betterment of Ireland under the governments of the Stuarts involved many profound injustices ; that the prosperity that it was hoped Ireland would enjoy was meant to accrue for the benefit of the English settlers ; and that the rightful owners of the soil were dispossessed of their land and degraded to the position of tenants, or driven to emigration ; but it nevertheless remains equally true that the policy of the rulers of Ireland at the beginning of the seventeenth century was to turn the country into a garden, while the policy of its rulers at the end of the same century was to turn it into a wilderness.

In conclusion, it must ever be remembered that the realization of the cruel ambitions of the statesmen who succeeded the Revolution was only rendered possible by the destruction of the independence of the Irish legislature, and that the era of trade restriction and economic repression was heralded by a successful, if unconstitutional, assertion of the right of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland. The more one studies Irish history, especially Irish economic history, the more one becomes convinced of the profound truth of Isaac Butt’s observation: “Never perhaps was the physical misery of a country more directly connected by clear and overwhelming evidence with its national destruction and its political degradation.” [91]

[1] C.S.P., Dom., 1689-90, pp. 336, 368.

[2] *The Character of the Protestants of Ireland*, London, 1689.

[3] *The Character of the Protestants of Ireland*, London, 1697, p. 21.

[4] *Arch. King to Mr. Annesley, King MSS.*, 10th March, 1697.

[5] C S.P., Dom., 1691-2, p. 186.

[6] *Leybourne-Popham MSS.*, p. 274.

[7] *An Exact Relation of the Persecutions, Robberies, and Losses Sustained by the Protestants of Killtnare*, London, 1689 ; *Ireland’s Lamentation*, London, 1689 ; *The Sad State and Condition of Ireland*, London, 1689.

- [8] *Ireland's Lamentation*, London, 1689.
- [9] C.S.P., Dom., 1689-90, pp. 261, 531.
- [10] *The True Way to Render Ireland Happy and Secure*, Dublin, 1697.
- [11] *I.C.J.*, vol. ii, p. 10.
- [12] C.S.P., Dom., 1690-1, p. 120, and see pp. 152, 154, 155, 161, 191.
- [13] Litton Falkiner, *Illustrations of Irish History*, p. 151.
- [14] Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. iv, p. 165, 1858 Edition.
- [15] Lecky, *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i, p. 248.
- [16] C.S.P., Dom., 1691-2. p. 67.
- [17] *Bucleuch MSS.*, Montague House, vol. ii, p. 94.
- [18] Moran, *Persecution of Irish Catholics*, p. 363.
- [19] McGeoghegan. *Histoire d'Irlande*, vol. iii, p. 754.
- [20] Lecky, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 248-50 ; O'Callaghan, *History of Irish Brigades*.
- [21] Lecky, *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i, p. 139.
- [22] 3 Wm. and Mary, c. 2.
- [23] Burke, *Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe*.
- [24] Murray, *Revolutionary Ireland and its Settlement*, p. 289.
- [25] O'Brien, *Economic History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 24 to 30.
- [26] Davis, *Patriot Parliament*, pp. 88, 103-4, 107.
- [27] Butler, *Confiscations in Irish History*, p. 232.
- [28] William III, c. 3.
- [29] Anne, c. 6.
- [30] 2 Anne, c. 6, sec. 6 ; 8 Anne, c. 3.
- [31] Prendergast, p. 24.
- [32] Sigerson, *Land Tenures in Ireland*, p. 104.
- [33] 7 William III, c. 12.
- [34] 7 William III, c. 21.
- [35] Gibbons, *Industrial History of England*, London, 1892, p. 114.
- [36] *I.C.J.*, vol. ii. pp. 32. 79.
- [37] C.S.P., Dom., 1691-2, p. 169.
- [38] Hely Hutchinson, *Commercial Restraints*, p. 56.
- [39] *King MSS.*, 2nd April, 1698.
- [40] *A Discourse on the Woollen Manufactory of Ireland*, Dublin, 1698 ; *A Discourse Concerning Ireland*. London, 1698.
- [41] *A Discourse Concerning Ireland*, 1697-8.
- [42] *I.C.J.*, vol. ii, p. 247.
- [43] Sigerson, *Land Tenures in Ireland*, p. 97.
- [44] Lecky, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 440.
- [45] *Anonymous Paper in Bucleuch MSS.*, Montague House, vol. ii, p. 745.
- [46] Murray, *Revolutionary Ireland and its Settlement*, p. 307 ; Murray, *Commercial Relations*, p. 51.
- [47] *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, vol. ii, p. 371.
- [48] *Parl. Hist.*, vol. xx, p. 1163.
- [49] *Ibid.*, vol. xxi, p. 1297.
- [50] Murray, *Revolutionary Ireland and its Settlement*, p. 385.
- [51] Murray, *Revolutionary Ireland and its Settlement*, p. 390.
- [52] Meredith, *Economic History of England*, p. 191.
- [53] Murray, *Commercial Restraints*, p. 85.
- [54] *The Interest of England as it Stands with Relation to the Trade of Ireland Considered*, London, 1698.
- [55] Swift McNeill, *History of the Irish Constitution*, p. 10.
- [56] C.S.P., Dom., 1676-7, p. 386.
- [57] *Letter from a Gentleman in Ireland to his Brother in England Relating to Trade*, London, 1677.

- [58] *Remarks on the Trade and Interest of England in Ireland*, London, 1691.
- [59] Cary, *An Essay on the State of England in Relation to its Trade*, pp. 91-2 Bristol, 1695.
- [60] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
- [61] *E.C.J.*, vol. xii, p. 63.
- [62] *I.C.J.*, vol.ii, pp. 725, 733 ; vol iii, pp. 45
- [63] *Portland MSS.*, Vol ii, p. 95.
- [64] O’Conor, *history of Irish Catholics*, p. 149.
- [65] Murray, *Revolutionary Ireland and its Settlement*, p. 390.
- [66] *E.C.J.*, vol. xii, pp. 37, 63, 64.
- [67] Hely Hutchinson, *Commercial Restraints*, p. 60.
- [68] *E.C.J.*, vol. xii, pp. 37, 40, 63, 64.
- [69] *E.C.J.*, vol. xii, p. 338.
- [70] 10 William III, c. 5.
- [71] 10 & 11 William III, c. 10.
- [72] O’Brien, *Economic History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 269-75.
- [73] *I.C.J.*, vol. xvi, p. 352.
- [74] A full account of the career of this Company will be found in the *Kilkenny Archceological Journal*. 5th Series, vol. xi, p. 371; see also Murray, *Revolutionary Ireland and its Settlement*, p. 4C6.
- [75] *Remarks on Interest and Trade of England and Ireland*, London, 1691.
- [76] *Kilkenny Arch. Jnl.*, 5th Series, vol. xi, p. 371; *A Discourse Concerning Ireland*, London. 1697-8.
- [77] *A Discourse Concerning Ireland*, London, 1697-8.
- [78] 7 & 8 Wm. III., c. 39. (Eng)
- [79] *Locke’s Works*, vol. iii. p. 552.
- [80] *A Brief Character of Ireland*, London, 1692.
- [81] Official Accounts of Receipts and Expenditure, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1868-9, vol. 35.
- [82] *Ibidem*.
- [83] William and Mary, c. 3.
- [84] William III, c. 15.
- [85] William III, c. 8.
- [86] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1868-9, vol. 35.
- [87] 10 William III, c. 3.
- [88] 10 William III, c. 4.
- [89] 10 William III, c. 5.
- [90] Clarendon, *Revenue of Ireland*, 1791, pp. 34-5.
- [91] *The Irish Land and the Irish People*.

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