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The effects of social and political movements in eighteenth century Ireland upon the act of union in 1801

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THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MOVEMENTS
IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IRELAND
UPON
THE ACT OF UNION IN 1801

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
The Municipal University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Anne Munholland
June 25, 1959
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PREFACE

This study is an attempt to unravel the "Irish question" by searching for the underlying currents and trends which governed events in the eighteenth century. It is hoped that a discussion of these underlying trends will provide a key for a better understanding of the peculiar relationship which later existed between Ireland and England and which continues, to some degree at least, to govern the relations of those two countries today. The study will begin by examining the native Irishmen's traditions and will proceed with an attempt to relate these traditions to events in the eighteenth century in Ireland. Emphasis throughout will be placed upon social and political developments.

The author would like to express her appreciation to Dr. A. Stanley Trickett for the kind help and criticism which he offered while directing this thesis.
CHAPTER I

THE IRISH TRADITIONS

The Irish question is more often treated with levity than with serious intention. The Irish people are too commonly considered as a colorful, romantic, and somewhat backward "race." In short, the Irish are seldom taken seriously by anyone other than the Irish themselves. The purpose of this chapter is neither to establish nor describe the Irish "personality" but to provide a brief analysis of the structure of Irish society before the eighteenth century and to provide an historical background for a discussion of the changes that occurred in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century. Briefly, the position of the Church, the native institutions, the bards, and the development of English governmental institutions will be discussed.

I. THE IRISH CHURCH

Ireland was conquered by Henry II in 1172 as an attempt to satisfy the ambition of his fourth earl; John Lackland. Hoping to anticipate every eventuality which might destroy the hard-won Plantagenet empire, Henry had prematurely divided and invested his domain in 1169 between his three sons, Henry, Geoffrey, and Richard. The empire was so efficiently divided that Henry was hard pressed to
find a suitable fief for his additional son, John. When John became an aggressive young man, Henry realized that John's unfulfilled ambitions would be a constant threat to the empire.

Since Ireland was a Christian country, and since Henry had just recently been reconciled with the Church, it was politic that he should receive permission for this conquest from the Pope. The Bull Laudabiliter from Pope Adrian IV gave Henry the desired consent and stated the papal conditions,

You have indeed indicated to us, dearest son in Christ, that you desire to enter into the island of Ireland for the purpose of subjecting its people to the laws and of rooting out from it the weeds of vice, and that you are willing to pay a yearly tribute to blessed Peter of one penny from every house and to preserve the rights of the churches of that land whole and unimpaired.¹

To insure Henry's success Pope Alexander III wrote letters to the Irish prelates and the Irish lay nobles ordering them to comply with Henry's commands. He stated that Henry, "...moved by inspiration from God...has subjected this barbarous and uncouth race which is ignorant of divine law...." and that through Henry the race, "...will better submit to the discipline of Christian faith."² In a letter to Henry, the Pope congratulated Henry for accomplishing what the Roman princes had not; that is, he had subjected


²Ibid., p. 778.
Ireland. The Pope further described the religious condition of Ireland as it was reported by his bishops and archbishops,

...all of them eat flesh during Lent, they do not pay tithes; and they do not reverence as they should, either the churches of God or those ecclesiastical persons who serve them.

These letters indicated several things. One was that Henry was now, after the Thomas Becket controversy, "...the noble king of the English, our dearest son in Christ..." Another was the fact that in the eyes of the Church, Ireland had never been conquered, the people formed a barbarous race, and that its religion was not firmly connected to the discipline of the Roman See.

Irish Catholicism has traditionally posed unusual problems. Converted in the fourth century through the influence of Saint Patrick (Irish annals date his arrival AD 432), it was shortly to lose its connection with Rome as Rome retreated under the pressures of the barbaric invasions. With the severance of its connection with Rome the development of the Irish church took on its own peculiar form. It is well to remember that in Ireland Christianity was established in a wholly barbarian community. The result was that the Roman Church organization, related as it was to the urban character of the Empire, did not long retain this character in Ireland. A unique organization evolved in which the

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3Ibid., p. 779.
4Ibid., p. 777.
Monastic colonies became the centers of an intense religious life. While it maintained an adherence to the early Church doctrines, the Irish Church remained isolated from the later developments, such as the date for celebrating Easter and the supremacy of the Roman See.

In the sixth and seventh centuries the Irish monks enjoyed a golden age in the fields of missionary work and literature. The missionary work under the guidance of Saint Columban and Saint Gall was directed into the Frankish Lands, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany. The culture and enthusiasm of these missionaries compared brilliantly with the boorishness of the Merovingian clergy, and in general the Irish monks were quite successful. Latin writing was introduced at the time of the conversion, and in the sixth century the Irish monks began to develop the panegyric style which was to survive for almost ten centuries. The earliest surviving Irish manuscript, known as the "Cathach of St. Columba" may have been written in the early sixth century and showed the development of a distinctive script known as the "Celtic" half-uncial. This style, which is both bold and barbaric in its terms and indulges in metaphor over simile, maintains...

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7 Ibid.


9 de Paor, op. cit., p. 111.
a very strict and concise form. It is an ideal style for describing the heroic tales which have always been loved by the Irish.

By the seventh century the monks were verifying through literature the ancient Irish traditions. To "verify" these tales, which are devoted to the praise of Ireland and its noble families, the monks called upon the voices of the Church fathers. The Irish Church had become indigenous and was thus grafting itself upon the clan system. The literature was animated throughout by an intense love for the very soil of Ireland and its traditions. Even the missionary zeal exercised by the monks during this period could be explained by this devotion, especially if this seventh century homily is a true reflection:

Now this is white martyrdom for a man when for God's sake he parts from everything that he loves, though he suffers fasting and labour thereby. And green martyrdom is when he endures labour in penitence and repentance. And red martyrdom is the sub-
mission to the cross and tribulation for Christ's sake.

It would appear from this homily that missionary work which involved leaving their country and taking up the Cross of Christ was, in the eyes of the Irish, the highest form of martyrdom.

During the seventh century besides sending out missionaries who encouraged a cultural interest, Ireland

10 Flower, op.-cit., p. 19.
11 Ibid.
itself flourished as an intellectual center and students came to the "misty isle" to learn from the Irish scholars. The venerable Bede credits much of his knowledge to these Irish scholars.12

The period just described is known as the golden age of Irish monasticism. A decline had occurred before the English invasion, but the unusually indigenous character of the Irish Church, which had developed during this early period, was to continue. There is a tale which has persisted from the twelfth century about Comgall of Bangor, who was chief Saint of the Picts. Bangor was located in Ulster, and during a series of fights between Ulster and the Picts the king of Ulster asked Comgall which side he prayed for. "I pray for both of you," he replied. "But for which do you pray most earnestly?" He answered, "For the lord of the land in which I was born."13 This intense local patriotism was probably difficult for the Roman See to control. It was no doubt in order to force the Irish Catholics back into the "Christian discipline" of Rome that Henry's conquest was so enthusiastically supported. After the conquest, in 1172, Henry summoned a Council of the Irish Church at Cashel in an attempt to secure conformity in doctrine and ritual. This was not successful, however, in breaking down the integration of the Church and the clan system. This attempt only

12Ibid., p. 13.
13Ibid., p. 16.
succeeded in identifying the Church of Rome with the policy of the invaders.

An intense antagonism immediately arose after the English invasion between the English and the Irish clergy. In the state papers of 1285 it was urged that no Irishmen be made bishops or archbishops as they preached against the king and tried to maintain their language. In a letter from Nicholas Cusack, Bishop of Kildare to Edward I, he described "certain religious groups" which were organizing the Irish to fight for their country.14

The identification of the native Irish clergy with the interests of their own people is an historical fact constantly repeated throughout Irish history. The native character of the Irish Church was one of the major forces which prevented Irish assimilation by England.

II. NATIVE INSTITUTIONS

With the advent of Henry II a continental influence was introduced upon Irish society as was English common law, but both influences were unsatisfactorily imposed and had a tendency to wane beyond the limited area of the Pale (Louth, Meath, Dublin, and Kildare). There was no central organization for the English to subdue, just the tribes. The English invasion resulted in the Irish tribal kings having to pay homage to John Lackland, but the subkingdoms retained their

14 Ibid., p. 115.
independence until 1607 with the famous Flight of the Earls (O'Neill of Lycone and O'Donnell of Donegal). Furthermore, there was a fundamental difference between the clan system, as it existed in Ireland, and the feudal system in that the clan could exist quite separately from and was not bound to the actions of its chief. The Irish king's power was limited by the fact that individual status was determined solely upon kinship. It was therefore unchanged by any action of the king.

The primary unit of society in Ireland was the family, called the dérfsine, and comprised all of those related to one another in the male line up to second cousins. All property was common to the family. A number of such families formed a tuath (a tribe or petty kingdom) which was a semi-independent political unit. The tuatha were then grouped into seven "over kingdoms" which came in turn under the general sovereignty of Cashel in the south or Tara in the north. Over these various sub-groupings there was no form of central government or administration. Therefore, the paying of fealty and homage by the Irish chiefs had little political significance.

16 Ibid., p. 38.
17 de Paor, op. cit., p. 73.
Furthermore, the English, instead of assimilating the Irish, were, in fact, assimilated by the Irish. They adopted their customs and language, becoming what is called "Hibernis ipsis hiberniores." The Statutes of Kilkenny, passed in 1366, signified a triumph of native institutions over those imported from England. This was an attempt by the Irish Parliament to pass legislation that would prevent the Anglo-Irish lords from becoming "Hibernis ipsis hiberniores."  

A major obstacle preventing English common law from taking root among the native Irish was its exclusive nature. Besides the English living within the Pale, the right to the King's court included only those Irish belonging to one of the "five bloods", the O'Neills of Ulster, O'Melachlin of Meath, O'Connor of Connaught, O'Brien of Thomond, and MacMurrough of Leinster. 19 Outside of the Anglo-Irish pale the brehon law continued to flourish. As matter for serious study the brehon law is just gaining the attention of experienced scholars. Ireland, unfortunately, has not produced famous lawyers who have taken it upon themselves to write legal history. It is quite interesting to the student as an example of a legal system, based not on state sanctions but on the power of traditional custom, formulated and applied by a learned professional caste, which could function and command obedience. The interest is not purely

18 Donaldson, op. cit., p. 7.  
19 Ibid., p. 6.
The core of the brehon law was centered around a principle of arbitration, and it is possible that in disputes arising over land problems the brehon law influenced English common law. The important positions in negotiating this law were held by the local kings and the brehones, who were the professional jurists. Although the exclusive limitations placed upon those who could participate in English common law were allayed by the practice of granting the right to use English law to individuals, it was not until 1612 that an act was passed formally stating that all Irishmen lived under English common law. It was during this period that Sir John Davies travelled throughout Ireland instituting the proper machinery for the operation of English law in those areas which had been subject only to Irish law. In conclusion, the leading problem, which prevented the complete conquest of Ireland, was that both its native social and legal organizations lacked a tradition of allegiance to a central authority.

20 Ibid., p. 5.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
23 de Paor, op. cit., p. 183.
III. THE BARDs

A unique force in Irish society was the bardic poet. The bards occupied a special position in the society and were granted extraordinary privileges. Their status was not determined by birth and they were traditionally held in such high esteem that they were protected by custom and allowed freedom of movement outside their native tuath. For this reason they played an important part in maintaining a unity of culture throughout Ireland and in the development of that culture throughout the island.\(^{24}\) It seems reasonable that before the introduction of writing the bards developed to meet the society's need to preserve its traditions and culture. The Irish society was aristocratic and, like such societies, would set great store in past achievements that tended to bolster the pride and prestige of the dominant class. The function of the poet would be to keep alive this long-descended record, complete with full genealogical detail.

It was probably during the late middle ages that the bardic poets became supported entirely by the noble families rather than by the whole clan.\(^{25}\) In return for this luxurious support the bard was required to glorify his patron's family, but he retained a certain amount of power in that he could

\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 74.

\(^{25}\)Flower, op. cit., p. 71.
turn his invective into satire if he so wished.26 Most of the poems which have come down to us are preserved in the duanaire, poem books of the noble families, although some were written in Flanders during the great dispersion of the 17th century.27 Since the inflexible literary standards were established in the early middle ages and continued unmodified over a period of years, poems written within a three or four hundred year period sound contemporary with each other. This vigorous literature left by the bardic poets expressed the joy of a people whose pleasure was primarily derived from the primitive pursuits of the fight and the chase.28 This shows that the Irish even early in their history favored their indigenous methods of expression and extolled the old, traditional way of life almost defiantly since there are very few imported influences revealed in their early culture.

In a sense the bards composed a conservative trade school and their trade was hedged with absolute rules. They learned their trade in bardic schools, described as a large structure divided into small cubicles, each furnished with a bed. The student would go into his cubicle and in complete darkness compose themes set by the teachers. When the theme was composed, the student would call for a candle.

26Ibid., p. 99.
27Ibid., p. 95.
28Ibid., p. 159.
write out the theme, and present it for criticism. In some ways the bards compare with university men, but they enjoyed a much higher status in society. Their influence in society, being well supported by the nobility and directing all of their talents towards preserving the Irish tradition, can hardly be over-estimated.

IV. ENGLISH INSTITUTIONS

For almost three hundred and fifty years after Henry II's conquest, England did not attempt a true integration of Ireland. Superficially imposing English authority over Ireland, the Irish, with the aid of the clergy, the tribal organizations, and the bards, were able to maintain their tribal identities. However, English institutions were developing superficially during this period. Among the outlying dominions of the English crown, Ireland was the only one subject to English common law and English legislation. The King's bench was the legal tribunal to which one referred appeals of a strictly judicial character. Out of the justiciars court, which represented the King's court in Ireland, grew the Irish Parliament in much the same fashion as its English counterpart. The justiciar was aided by a council, the innermost members of which formed the privy

29 Ibid., p. 95.
council. By the end of the 13th century elected representatives were being summoned to Parliament.  

The parliament held by Sir Edward Poyning at Drogheda in 1494-95 marked a major assertion of the Tudors over the great Irish Earls. This consolidated the position of English statute law and provided means for exercising executive control over the Dublin legislature. Poyning's law declared,

...all statutes, late made within the said realm of England, concerning or belonging to the common and publique weal of the same, from henceforth be deemed good and effectual in the law, and over that be accepted, used, and executed in this land of Ireland in all points at all times requisite according to the tenor and effect of same...  

This law also described the statute which provided that no parliament was to be held in Ireland until the Lord Lieutenant and the Irish council (justiciar and council) had certified to the King under the great seal of Ireland, "the causes and consideration, and all such acts as them seemeth should pass..." If the proposals were approved, they would be returned to Ireland with a license to hold parliament. This served an important function in that besides establishing English authority, it would also prevent the Irish Parliament from supporting a pretender to the throne. This had occurred in 1487 when Lambert Simnel had been

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31Ibid., p. 43.  
32Ibid., p. 42.  
33Ibid.
crowned Edward VI in Dublin. The gist of the situation was that Ireland would have a parliament, but the English would decide which acts it could pass. Thus two diverse institutions were developing in parallel fashion in Ireland: the tribal society and parliamentary government.

In the middle of the 16th century England inaugurated a new policy in Ireland which was designed to subdue Ireland as never before and was to cost England dearly in terms of her life's blood and her treasury. The change in policy began with Henry VIII when Pope Paul III conceived the idea of using Ireland as a stepping stone through which he might regain England. A question arose as to the Pope's right to withdraw what was called the Donation of Adrian to Henry II. To counteract the effects of this claim on the part of the Pope, Henry VIII in 1541 caused the Irish Parliament to pass the Crown of Ireland Act. This act declared that the Lord of Ireland would be known as the King of Ireland and, "...enjoy the privileges of that office as united and knit to the imperial crown of the realm of England." Henry VIII

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34Ibid.


36Ibid., p. 584.

37Donaldson, op. cit., p. 45.
also requested the clan leaders to acknowledge him as "Supreme Head of the Church in Ireland under Christ."\(^{38}\) This they were willing to do as they felt little connection with the Church in Rome. However, what Henry did not realize was that the allegiance of the chief did not necessarily insure the allegiance of the clan, and this action presented opportunity for great intrigue and bitterness. The remaining half of the century was spent in rebellions and intrigue between the native, the English and the Roman See. Ireland had now become a question of English national security, and England was determined to enforce her authority. In 1603, in the famous "Calvin's Case," Scotland was described as a dominion of the King, but Ireland was declared a conquered country subject to the crown and to the English Parliament. A tremendous effort to plant English colonists in Ireland was commenced, and in 1607 with the "Flight of the Earls" the independence of the Irish subkingdoms began to fade.

V. SUMMARY

The 17th century completed the breaking down of the native Irish resistance to English control. In 1612 common law became very real as it was organized throughout the remote areas of Ireland. Furthermore, within the first half of the century three fourths of Ireland's land passed from

\(^{38}\) Dunlop, op. cit., p. 584.
the natives into colonial hands.\textsuperscript{39} After the restoration an attempt was made to redistribute some of the land among the original landowners. These acts were known as the Acts of Settlement of 1662 and the Act of Explanation of 1665 and were to remain as the basis for land settlement in Ireland until the nineteenth century. The latter half of the seventeenth century was marked by a constant conflict between the colonists and the native Irish. The final culmination of this struggle occurred during the civil war of 1689. The Patriot Parliament met in Dublin and declared James II as King, repealed the Acts of Settlement, and declared the Irish Parliament free from the English. The colonists withdrew to the north until they received British support, and a bitterly contested civil war ensued. In 1691 the Treaty of Limerick was signed. This moderate treaty was the result of several pressures, one being that William III could not afford to keep his troops in Ireland while Louis XIV was victorious on the continent. Another reason was the fact that William hoped by this moderate treaty not to alienate his Catholic allies in Europe.\textsuperscript{40} The major point of this peace treaty related to the future position of the Irish Catholic in Irish society. The position of this group was


\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 703.
mentioned in the first article of the treaty,

The Roman Catholics of this kingdom shall enjoy such privileges in their exercise of their religion as are consistent with the laws of Ireland, or as they did enjoy in the reign of King Charles the Second, and their Majesties, as soon as their affairs will permit them to summon a Parliament in this kingdom, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such farther security in that particular as may preserve them from any disturbance upon the account of their said religion.\(^1\)

The breech of this article occurred a few weeks later when the English Parliament passed an act requiring all Irish officials and members of Parliament to take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance and subscribe to a declaration against transubstantiation. This placed the control of the Irish Parliament completely in the hands of the Anglo-Irish who between the years 1695 and 1697 established the penal code which was to be a major problem during the eighteenth century.\(^2\)

Thus the final vestige of native Irish power was destroyed when the Catholics found themselves excluded from the Irish Parliament. The energy and resource of the native Irish were exhausted by the end of the seventeenth century. With the downfall of the native landowners came the downfall of the Bardic order, and with the exclusion of Catholics from the government the three mainstays of Irish traditional society were destroyed. Not only was the

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 765.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 703.
population depressed, but the economic progress initiated by the colonists had been destroyed by the civil strife and put into shackles by the English Parliament. Strangely enough it would be these Anglo-Irishmen who would eventually raise difficulties with the English government as they found themselves the victims of English policies, and they began to identify their own interest with those of the Irish. In other words these colonists became "Hibernis ipsis hiberniores."
CHAPTER II

THE OPENING OF THE 18TH CENTURY

At the opening of the 18th century, English and Irish relations should have embarked upon a new phase. Ireland occupied a unique position in that she had become important to English national defense. Both the Catholic popes and Louis XIV had looked upon Ireland as a stepping stone to England. That England realized the serious relationship she had with Ireland was evidenced by the unstinting effort and sacrifice she made to "reconquer" Ireland. The clan system was apparently destroyed and the island well planted with English colonists and some Scottish Presbyterians. This chapter will attempt to analyze the new structure of society, the further development of the parliamentary system in Ireland, and to evaluate the success of the English policy which attempted to bind Ireland to the mother island.

I. THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The social structure had a feudal tone to it from an external view but with an important deviation. In Ireland "rights" belonged almost exclusively to the lords while "obligations" belonged exclusively to the peasants. The highest status in society was held by the country gentleman, that is, a man who possessed a large estate and could command
the votes of many theoretically individual free-holders.
The country gentlemen were the mainstays of every important function in Ireland. They were described as rugged individuals who expressed themselves in a "...bold and plain manner, regardless of polished periods and regular elocution."\(^1\)

Their political principles were in keeping with this period in Ireland. The Marquis of Downshire's correspondence gives an excellent indication of these principles. In one letter he defined jobbery as follows,

...particular benefits arising from public works do not constitute jobs, but public works undertaken for private benefits do.\(^2\)

These country gentlemen were all Anglo-Irish. At this time the Anglo-Irish owned three-fourths of the land in Ireland. Furthermore, only the Anglo-Irish enjoyed the franchise.\(^3\)

Hence, the country gentleman exerted considerable political influence. Following the country gentlemen on the social scale were the professional men. These men were also Anglo-Irish and formed the group from which the parliamentary leadership was taken. The businessmen formed the next group.

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in Anglo-Irish society in Ireland, but they had very little influence compared with the first two groups. 4

The Anglo-Irish, while they enjoyed and were proud of their local life, tried to maintain the intellectual, political, and cultural habits of the motherland. They felt that in coming to Ireland they had forfeited none of their rights and privileges as Englishmen. After all, many of them had received their Irish "stakes" in lieu of a debt owed them by the Crown. Considering the problem which England had historically faced with her colonists becoming "Hibernis ipsis hiberniores," this would seem a healthy attitude for England to encourage among her Irish colonists.

However, according to Jonathan Swift's letter written in 1726 on the state of Ireland, the English tended to extend their prejudice toward the Anglo-Irish as well as the native Irish. In this letter Swift objected to the practice of calling all persons born in Ireland Irish even though their parents and grandparents were born in England and their predecessors were the conquerors of Ireland. Due to the practice of filling civil and ecclesiastical positions with people from England, the gentry were placed in the awkward position of not being able to provide for their younger sons. Restricted from being able to place their sons in the Church, law, revenue or military and with undue restrictions making

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4 McDowell, op. cit., p. 28.
trade unprofitable, the gentry were forced to squeeze extra profit out of their tenants. In addition to objecting to these practices as showing prejudice against the Anglo-Irish, Swift also criticised them on the ground that they tended to drain the majority of Irish wealth into England.5

The practice of preferment in giving Irish posts to Englishmen was annoying to the Anglo-Irish, but the manner in which the English had paralyzed the Anglo-Irish trade was to prove the most serious annoyance. The majority of the colonists who had been planted in Ireland during the late 16th and 17th centuries could be considered as frontiersmen. They might not have been derived from the best English "stock," but they were vigorous, speculative men who saw a chance to raise their position in life in Ireland. The relatively peaceful period between the Restoration of 1660 and the Patriots' Parliament of 1689 was a prosperous period due to the economies introduced by the new colonists. Not secure in their new position, they encouraged short term investments, such as pasture farming, in contrast with investment in agriculture. This venture proved highly successful, and a brisk export trade in cattle and sheep was created with the English market. This soon

provoked the English Parliament, under pressure from English cattlemen, to pass the Irish Cattle Act in 1666, which prohibited importing Irish cattle into England. The colonists, undaunted, converted their livestock trade into a beef, tallow, hides and wool trade. The success of this venture was reflected in the revision in 1689 of the original Navigation Act to exclude Ireland from equal trade privileges with England and from direct trade with the colonies. The final coup de grâce was issued in 1699 when Parliament passed the Wool Act. This act made it illegal to export Irish wool to any foreign port. The Irish could only ship to English ports where the high tariffs made the trade unprofitable. Thus, almost within a period of thirty years, the English managed to quench the flicker of prosperity which was developing under the industry of the colonists. The Anglo-Irish were directly affected by this policy, but it was the native Irish who would indirectly bear the brunt of the hardship as profit became associated with rent.

The result of this practice was to create a situation in which it was more profitable for an Anglo-Irish landowner

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7 Ibid., p. 740.

8 Ibid., pp. 742-43.
to live in England, where he could enjoy English privileges and where his children could be assured of English birth-rights. This was an important impetus toward absentee ownership. However, in spite of the prejudices facing the Anglo-Irish, there were many who loved Ireland and preferred living in the "emerald island." This attitude was reflected by the Count of Orrery in a letter to Dr. King, dated 1747:

There was a time when I wished to have passed my days in my native country. But that time is past... I am so perfectly happy in this state, that I am regardless of the state of Europe; at least in those points which cannot affect Ireland... Most of my conversation turns upon Potatoes, Flax, Wool, Syder, and Strait ditches... My companions now are the Man-Tyger, the Wild-man, the mad-man... My Female Goddesses are Betty Montgomery, a mad-woman, and old Betty Gaah our Archdeacon's housekeeper.9

This letter smacks suspiciously of "Hibernis ipsis hiberniores." The writer certainly demonstrated his preference for living in Ireland with its "mad" people to living in England. He was interested only in those events which affected his adopted state, Ireland, and was concerned with the development of Irish agriculture, trade and internal improvement.

At the bottom of the social ladder was the "laboring poor" whose welfare, to quote Arthur Young, "...forms the broad basis of public prosperity."10 By this standard there


10 Horn, op. cit., p. 714.
was no "public prosperity" in Ireland. The labouring poor in Ireland included nearly all of the native Irish element. Under the injustice of the penal code passed in 1691 the native element was being effectively demoralized and degenerated. To break all threads of political influence, the Irish Catholics had been excluded from both the franchise and representation in Parliament and from all civil jobs such as legal offices, extending down to watchmen and gamekeepers. To break down the family unit, children were educated in the Anglican schools where they learned to speak English, and children who professed themselves Anglicans were taken from the family and bribed by a promised stipend which was exacted from the income of the child's family. A further attempt to destroy the family unit was through land inheritance. Very few Catholics owned land, but those who did were forced to divide their land equally between their children.\(^\text{11}\) There was one exception: if the eldest son would apostatise, he would inherit all. While among the few surviving landowners the tendency was to convert in order to hold the family property together, the acts of conversion were rare among the landless poor. Arthur Young noted that at the present rate of conversion (during the late 18th century) it would take 4,000 years to convert Ireland.\(^\text{12}\) Interestingly enough,

\(^\text{11}\)In 1782 the Catholics, comprising three-fourths of the population, owned one fiftieth of the land.

among the poor there was a greater rate of conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism than the reverse.\textsuperscript{13}

In an attempt to demoralize the Irish religious organization, all of the Catholic dignitaries, friars and monks, were forced to leave Ireland. This had the effect of furthering the indigenous character of Irish Catholicism as it left all religious training to the parish priests. The priest, supported voluntarily by his local area, was forbidden the use of bells, steeples or crosses in his church. To encourage the people to apostatise, each priest who turned Anglican was given an annuity of twenty to forty pounds.\textsuperscript{14}

The parish priest became somewhat of an independent religious leader and in the traditional manner of Irish Catholicism became indigenous to the community.

To frustrate the ambitions of the native Irish, an ingenious method was devised to prevent them from improving their situation. Generally speaking, the Irish could neither buy outright nor inherit land. Instead, they were forced to lease their land for thirty-one years under the condition that rent would increase as profits increased over one-third the rent. If a Protestant reported an unrevealed increase in profit, the Catholic's property could be transferred immediately to the Protestant. In the same vein a Catholic

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\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 119-122.
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could not own a horse worth more than five pounds. If a Protestant offered the Catholic five pounds for his horse, the Catholic was forced to sell.\textsuperscript{15}

As Edmund Burke described the penal laws, they were, 

\ldots well digested and well disposed in all its parts; a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.\textsuperscript{16}

The social problems created by the Penal Laws were disastrous; able men were suppressed, law was equated with force not morality, and rewards went to the informer, the hypocrite and the undutiful son. The more serious social problem arising out of the Penal Laws was the fact that the native Irish were cut off from any chance to integrate into or form an allegiance with English society. Pushed back upon his own resources, he was forced to maintain his own customs and traditions. The clans, based upon family ties, had declined as a political force; however, the idea of the clan existed as long as any of its members survived. In this way, the clan continued to play a role in Irish history as a social institution. Although the professional bards no longer existed as they had under the patronage of the noble families, their tales were not forgotten, and to a people who had little chance to develop intellectually or to express themselves culturally, the telling of tales which emphasized

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 120. 
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 123.
by-gone glories fulfilled a psychological necessity. John Stevens, when travelling through Ireland in 1690, commented upon the Irish habit of gathering together for a smoke,

They all smoke, women as well as men, and a pipe an inch long serves the whole family several years... seven or eight will gather to the smoking of a pipe.17

It is not difficult to imagine a group gathering together at night for a smoke and a "crack" by which is meant the Irish practice of matching tales.18 But the tales must have come from the traditional Irish folklore as the Irish had no other sources available to them. In this way, and with the aid of their parish priest, they were able to maintain their pride and glory in being native Irishmen.

The native Irish under the disabilities of the Penal Laws tended to develop in a wild and reckless fashion. Tied to the soil, with little future prospect, they married young, had large families and felt themselves fortunate if they could pay the rent and the priest and still have enough money on which to live.19 Continually harrassed by the middlemen who collected profits between themselves and the landlords, the natives were often forced to go to England in the late summer for the harvest in order to supplement their incomes.

17 Browning, op. cit., p. 729.
19 Dunlop, op. cit., p. 483.
Here they often fell into the hands of contractors called "saloon" brokers who contracted for their services with English farmers and took a good cut out of the Irishmen's wages.20

Arthur Young in his article, "A Tour in Ireland," left one of the best descriptions of actual living conditions among the natives. He did not find the people very industrious or hard-working.

When they are encouraged, or animate themselves to work hard, it is all by whisky, which though it has a notable effect in giving a perpetual motion to their tongues, can have but little of that invigorating substance which is found in strong beer or porter, probably it has an effect as pernicious, as the other is beneficial...21

This statement will be amusing to the modern reader who perhaps doubts the beneficial influence of porter or beer as well as the evil influence of Irish whisky. This simple English belief may well be the origin from whence is derived the stereotyped picture of the drunken Irish paddy. The apparent idleness noted by Arthur Young probably reflected a disinterest in making a profit which would only result in the raising of their rents. However, he admired their practical adaptation to their environment. They ate heartily of potatoes and milk,

...incomparably better than the small beer, gin, or tea of the Englishman, employed their livestock to


21Horn, op. cit., p. 715. Excerpts from Arthur Young's A Tour in Ireland.
provide warmth while sleeping, and were more solicitous to feed their children than the English who spend great sums providing proper clothing for children whose principal subsistence is tea." Arthur Young was making an unusually objective statement about a people who ate potatoes. At this period there was a common European aversion towards eating potatoes. People faced with starvation found it difficult to eat this noxious "root plucked from the earth." This was another of those simple beliefs which no doubt contributed toward presenting the Irish as a primitive, barbaric people.

As to the oppression suffered by the native Irish, Arthur Young declared that nothing but unlimited submission satisfied the landlord,

"It must strike the most callous traveller to see whole strings of carts whipt into a ditch by a gentleman's footman to make way for his carriage; if they are overturned or broken, it is taken in patience, were they to complain they would perhaps be horswhipped." Latornaye, a young Frenchman, left a good description of the "labouring poor" which had moved into the cities. It is interesting that during a period when the French peasants had reached the limit of their endurance of oppression, a Frenchman would be shocked at the contrasts between the rich and the poor of Dublin. He was appalled at the habitual drunkenness which he noticed among the poor.

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22 Ibid., pp. 715-716.
23 Ibid., p. 718.
There is nothing more disgusting than the spectacle of rag-covered women coming out of the public houses carrying two or three naked children and begging for alms. At such too frequent sights the heart's door closes, pity and compassion disappear, leaving behind only feelings of disgust and horror, and a desire to fly from the unpleasant company.24

The "laboring poor" who were forced off the soil due to inability to pay rents, enclosures, or simply a desire to give up the fruitless struggle were not to be absorbed by the cities since the cities lacked an expanding industry. The miserable conditions in which the native Irish were forced to live were blamed upon the Penal Laws, drinking and the landlords' greed. However, above and beyond these tangible explanations, a feeling existed that besides the economic disparities between the Irish and their masters there was a distinct difference in the mental and moral qualities of the native Irishman; a natural propensity for laziness and vice existed in his character. This attitude served to relieve many feelings of guilt among the dominant class.25

II. IRISH PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT

The parliamentary form of government had a long history in Ireland. Its development provides an interesting study in that both English parliamentary government and Common Law were experiencing their first adventure as "planted" institutions.

24Jones, op. cit., pp. 35-36.
25McDowell, op. cit., p. 33.
In Ireland as in England the parliament was bicameral. The House of Lords consisted of approximately one hundred secular peers, four archbishops and eighteen bishops of the established church. The chamber tended to become increasingly "corrupt," especially under the influence of Robert Walpole, until it consisted mainly of English place-men and Anglo-Irishmen who supported the Crown. The House of Commons was made up of two members each from thirty-two counties, one hundred seventeen boroughs, and the University of Dublin. The borough system, following its prototype in England, became increasingly "rotten." Of the two hundred thirty-four members from the boroughs two hundred of these were elected by one hundred electors, and nearly fifty of the two hundred were elected by ten members. Parliament followed the practice of not dissolving until the death of a sovereign, hence the parliamentary seats were considered the same as private property.

In Ireland there was not a development, as in England of a cabinet system. This was due to the nature of the office of the Lord Lieutenant. Evolving out of the justiciar, the Lord Lieutenant was responsible to the English executive

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26 Browning, op. cit., p. 704.
28 Browning, op. cit., p. 704.
29 Lecky, op. cit., p. 65.
rather than the Irish Parliament. With the exception of the Duke of Ormond, the Lord Lieutenant was always an English nobleman. Until the middle of the century the post was considered a sinecure and the Lord Lieutenant rarely lived in Ireland. The chief business was conducted by the Lord Justices and the Irish Privy Council, all of whom were Anglo-Irish at the beginning of this period but who were gradually replaced by Englishmen.

In effect, the Irish Parliament bore little resemblance to its English prototype. Ireland had no equivalent to the English Triennial Act, and most of Irish revenues (including quit-rents, customs, excise and hearth tax) were considered the hereditary possession of the King. When the Irish Parliament met, even its legislation, under the conditions of Poyning's Law, was subject to the approval of the English Privy Council and could be overridden by the English Parliament. This paralysis of the Irish Parliament and its inability to function for any real political purpose led the Anglo-Irish to petition in 1703 for a Union with England. Besides correcting the evils of the Irish parliamentary machine, the Anglo-Irish expressed a hope that such a union would correct,

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31 Dunlop, op. cit., p. 486.
32 Browning, op. cit., p. 704.
...misrepresentations made of the Protestants of this kingdom by designing and ill-meaning men, in order to create misunderstandings between England and Ireland and to procure beneficial employments to themselves....

This statement indicates that the Anglo-Irish felt that they were often the victims of a conspiracy and unjustly treated. The English, however, felt that the "Irish question" had been satisfactorily settled by the century and a half of reconquest and therefore the question of a union was treated with indifference and dropped. Ignored in their request for a union the Irish Parliament attempted to break its bonds and to assert itself as the final court of appeal in Ireland. This led to The Declaratory Act (1719) passed in London. The Declaratory Act was a firm reassertion of Poyning's Law which stated that Ireland was subordinate to and dependent upon the Imperial Crown of Great Britain and that Ireland was subject to the laws and the statutes passed by the British Parliament. Thus the Irish Parliament equipped with the trappings of a representative government, was neither representative of Ireland, as only the Anglo-Irish could vote, nor did it have a final voice in the matter of the government of Ireland, as it was subordinate to the legislation of the British Parliament.

33Ibid., pp. 780-81.

34Ibid., p. 705.

35Horn, op. cit., p. 683.
English policy in Ireland during the 18th century was concerned with one object, and that was to maintain English control. The tactics used to assure this control included a form of bribery through the granting of pensions and sinecures. After the incident concerning Wood's copper patent, English policy was launched in full force.  

The Irish economy was handicapped by a lack of sufficient coinage. There had been no new silver minted since 1649, and by the 18th century what silver had not been directed to England had been completely debased.  

In 1724, £400,000 was the sum total of currency in circulation in Ireland. To relieve economic pressures, the British Parliament, without consulting the Irish Parliament granted the Duchess of Kendal (one of the German "favorites" of George I) a patent to mint new copper coins for Ireland. The Duchess in turn sold the patent for £10,000 to an English iron master named William Wood. Wood's proposal to flood the country with £100,800 worth of half pennies and farthings brought forth a storm of outrage from the Irish Parliament. This outrage found a

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36 Dunlop, op. cit., p. 486.  
38 Dunlop, op. cit., p. 484.
suitable vehicle for expression in the dynamic writing of Jonathan Swift. The discontent was spread when Swift questioned the whole relationship which existed between Ireland and England. In the fourth of his famous Drapier's Letters Swift wrote:

Those who come over hither to us from England, and some weak People among ourselves, whenever in Discourse we make mention of Liberty and Property, choke their heads, and tell us that Ireland is a depending Kingdom...by the Expression, a depending Kingdom, Kill there is no more understood than that by a Statute made here in the thirty-third year of Henry VIII.

The King and his successors are to be Kings Imperial of this Realm as united and knit Crown of England.

I have looked over all the English and Irish Statutes without finding any Law that makes Ireland depend upon England, any more than England doth upon Ireland. 39

In other words, Swift rejected the interpretation of Poyning's Law found in the Declaratory Act and looked to the Crown Act of 1541 for a true statement of English-Irish relations.

His desire to have Ireland connected to the Crown as an independent kingdom would be persistently reflected throughout the century by the Anglo-Irish. To stem the tide of opinion which favored independence, Robert Walpole instituted a carefully designed policy, through his agent Archbishop Boulter, of slowly filling vacant episcopal, judicial and civil positions with English place-men and well bribed Anglo-Irishmen. The borough-owners, watching their influence dissolve under Walpole's methodical agent, compromised their integrity for a share in the lucrative business. 40

39 Horn, op. cit., p. 685.
brief movement looking towards Anglo-Irish independence was checked and the period known as the time of the "Undertakers' government" commenced.

In the long run the "Undertakers' government" was to prove an unimaginative stop-gap measure. No positive effort was made to remove the roots of discontent. Employing tactics similar to those used by Louis XIV to buy off his nobles, England tried to commute the desire for political freedom by money payments. However, among the Anglo-Irish borough owners and country gentry, the desire for political independence was only checked, not quenched. Their hopes of maintaining their rights as Englishmen had been destroyed first by the unfavorable trade acts, then by the failure to achieve union, and finally by the assertions of the Declaration Act. The Anglo-Irish were forced to become Irishmen as they increasingly became aware that their interests were associated with Ireland's interest. Between 1750 and 1771 the bitterness underlying the "Undertakers' government" began to make itself manifest.

The first outburst occurred in 1751 over the right to control surplus revenue. A proposal made by the Irish Parliament, indicating the use to be made of surplus revenues, was returned from England accompanied by the formal assent of the Crown. This giving of consent infuriated the Irish Parliament as it indicated that the Crown considered the dispensation of surplus revenue its prerogative. To combat the Anglo-Irish opposition to the Crown's assertion, the Lord Lieutenant prorogued Parliament, deprived four leaders
of the opposition of their offices and seized the surplus revenue by an Order issued under the King's sign-manual. A feeling of outrage swept over Ireland, but George II, determined to quell the opposition, did so by creating more pensions and sinecures.\footnote{Ibid., p. 487.}

This outburst made one thing clear to the Parliament in London; government by the "Undertakers" must be more closely supervised. In 1763 the Lord Lieutenant was directed to reside in Ireland, in a step designed to assure better English control. Lord Townshend was the first Lord Lieutenant to serve under this condition. In 1767, anticipating a desire for reform and hoping to overshadow the growing popularity of the "Undertakers," Townshend introduced a bill to secure the independence of Irish judges. This bill was accompanied to London by a proposal from the Irish Parliament to limit Parliament's duration octennially. Townshend's proposal was accepted in London but modified by a clause which subjected a judge's removal to a joint address from both houses of the English Parliament. The Octennial Act, however, passed, and the duration of Parliament no longer lasted until the death of the sovereign but was now automatically dissolved every eight years.

The Dublin Parliament again asserted its independence in 1769 when it refused to pass a Money Bill, which had
originated in the Privy Council, on the ground that money bills should originate in the Commons. Townshend retaliated in the prescribed fashion by proroguing Parliament and reshuffling the sinecures and pensions. This met with such furious indignation in Ireland that the English Government deemed it wise to replace Townshend with the Earl of Harcourt.\footnote{Ibid., p. 494.}

IV. SUMMARY

Thus, within a twenty year period great changes had occurred in Ireland. The Anglo-Irish, aligning themselves with Ireland, were making a bid for political freedom. English policy had failed to prevent and had, in fact, provoked the Anglo-Irish into becoming "Hibernis ipsis hiberniores." Imbued with the growing scepticism of the period, the Anglo-Irish found it advantageous to interpret the Penal Laws with greater tolerance. The welfare of the native was increasingly looked upon as bearing a direct relationship to the prosperity of the Anglo-Irish. At the same time an ill-boding phenomenon appeared among the peasants. Deprived of the chance to form a true allegiance with the existing system, or with England, the natives had retained a great deal of tribal orientation which was ancient in character. As the burdens of the tithes, rents, enclosures, and the high cost of living became more intolerable, the natives began organized resistance. Such movements as the
Whiteboys were important, not their immediate effects, but as the seeds of future peasant mobilization. The Anglo-Irish were not indifferent to these warning signs, and a common national sentiment developed in which all of the Irish "interests" resented the subordinate position of Ireland to England.

The growth of national consciousness was aided by the growth of a critical political press. One paper, called The Bachelor, was particularly critical of the "Undertakers' government," which it termed "Hibernian politics" or the "aristocratic government." The Bachelor satirized with great relish the reshuffling by Townshend of the "Undertakers'" parliament. In an article entitled, "The Sale of the Patriots: A Dialogue, In Imitation of Lucian's Auction of Philosophers" the author indicted those gentlemen who had lost their seats in Parliament."

Moralists and sage politicians have expatiated largely on the instability of court favor; you sirs, have experienced the truth of their observances.44

In general, this paper objected to the "Undertakers" as being "weak reformers and miserable financiers and not the least qualified for a seat at either the old or a new board."45

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44 Ibid., p. 73.

45 Ibid.
The Bachelor also objected to and favored reform of the widespread practice of jobbery. It considered jobbery as, "...indirect bribes, given by the aristocratic powers, to maintain their local interests; or to commute for the pretended patriots silence on official transgressions."46

All of this indicated that a political consciousness was developing in Ireland. This consciousness included not only a desire for an independent Parliament but a growing demand from some elements of society for a thoroughgoing political reform. Into this potentially dangerous situation moved the ideas of the American Revolution.

46Ibid., p. 89.
CHAPTER III

IRISH LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE

A fresh wind carrying the ideas of the American Revolution blew across Ireland during the late years of the 18th century and had the effect of uniting and re-invigorating the latent discontents which pervaded Irish society. The religious bigotry, which had served to keep Ireland divided, was beginning to wane as a result of the growing acceptance of the new beliefs of the age of reason. In addition, the scepticism that came to dominate French thought, the expulsion of the Jesuits in Spain, and the demands of the Portuguese for scriptures in their own tongue reduced the "threat" of a Romish plot for world conquest. In truth the Pope was viewed as a poor prince with but a tiny kingdom.\(^1\) The old fear that the native Irish would rise to support a Catholic invasion of Ireland had been largely dispelled by such events as the patriotic fervor which the Catholics displayed in 1769 when they had opposed the French at Carrickfergus.\(^2\) The emphasis in world affairs was gradually shifting from religious bigotry to the modern rivalry of commerce.


Among the enlightened Anglo-Irish the belief was held that an educated native Irish population would provide a more receptive group for conversion. It was to encourage this that, starting in 1768, a gradual relaxation of the social inequalities fostered by the penal codes was instituted. In 1777 the Irish Parliament proved its liberalism by passing an act which removed many inequalities—excepting the restrictions on the franchise—and which granted Catholics the right to make 999 year leases of land. At the same time the depressed economic condition of native life was recognized as a menace to society and a constant hinderance to Irish national prosperity. The only remedy for such an underdeveloped economy was an expanding industry, but Irish trade had been paralyzed by the English Trade Acts. The Anglo-Irishman resented these limitations upon trade as he also resented the restrictions placed upon the Irish Parliament in the Declaratory Act of 1719. When native unrest, as expressed through agrarian revolts, became "real," a positive program to meet the native uneasiness and discontent became imperative.

The decade of the 1780's is the most significant decade in 18th century Irish history. This chapter will attempt to analyze the major events and movements which took place during that decade as the Irish attempted to adjust the grievances which had plagued Ireland throughout the century. The important events and movements discussed will be: the rise

\(^3\)Ibid.
of the Volunteers, repeal of the trade acts, the agitation
for Irish legislative independence, the reform movement, and
the proposal for commercial union.

I. THE VOLUNTEERS

The principles of the American Revolution found
enthusiastic approval among the simmering, discontented Irish.
To begin with the Irishmen felt close bonds of kinship with
the colonials in America. As one contemporary wrote,

...there is scarce a protestant family of the middle
classes among us, who does not reckon kindred with
the inhabitants of that extensive continent.  

If this was felt by the Protestant, it was even more likely
to be felt by the native whose kin had every reason to
emigrate to the colonies where every man could be a free-
holder and religious tolerance was practical. Pro-American
sentiments were expressed in the records of various Irish
clubs and societies by the popularity of such toasts as,
"May every mercenary be obliged to pile his arms and march
to the tune of Yankee Doodle," and, "Our fellow subjects in
America now suffering persecution attempting to assert their
rights and liberties."  

The feeling of identification with the American colonists
was expressed in the Irish Parliament during discussion of

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4 McDowell, op. cit., p. 43.
5 Ibid.
a bill to raise four thousand Irish soldiers to fight for the English cause in the colonies. There was a feeling of moral repugnance towards aiding the English "cut the throats of their American brethren" and a fear that by so doing they would set a precedent which might someday be used against themselves. The troops were sent, but the feeling that American grievances were similar to Irish grievances became widely prevalent. This was held to be true because of the Declaratory Act which bound Ireland to the decisions of a Parliament in which she had no representation.

The feeling of identification with the American Revolution might have subsided into mere sympathy for the American cause had it not been for the raising of the Volunteers. After sending Irish troops to fight for the British cause, Ireland found herself unprotected and with no means for maintaining internal peace. Moreover, the Irish feared that French and Spanish frigates would attack her unprotected shores. With the agrarian revolts creating an uneasy atmosphere for property owners, the Volunteers developed spontaneously as both a military and a police force. Originally a bourgeois Protestant organization, ultimately the gallantly named corps with their bright colored uniforms georgeousy faced, with their drills, parades, reviews and sham fights, provided outlets for many of the long denied

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6Ibid., p. 45.
emotional needs of all Irishmen. Before long, the spirit which motivated the Minute Men began to overcome the Volunteers. Some of the groups were raised by landlords, many were spontaneous citizen groups, but all served as cells in which public opinion could be expressed and circulated. Before anyone realized what had occurred, a nation was in arms. In 1779 George Bruce described the Volunteers in a letter to Townshend as,

...protestants headed by men of property, well trained and better armed and clothed than the regulars.

The generous subscriptions and aid offered by the Catholics, who were prohibited from carrying fire arms, kindled a new feeling of benevolence and comradery within the Volunteers towards the Catholics. This feeling was to lead to the significant development among the Irish of a feeling of national identification.

II. REPEAL OF THE TRADE ACTS

The economic distress which had plagued Ireland throughout the century reached a peak when colonial trade was cut off by the colonial blockade. Trade was literally at a standstill. Rents could not be paid, warehouses were

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7Ibid., p. 50.


9McDowell, op. cit., p. 51.
closed, money became more scarce, and incidents of bankruptcy grew more frequent. The city streets teemed with thousands of unemployed workers. The Volunteers, composed almost exclusively of bourgeois Protestants, were natural supporters of a free-trade policy.

Almost imperceptibly the Volunteers took on a political aspect and backed a public demand for a trade settlement between Ireland and England. Under the leadership of such men as Henry Grattan, Lord Charlemont, Henry Flood and Lord Hervey, the Volunteers found effective spokesmen to speak for them in the Irish House of Commons. The first demand in the Commons for a free export trade was answered by a colorless response from the throne in which the King announced his intention to concur in all measures which were conducive, "...to the general welfare of all his subjects." This

10 Dunlop, op. cit., p. 495.

11 Henry Grattan was a lawyer in the House of Commons for the borough of Charlemont. Grattan favored a close connection with England but with Irish legislative independence and Catholic emancipation. Lord Charlemont (James Caulfield, first Earl of Charlemont) acted as an independent nobleman. Charlemont favored parliamentary reform but was against Catholic emancipation. Henry Flood, was the illegitimate son of Warren Flood, a minor government official. Henry Flood played an active part in the Undertakers' government. He favored legislative independence but not Catholic emancipation. Lord Hervey (Frederick Augustus Hervey, fourth Earl of Bristol, fifth Baron Howard DeWalden, bishop of Derry) favored a radical reform in the House of Commons and extending the franchise to the Roman Catholics. All four of these men belonged to the established church.

12 Dunlop, op. cit., p. 495.
unsatisfactory response from the Crown indicated a failure to understand Irish conditions and had grave consequences. Within a few days a riot in Dublin resulted in forcing the members of Parliament to swear that they would vote for both a free trade and a short money bill. As Hussey Burgh said in the Irish Parliament, "Talk to me not of peace. It is not peace; but smothered war. England has sown her laws in dragons teeth, and they have sprung up armed men."

The members of Parliament voted 138-100 in favor of not granting new taxes and of limiting English supplies to six months.

Lord North's government could not ignore this vote. The question was now whether Irish trade would be unshackled so that she could support herself or whether England would support Ireland. After receiving a definitive report from Edmund Perry, the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, on the economic problems created by absentee landlordism, the restrictions upon direct colonial trade and the penalties upon the wool trade, North presented a new trade bill in the British Parliament. The legislators in London, finally understanding the explosive nature of Ireland, voted to repeal the ban on the importation into Britain of woolen

13[Ibid.]
14[Ibid.]
goods, abolish the restrictions on the glass trade, and admit Ireland to equal trade advantages in trade with the colonies.15

The repealing of the trade restrictions by the English Parliament was an act of necessity rather than an act of policy. A violent reaction to the legislation was exhibited among the English commercial classes, who had suffered themselves from the colonial blockade. Their reaction served to fuse the explosive Irish discontent, which had gained organization and power through the Volunteers. The Irish press and pamphleteers poured forth their bitterness at what they felt to be unfair portrayal of Ireland painted by the British commercial classes.

...so low has their malice descended that the very mob is united against us, and printed bills are posted in several parts of the city laconically expressive of their ridicule, 'Sure Paddy wants a free trade.'16

Such statements encouraged a thorough examination of the conditions behind their economic misery. English legislation was tagged by many writers as being the culprit which had, "...like an April frost...blasted in the bud the most promising appearance of national prosperity."17 The overt


16McDowell, op. cit., p. 56.

17Ibid., p. 57.
resentment expressed by the English merchants over the 
repeal of the trade restrictions gave the Irish reason to 
fear for the permanence of the new repeal legislation. 
To prevent a later reversal of these trade decisions, the 
Irish began to demand legislative independence. Was 
legislative independence the birthright of Englishmen alone? 
There were many Irishmen who could not believe this. One 
Irishman wrote that he would never believe that liberty 
belonged solely to the English, "...until he beheld Irishmen 
born with hunches (humps) on their backs like camels, and 
Englishmen with combs on their heads like cocks."18 

Encouraged by the success she had achieved by striking 
while England was weak, the Irish decided to confirm their 
trade victories by breaking the power of the Declaratory 
Act. At this point legislative independence with a strong 
connection was the desired relationship with England. It 
was generally accepted that the two countries possessed 
common cultural and political heritages, and that the true 
interests of Ireland and Great Britain were inseparable.19

III. LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE

Definite demands for independence can be noted in 
1780 when the Irish magistrates refused to prosecute in two 
cases of military desertion. Their refusal was based on the

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18Ibid., p. 60.
19Ibid., p. 62.
assertion that the English Mutiny Act was not binding in Ireland. The Irish Parliament then presented the Crown with its own annual Mutiny Bill. England was faced with a choice between recognizing that English laws were not binding in Ireland or running the risk of desertion among the Irish troops. Under the circumstances the Bill was passed in London and returned to Ireland but with the annual limitation omitted. The annual Mutiny Bill was constructed not only to provide Ireland with her own mutiny laws but also to insure the Dublin Parliament of an annual meeting. The Irish Parliament registered indignation, but the Bill passed in Dublin with the aid of the Lord Lieutenant's (Buckingham) superb skill in corrupting.20

In 1780 Henry Grattan, who was a moderate spokesman for the Volunteer group, moved for the repeal of the Declaratory Act stating, "...that no person on earth, save the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, has the right to make laws for Ireland."21 This was the re-echoing of an Anglo-Irish sentiment which had persisted among "patriots" since the days of Jonathan Swift. Now, while England was weakened by her external and colonial problems, the Anglo-Irish were making a determined thrust, and this time they were backed

20 Dunlop, op. cit., p. 499.

by national sentiment. In his speech Grattan attempted to define his concept of the two countries' relationship:

...it is not merely the connection of the crown, it is a constitutional annexation, an alliance of liberty, which is the true meaning and mystery of the sisterhood, and will make both countries one arm and one soul, replenishing from time to time in their immortal connection, the vital spirit of law and liberty from the lamp of each other's light; thus combined by the ties of common interest, equal trade and equal liberty, the constitution may become immortal, a new and milder empire may arise from the error of the old, and the British nation assume once more her natural station—the head of mankind.22

The presentation of such a controversial proposition brought out clearly in Parliament the difference between those members who were the "patriots" and those who preferred to stay on the safe side of a sinecure. Rather than risk taking a vote, Parliament was adjourned. The Lord Lieutenant (Buckingham) was then replaced by the Earl of Carlisle, who came to Ireland well equipped with a secret fund for buying support among members.23

When Parliament met in 1781, Grattan's motion for a limited Mutiny Act was rejected 177 to 33. This blatant disregard for national opinion, which the corrupt Parliament expressed, could no longer be tolerated.24 On February 15, 19


23 Dunlop, op. cit., p. 499.

24 Ibid.
1782, the Ulster Volunteers held a convention at Dungannon where they prepared their famous resolutions for legislative independence. Of the resolutions agreed upon at this convention these six are most important:

1- Resolved unanimously, that a claim of any body of men, other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, to make laws to bind this kingdom is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance.

2- Resolved (with one dissenting voice only) that the powers exercised by the Privy Council of both Kingdoms, under or under colour or pretence of the Law of Poyning, are unconstitutional, and a grievance.

3- Resolved unanimously, that the ports of this country are, by right, open to all foreign countries, not at war with the king, and that any burthen thereupon, or obstruction thereto, save only by the parliament of Ireland, are unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance.

4- Resolved (with one dissenting voice only), that a Mutiny Bill, not limited in point of duration, from session to session, is unconstitutional and a grievance.

5- Resolved unanimously, that the independence of judges is equally essential to the impartial administration of justice in Ireland, as in England, and that the refusal or delay of this right to Ireland makes a distinction where there should be no distinction, may excite jealousy where perfect union should prevail, and is in itself unconstitutional and a grievance.

6- Resolved (with two dissenting voices only, to this and the following resolution), That we hold the right of private judgment, in matters of religion, to be equally sacred in others as in ourselves.

Resolved therefore, that as men and as Irishmen, as Christians and as protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of the Penal Laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland.25

The demand for legislative independence was to include the demands for trading rights, an annual Mutiny Bill, and judicial independence. In other words these resolutions attempted to settle the grievances of the past 80 years.

The most interesting of the resolutions concerned the Roman Catholics and the Penal Laws. This resolution reflects the genuinely liberal feeling which had developed towards the native Irish and the desire to embrace them in a union as Irishmen.

These resolutions represented the desires of eighty thousand armed men, but when they were presented in Parliament by Grattan, the Irish Parliament again chose to adjourn rather than vote upon the issue. However, the Lord Lieutenant (Carlisle) realized that the agitation outside of Parliament could no longer be ignored. To quote the *Annual Register* of 1791, "The spirit of Ireland, roused by the American War, was now calling for the restoration of her rights, in the most energetic accents. England was embarrassed and enfeebled. Ireland was armed." 26 On March 27, 1782, Carlisle suggested the repeal of the Act of George I (Declaratory Act). Before his secretary, Mr. Eden, could present Carlisle's proposal to the English Parliament, the North administration fell. Almost simultaneously, Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown and the Rockingham Whigs were

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installed at Westminster. Shortly after Carlisle's motion was presented in London, Fox introduced his majesty's message that Parliament consider the Irish problem so that the Duke of Portland, who was succeeding Carlisle as Lord Lieutenant, would have a proper policy to offer the Irish Parliament. Henry Grattan responded to this message by insisting that the Irish desires were the Dungannon resolutions.\textsuperscript{27} The crucial nature of the Irish settlement was reflected in a letter to George III from Lord Shelburne:

Of all the subjects depending, Ireland gives me the most pain. Such is the difficulty of it... It is the only subject through which I do not see some sort of way.\textsuperscript{28}

On April 27, 1782, the Duke of Portland acquainted the Irish Parliament with the King's wishes. The Constitutional Settlement contained four major provisions: first, the repeal of the Declaratory Act and the passing of Yelverton's Act (which established that bills no longer had to be approved by the English Parliament); secondly, that certain acts such as the Acts of Settlement and the recent Commercial regulations which had been passed in the English Parliament were binding; thirdly, an act which established the supreme

\textsuperscript{27}Annual Register 1782 Vol. 25, p. 178.

appeal jurisdiction of the Irish House of Lords; finally, an act which secured the independence of Irish judges.29

In response to the generous concessions made on the part of England, the Irish Parliament voted one hundred thousand pounds for the purpose of providing twenty thousand seamen for the Royal Navy.30 Fifty thousand pounds was granted at this time to provide an estate for Henry Grattan, in gratitude for the service that he had rendered to his country. On May 17, 1782, Lord Shelburne announced to the King that the House of Lords had passed the Irish resolutions. The only person in opposition had been Lord Loughborough, who objected to the mode of repeal by a resolution.31

Gradually, the original scepticism which had questioned the permanent value of the British trade concessions also began to dampen Irish enthusiasm towards the Constitutional Settlement. To prevent the future use of a legal loophole, the Volunteers, now under the influence of Henry Flood, demanded a formal renunciation of all legislative rights by the English Parliament. In 1783 Lord Shelburne was to announce under pressure from the Volunteers that the renunciation of all of the British rights to legislate had been formally acknowledged. The Renunciation Act declared that,

29Horn, op. cit., p. 697.
30Annual Register 1782 Vol. 25, p. 178.
31Fortescue, op. cit., p. 28.
...the said right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by laws enacted by his Majesty and the Parliament of that kingdom, in all cases whatever, and to have all actions and suits at law or in equity, which may be instituted in that kingdom, decided in his Majesty's therein finally, and without any appeal from thence, shall be, and it is hereby declared to be established and ascertained forever, and shall, at no time hereafter, be questioned or questionable.\(^\text{32}\)

The Renunciation Act set all legal doubts aside by declaring that no writ of error was to lie from the Irish courts to the English courts and that the right to have Irish actions and suits finally determined by the Irish courts was established and unquestionable. Thus, the Irish influenced by the American Revolution and buttressed by the Volunteers had achieved legislative independence. Unlike the Americans, Ireland had demanded a close connection with England and had recognized the same sovereign ruler.

In reality the question might be raised as to how much independence the Constitutional Settlement and the Renunciation Act actually gained for Ireland. Although bills now had to originate in the Irish Parliament, they still had to be sent "unaltered" by the Irish Privy Council to London, and only those receiving Royal assent would be returned as law. This destroyed the power of the Irish Privy Council, but not the power of the London Council. Also, what would be the procedure for establishing foreign policy for Ireland, and what relation would this policy have to

English foreign policy? Evidently, Irish foreign affairs were to remain under the guidance of Great Britain. Of great significance was the lack of concern over the fact that the English Parliament appointed the Lord Lieutenant for Ireland. This, in effect, tended to discourage the growth of responsible government. However, another point gave great concern to many Irishmen. Parliamentary reform was essential to insure any sort of representative government and that had not been dealt with.

IV. THE REFORM MOVEMENT

The workings of the borough system and its tight control by a limited number of families has already been discussed in the preceding chapter. In 1784 a secret report drawn up for the new British Prime Minister, William Pitt, described the situation in the Irish Parliament as follows: in the boroughs, Lord Shannon returned sixteen members, the Ponsonbys fourteen members, Lord Hillsborough nine members, and the Duke of Leinster seven members. The government pension and patronage list had been carried to such an extent that in 1784, in addition to forty-four placement, the House of Commons contained eighty-six members who represented constituencies which had been in a sense "rented" to the British government in consideration of titles, offices or pensions. Peerages were the special reward of borough-owners, and in this way both houses were satisfactorily
corrupted: fifty-three peers were said to be able to name one hundred twenty-three members of the lower house. Among the Irish nobility, absentee ownership was so common that in Swift's time the bishops usually constituted half of the working members of the House of Lords, and it should be remembered that ecclesiastical appointments being made, as others were, for political motives. To be precise, Ireland had become the natural prey for the place-hunter.

Further complicating Irish government was the fact that Irish administration had become a trial ground for a future English career. Lord Northington in a letter to Charles James Fox dated 1783 deplored the use of inexperienced politicians in Ireland:

...and I am sure men of abilities, knowledge, business and experience ought to be employed here, both in the capacity of Lord Lieutenant and Secretary, not gentlemen taken wild from Brookes's to make their debut in public life. A by no means small consequence of appointing Englishmen, whether experienced or inexperienced, to the most lucrative positions in Ireland, such as Lord Treasurer, Chancellor of The Exchequer and Vice-Treasurer, was that the salaries of these officials invariably found their way to England rather than into the native Irish economy. Irishmen in their own government considered themselves lucky if they could make

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33Lecky, op. cit., p. 65.

34Ibid., p. 17.
a profit from such minor posts as commissionerships of the Linen Board, cornetcies in the dragoons, through fragments of Church preferment and by miscellaneous pensions. The system of corruption was quite complete. Without a thorough-going reform, the independence of Irish legislation had little or no true political significance.

Although the independence of the Irish legislature was diminished by government corruption, Irish independence had found its expression in the growth of societies, best exemplified by the Volunteers. In 1780, in addition to the local organizations of the grand jury, and the county meeting there existed a number of small political organizations such as the Dublin Constitution Society. These societies encouraged freedom of opinion. A prevailing opinion which circulated within these societies was that the country had suffered enough from those members of Parliament who were willing to sacrifice Ireland for a reasonable bribe. Corruption was associated with the aristocracy because they were the only people who enjoyed both a seat in Parliament and enormous wealth. The Volunteers, basking in the glory of being "the first society of the kingdom," again became the leaders in the growing agitation for parliamentary reform. Under the able leadership of Henry Flood, Lord Charlemont and Lord Hervey

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36 McDowell, op. cit., p. 82.
(Bishop of Derry), a second convention was called in 1783 at Dungannon for the purpose of drawing up proposals for parliamentary reform.

At this convention the question of the Catholic franchise immediately posed a thorny problem. No one was in exact agreement as to what was actually meant by the original Volunteer resolution in which they had recognized the rights of private judgment and promised to relax the Penal Laws. Even amongst the three leaders there was dissention. Henry Flood, who admired the Irish Catholics, wished them to have every civil liberty except, "...any power in the state."\(^{37}\) Lord Charlemont felt that Catholicism was incompatible with religious and civil liberty and was against allowing the Catholics a free use of arms or a share in the government. The perverse Lord Hervey with a zeal for the Crusade favored full emancipation of the Catholics.\(^{38}\) Among a good many of the Volunteers, however, there was a tolerant attitude exhibited toward the Catholics. The people who favored Catholic tolerance realized that the separation of Protestants and Catholics in Ireland had facilitated English control. One anonymous article stated:

...why should we recollect we have different appellations?--protestants, Roman Catholics, dissenters?--Let them be forgotten and they are forgotten--we remember only that we have the common one of Irish men.\(^{39}\)

\(^{37}\)Ibid., p. 71.

\(^{38}\)Ibid.

\(^{39}\)Ibid., p. 70.
After a great deal of controversy, a compromise over the Catholic franchise was agreed upon. The final resolutions included a redistribution of the seats with a reasonable compensation for borough patrons, an extension of the franchise in the counties to include all protestants owning twenty pounds of private property over and above debts or were forty shilling freeholders with twelve months of established residence, an extension of the franchise in the boroughs to include all leaseholders of thirty-one years of which fifteen were unexpired, and finally the exclusion of all place-holders and pensioners from the vote. As a concession, six officers of the Crown would be allowed to sit in Parliament in an advisory capacity. The question of the Catholic franchise was avoided by a statement that those who were considered fit would receive the franchise. In essence the plan preserved the protestant character of Parliament while modifying many of its abuses.

On November 29, 1783, Henry Flood presented this program to the Irish House of Commons while the Volunteers were still convened. The Commons, using the excuse that the Volunteers were trying to force their proposals upon a constitutional body, voted the proposals down by a ratio of three to one. In March of 1784, Flood again presented the proposals. This time the Volunteers were disbanded, and Flood

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40Ibid., p. 100.
41Dunlop, op. cit., p. 502.
was supported with petitions from twenty-six counties.\footnote{42} Again the Commons disposed of the proposals with a statement that they wished to preserve the original constitution of 1688. The results of the reform movement in Parliament were disheartening after the superb victories which had been associated with the Volunteers. The Reform failed partly as a result of the lack of binding agreement among the leaders of the Volunteers and from an unwillingness of the ruling class to either risk losing their parliamentary influence or risk their governmental favor. The Volunteers began to disintegrate after this failure. They formed into separate groups and would never again capture the unity which had distinguished them in 1782. An attitude of disillusionment with the theory of reform by persuasion was to be found smoldering within these individual groups.

The young William Pitt had his greatest success in the English Parliament during the period in which parliamentary reform was being debated in Ireland. Pitt appointed his close friend, the Duke of Rutland, to the post of Lord Lieutenant in Ireland. Urging Rutland to sound the true desire in Ireland for reform, Pitt wrote:

I see how great the difficulty of your situation must be in this respect, because it must have naturally happened that the persons with whom you have necessarily most habits of intercourse must be those who are most

\footnote{42}Lecky, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 99.
interested against any plan of reform; that is to say, those who have the greatest share of present parliamentary interest.\textsuperscript{43}

In this letter Pitt reflects the corrupt nature of Irish government but also indicates his willingness, if necessary, to support a moderate reform. The Duke of Rutland reported that Ireland was in a constant state of turmoil. Whatever solutions that England hoped to make, according to his advice, should be approached, "...in a manly and undaunted manner."\textsuperscript{44}

Rutland described the rebellion which was seething in Dublin:

This city is, in a great measure, under the dominion and tyranny of the mob. Persons are daily marked out for the operation of tarring and feathering; the magistrates neglect their duty...\textsuperscript{45}

In Rutland's opinion the sources of the Irish disturbances could be attributed to the ambiguity of English policy following Irish legislative independence.

The desire for reform in Ireland was complicated by the split in opinion over the Catholic franchise. As Rutland described the situation:

Lord Charlemont and Mr. Flood seem to exclude them from their idea of reform, yet in some late meetings, and in one particularly held lately in this city, the point entirely ran on their admission to vote, which was carried with a single negative. As to the system of Parliament it does not bear the smallest resemblance to representation.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{43}Lord Mahon (ed.), \textit{Correspondence between the Right Honorable William Pitt and Charles Duke of Rutland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland} (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1890), p. 46.

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{46}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 17.
Furthermore, Rutland feared the radical influence that was growing in Ireland. The turmoil, the meeting, the tolerant attitude towards the Catholics appeared as evil omens for the future. In Rutland's estimation, "I should say that without an union Ireland will not be connected with Great Britain in twenty years longer." Rutland suspected that French, American and Roman emissaries were creating the unrest among the lower classes by mixing the idea of Parliamentary reform with the Catholic vote.

After the failure of the reform bill a renewed appeal to Irish uniqueness can be found in some of the political pamphlets of the period. These pamphlets urged the Irish to glorify their own traditions rather than those of the English. One writer noted that the Irish, "...in claiming relationship with the Saxon Alfred, the Hampden and the courageous Sidney," had in fact been led astray by false historical associations, for they were "native Irish" still under the control of an English pale. The radical element, or "treasonous" element, which disturbed Rutland was essentially nationalistic and for the first time urged the revival of a separate Irish cultural heritage as well as Catholic emancipation. This was a dangerous spark to ignite among a restless and dissatisfied native population which had suffered from many years of oppression and isolation in its own country.

V. THE COMMERCIAL UNION

William Pitt realized that some reform was necessary. In a letter to Rutland he wrote, "I am more and more convinced in my own mind everyday some reform will take place in both countries." However, Pitt was a student of Adam Smith, and he felt that Ireland's economic problems were the most pressing and had to be given primary consideration. By improving the economic prosperity of Ireland Pitt hoped to remove the main causes of discontent; then he proposed to effect a moderate reform of Parliament. Pitt felt certain that Parliament could regain its popularity by,

...acceding (if such a line can be found) to a prudent and temperate reform...and unite the Protestant interest in excluding the Catholics from any share in the representation or government of the country.50

Pitt's policy was moderate and sound in all but one respect. His desire to exclude the Catholics was not in keeping with the Irish mood and was especially significant in view of his later actions during the negotiations for the Act of Union of 1801.

Ireland's economy suffered a crisis shortly after the gaining of legislative independence of 1782. It was partly due to its extreme urgency that the clamor for parliamentary reform was overshadowed. The depression was fostered by two practices. First, Ireland lacked capital

49 Lord Mahon, op. cit., p. 76.
50 Ibid., p. 44.
to support an expanding commerce. This was due, in part, to the drain of capital due to absentee landlords and the great number of English placemen. 51 Secondly, Ireland's natural market was England, but the prohibitive duties placed upon all imports other than plain linen and provisions excluded Ireland from this market. Irish manufacturers, forced to trade within their own market, found themselves competing with goods from England as a result of the preferential duties given imported English goods. 52

In 1784 Luke Gardiner presented a bill in the Irish Parliament that would have increased the duties upon goods imported into Ireland from other countries in order to place the Irish manufacturer in a favored position. The bill was rejected as a result of the efforts of the British placemen and pensioners, who were not eager to displease the English government. This bill was followed by a proposal from John Foster for a Corn Law. The Corn Law (which provided for a system of bounties) passed, and, despite the bitterness expressed by Irish business men, the bill proved beneficial, as Ireland began to change from a grazing to a country of diversified agriculture. 53

51 1779 Prior's listed the sum taken out of Ireland to be around £ 627,800. 1769 it was estimated at £ 645,575. 1779 Arthur Young listed sum taken out by absentee landlords at £ 732,200 and pensions at £ 84,591. Cited by Arthur Wollaston Sutton (ed.), Arthur Young's Tour In Ireland (1776-1779) Vol. II (London: George Bell and Sons, 1892), p. 114.

52 Dunlop, op. cit., p. 502.

53 Ibid., p. 503.
The frustration of the Irish manufacturer and worker was expressed in a drive to combine and form non-importation clubs. In 1783 the weavers of Cork, who felt that their poverty was due to, "...the rage for English cloth," paraded the city with banners inscribed, "For trade we mourn." The urge to combine against British imports spread from Cork into Kilkenny and Belfast. Shopkeepers who persisted in selling imports were branded as public enemies. Some of the tarring and feathering which the Duke of Rutland observed was no doubt connected with this movement. The protest was successful in that it encouraged strong feelings of antagonism and rebellion.55

William Pitt's plan for alleviating the economic situation in Ireland was to promote a free-trade union between England and Ireland. What he hoped to accomplish by this union was to make, England and Ireland one country in effect, though for local concerns under distinct Legislators; one in the communication of advantages, and of one in the participation of burdens.56

This enlightened doctrine called for the complete equalization of duties on goods and called for an improvement of trade regulations. According to Pitt, Ireland would benefit by participating in free trade with the "exclusive" British colonies and would benefit from free trade with England by

54McDowell, op. cit., p. 88.
55Ibid., p. 88.
56Lord Mahon, op. cit., p. 58.
virtue of the cheap Irish labor. Ireland in return for these privileges was to contribute all sums which exceeded a fixed amount of her hereditary revenue towards the support of the English navy.

Pitt originated his ten resolutions in the Irish Parliament where, as he wrote to Rutland,

...considering the strength of Government in Parliament, and all the circumstances of the country, it is impossible to believe that your friends and supporters should have really any hesitation...57

Pitt's resolutions for the commercial union between England and Ireland provided for a preferred free-trade status between the two countries and stated that the naval protection of this trade would be supported by an excess hereditary tax drawn from each country and distributed in "such manner as the parliament of this kingdom shall direct."58 On February 7, 1785 the Irish Secretary, Thomas Orde, proposed the Commercial Union to the Irish Parliament. The hereditary revenue in Ireland at this time was £656,000, and it had been rising steadily. The Irish Parliament, therefore, wanted an amendment added to the proposals stating that in time of peace the surplus revenue should be used to support the Imperial navy in such manner as the Irish Parliament directed.59

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57 Ibid., p. 56.
This amendment is not surprising in light of the century long struggle between Ireland and England over the right to control Irish money bills. However, Pitt was annoyed by this attempt to amend his prudent and reasonable plan. He suspected Secretary Orde of duplicity in the affair and of irresoluteness in organizing the friends of the government to pass the bill in its original form. Pitt's proposals, including the Irish amendment, were then referred to the English Parliament with a careful introduction from the Prime Minister in which he said:

That it is the opinion of this committee that it is highly important to the general interest of the empire, that the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland shall be firmly adjusted; and that Ireland should be admitted to a permanent and irrevocable participation of the commercial advantages of this country, when the parliament of Ireland shall permanently and irrevocably secure an aid out of the surplus of the hereditary revenue of that kingdom, towards defraying the expense of protecting the general commerce of the empire in time of peace.

The enraged merchants of Lancashire and Yorkshire combined against this bill. Organized under Josiah Wedgewood, the merchants saw that thousands of petitions were circulated against the passing of this bill. So great was the merchants' fury that Horace Walpole reports hearing that Pitt had been burned in effigy.

60 Lord Mahon, op. cit., p. 125.
61 Barnes, op. cit., p. 118.
Charles James Fox, the chief political spokesman for the industrialists in this issue, was thrilled by the support he had gained in Manchester.

Our reception in Manchester was the finest thing imaginable, and handsome in all respects. All the principal people came to meet us, and attended us into the town, with buff and blue cockades, and a procession as fine, and not unlike that upon my chairing in Westminster.63

The merchants were a powerful pressure group, as is indicated by this description of their grandeur and opulence.

The bill was completely revised in the English Parliament and was expanded to contain twenty propositions. Of the nine new propositions the most objectionable to the Irish Parliament was the one which forced them to adopt all navigation laws then enforced or which might later be enforced by the British Parliament.64 This provided a real safety valve for the British merchants and would actually serve to put Irish trade back under English control.

Before the bill was returned to the Irish Parliament, Charles James Fox switched to the defense of the newly won Irish constitutional liberties and denounced these proposals a threat to Irish independence. When the proposal to reintroduce the bill was presented to the Irish Parliament, it passed by such a small majority (127-108) that it was dropped. The Irish felt that this was a great triumph over English control, and that night Dublin was illuminated in

63Ibid., p. 176.
64Dunlop, op. cit., p. 504.
It is quite certain that William Pitt was greatly disappointed over the negative outcome of this program, which he considered, "...the most important service which I believe can, in the existing state of things, be rendered to either kingdom."66

VI. SUMMARY

In evaluating the changes which took place in Ireland during the 1780's one is forced to comment that the changes which were made came about one hundred years too late. Legislative independence and a lifting of the trade restrictions would have been quite satisfactory to the Anglo-Irish colonists at the turn of the century. The effect would have been to satisfy the colonists' demand that he was still an "Englishman" and would have encouraged the growth of economic prosperity in Ireland. The practice of attempting to buy support from the colonists was to prove unwise and did not establish a pattern of true allegiance. The Anglo-Irish demonstrated their resentment of English policy by swiftly taking advantage of England's weakness in the 1780's to assert their claims for trade and legislative independence.

In reality few people were satisfied with the concessions won from the English. The repeal of the Trade Acts failed to effectively improve Irish trade. This was due to the

65Ibid.
66Lord Mahon, op. cit., p. 111.
high tariffs maintained by the English in contrast with the low tariffs maintained in Ireland. Legislative independence was turned into a travesty as England, due to the failure of the Irish reform bill, still maintained a great influence in Ireland through her many placemen in the Dublin Parliament and the control which London exercised in the Irish Council. In conclusion, one must say that the difficult questions in Ireland had yet to be met "in a manly and undaunted manner."

The most important and significant development of this period was the Volunteer movement. For once the Irish had risen above their petty quarrels and had formulated an organization to express a united national opinion. The real force behind the Volunteers might be called the middle class, and the effect of their work was to make men proud of being Irish. After the failure of the Reform Bill, however, the united national front started to dissolve. On one hand a moderate group developed, composed of such men as Grattan and Charlemont. This group had much in common with the English Whigs. On the other side was a much more definitely nationalistic group, which attempted to enlist the native Irishmen in support of its cause. During the years to come, this political awakening of the native Irishmen, long oppressed and with no deep sense of allegiance to England was to undo most of the English efforts to consolidate their control over Ireland during the 16th and 17th centuries.
The completely unsatisfactory and inconclusive nature of the legislative independence was to make itself evident in 1788-89 during the regency controversy. The Irish Parliament supported the Whig policy and desired the appointment of the Prince of Wales as regent. Despite the protest by some of the peers of Ireland and by the Lord Lieutenant that the recognition of a Regent without the agreement of England was unconstitutional, an address was presented to the Prince of Wales by delegates from both houses in Ireland on February 27, 1789. The address stated:

...we therefore beg leave humbly to request, that your royal highness will be pleased to take upon you the government of this realm during the continuance of his majesty's present indisposition, and no longer; and under the style and title of prince regent of Ireland....

Thus the age old problem which had occasioned the passing of Poyning's Law was again to raise its thorny head. Who was to decide the course of action taken by Ireland during the regency problem? The Irish Parliament maintained the Whig position that the king's insanity was tantamount to his death and that the proper successor should take the throne. Unfortunately, the hour was not carried by the Whigs. William Pitt, had been twice rebuffed by the actions of the Irish Parliament. By aligning with the Whigs the Irish Parliament had attached itself to a party that was losing its influence in English politics.

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67 *Annual Register 1789 Vol. 31*, p. 310.
CHAPTER IV

THE INTERVAL PERIOD

Irish legislative independence, won in 1782, proved to be something of a mixed blessing. It climaxed the growth in Ireland of a unified nationalistic spirit and was something of a triumph. At the same time, it was a tragedy in that none of the basic problems of Ireland, such as parliamentary reform or the Penal Acts, were solved by the gaining of legislative independence. The British government, annoyed over the position taken by Ireland during the regency controversy in 1788-89, quickly took advantage of all the inherent weaknesses of the "independent" Irish legislature. In a protest from the Irish House of Lords to the Crown, the Lords pointed out that they realized pensions and places were not new to Ireland; but they argued that they could not remember, "...any period when, in so short a time, so many of these grievances have been crowded together and inflicted upon the nation."

This observance was not exaggerated. In 1789 alone, sixteen new peerages were created or holders of titles were elevated to higher rank while the pension list was increased by £13,000 during

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1Annual Register, a review of events at home and abroad tc., 1761-19), p. 309.
the year.\textsuperscript{2} It was an ironical result that the group most adverse to parliamentary reform felt it necessary to propose an Irish Place and Pension Bill for their protection.

Unfulfilled political desires in Ireland were, during the last years of the eighteenth century, to serve as a stimulant for the spread of radical ideals launched by the French Revolution. This chapter will attempt to examine the effects of the Revolution upon Irish political thought, the changed political position of the native Irishmen, and the subsequent problems created by the growing prominence of the Catholic issue in Irish politics after 1782.

\textbf{I. EFFECTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION}

Although the Irish had felt bonds of kinship with and a keen sympathy for the American colonials in their struggle for freedom, it must be remembered that America was still considered a raw, young country. The French Revolution occurred in a country which in contrast with the United States was the acknowledged cultural center \textit{par excellence} of the western world. Throughout the whole of the enlightened eighteenth century, the spectacle of this highly civilized nation moving toward "rational government" was looked upon as a movement of unparalleled importance and majesty.\textsuperscript{3}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{2}W. E. H. Lecky, \textit{Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland} (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1871), p. 139.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{3}R. B. McDowell, \textit{Irish Public Opinion 1750-1800} (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1944), pp. 141-142.}
Before the Revolution there were already circulating in Ireland more translations of French books than similar works of German or Italian authors combined. Coupled with this preference for French culture was the fact that France had traditionally supported Irish ambitions. The famous Irish Brigade, maintained in France, had provided a welcome refuge for the native Irishmen who were excluded from civil and military offices in Ireland. The interest with which the Irish received the news of the Revolution in France was reflected in the rapid increase in newspaper articles which, after July, 1789, were devoted to French affairs. Not only was there an increase in newspaper articles on France but also books, speeches and even a copy of the first French constitution of the revolutionary period were enthusiastically circulated throughout Ireland. 4

The numerous small splinter clubs which had evolved out of the Volunteer movement invariably supported the revolutionary movement in France. On June 15, 1791, the Northern Whig Club of Belfast sponsored a municipal celebration in support of the Revolution. Townspeople, with jaunty green cockades stuck in their caps, crowded the streets and watched the long lines of paraders who, either on foot, horseback, or riding the decorated floats, hailed the new achievements of the French nation. One of these floats espoused the

4Ibid., p. 143.
motto, "For a people to be free, it is sufficient that they will it." Later that evening at a banquet held for three hundred and fifty of the townspeople, one of the toasts proposed was in favor of, "...an abolition of the Popery laws, and an extension of privileges to Roman Catholics."

The Belfast Whigs, who had promoted this celebration, included such distinguished men as Lord Charlemont, the future Lord Castlereagh, and Lord Moira.5

The French Revolution stimulated the holding of citizen banquets and the forming of new political societies. In February, 1791, a Catholic Committee was founded in Dublin with its sole object being to obtain Catholic relief and emancipation. Edmund Burke's son Richard was one of the enthusiastic organizers of this group which drew up a bill later passed as the Langrishe Bill.6

To counteract the tolerant temper of the times, many of the high functionaries of the Crown and the wealthy Anglicans in Ireland, both having an interest in maintaining the status quo, encouraged the rise of Protestant peasant groups, such as the Peep of Day Boys. The Peep of Day Boys committed many criminal offenses against the Catholics, burned their homes and ejected them from their farms. The


Catholic peasants retaliated by forming the Defenders, and the Defenders in turn committed outrages against the Protestants. Organization was not unknown to these peasants who had been expressing agrarian resentment for the preceding three decades through such groups as the White Boys.

In spite of the actions outlined above, among the educated Irish, the old technique of dividing Irishmen by religion, and thus ruling them, was coming to be considered as outmoded. In Belfast a secret society of Presbyterians developed which adhered to the principle that reform depended upon a united Protestant-Catholic front. These Presbyterians were impressed by a pamphlet published in August, 1791, entitled, "An Argument on Behalf on the Catholics of Ireland." This pamphlet, written by a Protestant named Theobald Wolfe Tone, proclaimed that Ireland was ruled by a foreign country and would continue to be so ruled until the Catholics were given the franchise, and legislative reform took place. The Belfast Presbyterians, impressed by Tone's eloquent statement of their own position, invited Tone to join their secret society. It was this group which formed the nucleus for the United Irishmen.

In addition to the clubs already mentioned there existed in Dublin an organization of more militant character

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7Ibid., p. 258.
8Ingram, op. cit., p. 265.
called the Dublin Democrats. This society, organized under Napper Tandy and Hamilton Rowan, was an attempt to recapture some of the old glamour of the Volunteers coupled with the new glamour of the French National Guard. The Dublin Democrats had snappy green uniforms with bright gold buttons. On the buttons, however, was imprinted the harp of Ireland, topped not with the traditional Crown but with the Jacobin cap.9

On October 18, 1791, in Belfast the United Irishmen held its first meeting. It immediately set up negotiations for uniting with the Dublin Democrats and the Catholic Committee. The Northern Star became the official paper for the United Irishmen, and a vigorous propaganda program commenced. Within twelve months the counties of Antrim and Down and the towns of Belfast and Newry were turned into United Irish centers of activity.10 In November, 1791, the Dublin society of the United Irishmen was formed. This society asserted that Ireland was in a state of slavery which could not be overcome without a "sincere and hearty union of all the people for a complete and radical reform of Parliament, because it is obvious that one party alone have been ever unable to obtain a single blessing for their country."11

9Hassencamp, op. cit., p. 265.
10Ingram, op. cit., p. 80.
11Ibid., p. 66.
These descriptions of the political societies in Ireland serve to illustrate the very liberal attitude which prevailed in Ireland at the outbreak of the French Revolution. This first delirious enthusiasm for revolutionary action was checked by the events which took place in France during 1792. The temper of the newspaper articles began to change as they questioned the value of a liberty which left a man subject to his neighbor's rapacity. Lurid tales were circulated about the Septembrist mobs who roasted women to death and about pastry cooks who, after the massacres, offered pies for sale, "de la viande des Suisses, des emigrants et des prêtres." After the execution of the French royal family, it was reported that all of the Irish House of Commons (except the United Irishman, Lord Edward Fitzgerald) appeared in mourning. In the South of Ireland the old Volunteer groups paraded with black bands on their arms.

The liberal cause in Ireland definitely suffered from the reaction and realignment which took place after the excesses in France. Many conservatives felt that the blood bath was the direct result of the break with tradition and the adoption of the "devilish" ideas of men like Rousseau, Voltaire and D'Alembert. The liberals, in contrast, urged the public not to let "maudlin sentimentality" triumph over the cause of liberty. Arthur O'Connor, writing for the

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12 McDowell, op. cit., p. 151.

13 Ibid., p. 152.
Northern Star, claimed that never before had the question, "...how man may best be protected and governed been so freely and ably discussed."\(^{14}\) He blamed William Pitt for subsidizing a horde of assassins which had, by creating confusion, enabled Robespierre to establish his reign of terror. He felt that Pitt was therefore responsible for much of the carnage which followed.\(^{15}\) This view reflected the liberals' distrust and dislike of the English ministry.

Shortly after Edmund Burke's essay, "Reflections on the Revolution in France," appeared in which he attempted to justify the established order, Thomas Paine challenged Burke's theories in an essay entitled, "The Rights of Man." The philosophical joust between Burke and Paine was to further intensify the cleavage among the liberals as some became arch-conservatives and others became radicals. Perhaps Lord Charlemont's reaction to Burke's and Paine's writings best expressed the moderate liberal's dilemma:

Though I have always thought that political controversy is highly useful by conveying instruction throughout the land, and though I have been greatly entertained by his Paine work as by that of his antagonist, perhaps I might be induced to wish that neither of them had published.\(^{16}\)

Lord Charlemont, a devout Anglican, could not agree with the secular and radical views espoused by Paine. However,

\(^{14}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 155.\)
\(^{15}\text{Ibid.}.
\(^{16}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 163.\)
he was at the same time a devout patriot and could not, therefore, accept Burke's defense of the status quo.

II. ENFRANCHISEMENT OF THE NATIVE IRISH

In the midst of this dissension and antagonism between conservative, liberal and radical, the united front, created by joining together the United Irishmen, the Dublin Democrats and the Catholic committee, brought forth their bill for Catholic relief. Introduced by Sir Hercules Langrishe, a private member, to prevent its becoming a government measure, the Bill was actively supported in the Dublin Commons by Grattan, Plunket, Curran, Burrowes, and Ponsonby. The Langrishe Relief Bill, as it was called, was passed in 1792 and with it disappeared the few remaining social inequalities still enforced against the Catholics. The Act repealed the statutes prohibiting Catholics from marrying Protestants, ended the bans on both Catholic schools and apprentices, did away with the restrictions upon Catholics who wished to be educated abroad, and erased the restrictions upon barristers who married Catholics. This legislation was in harmony with the rather long series of bills which had aimed at reforming the Penal Acts. It did not, however, approach the question of the Catholic franchise. The demand for the Catholic franchise was backed not only by the

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17 Lecky, op. cit., p. 135.
educated Catholics but also by those patriots who felt that Irish independence depended upon the union of Protestants and Catholics.

Lord Westmoreland, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, expressed concern over the discontent in Ireland on January 10, 1793, in an address to both houses of the Dublin Parliament. Westmoreland feared that French influence would grow and spread over Ireland unless the question of the Catholic vote was treated with "wisdom and liberality" by the Parliament. To insure tranquility, he also suggested a more effective militia bill.18

The bill dealing with the Catholic vote passed by the Irish Parliament in April, 1793, was revolutionary in character. It extended the franchise to Roman Catholics in both town and country under the same qualifications that applied to Protestants and, with certain exceptions, gave Catholics the right to sit on juries, be magistrates, bear commissions in the army and navy, and hold minor civil offices.19 While, by placing the franchise on the forty shilling basis, the law more than satisfied the political desires of the uneducated peasants, it did not satisfy the educated, wealthy Catholics who were still restricted from Parliament and the higher offices of government. The educated Catholics

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18 Annual Register V. 35 1793, p. 207.

had never seriously considered that the franchise would be extended on such a broad basis. In the *Recollections of Lord Donoughmore*, Lord Donoughmore indicates that it was the London government which insisted upon this liberal interpretation of the franchise. Lord Donoughmore wrote:

We found that Pitt and Dundas, after two or three interviews...said they would advise the prayer of their (the Irish delegation) petition being granted, and that the qualification should be forty shillings. Upon this Grattan and I asked to see Dundas, and we had different interviews with him in which we stated that the Catholics, in asking for a qualified franchise, had never thought of less than £ 20 a year and that they would be content even with £ 50. We urged again and again the impolicy of so low a franchise; and all we could get from Dundas was that it must be the same as it was in England.

This was an arbitrary and unreasonable stand for the British government to take. The situation in Ireland was obviously not going to "...be the same as it was in England." In the first place, the Catholics in England were not going to receive, at this time, a corresponding enfranchisement on any basis. Furthermore, the native peasant in Ireland had never participated in a centralized form of government. Hence, giving these peasants the vote promised to create serious problems for a government which was already struggling under a multitude of unsolved problems. The educated Irish Catholics could only interpret this liberal action in one way: that their complete emancipation would soon follow.

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Ireland remained in a state of suspense and anticipation. The organized societies, such as the United Irish, wanted the Dublin Parliament to get on with its business, to complete Catholic emancipation and make a start at Parliamentary reform.

Fearing the storm which public agitation for immediate action could precipitate, the Lord Lieutenant introduced a Bill in 1793 which aimed at abolishing the right to hold conventions or to draw up petitions. This struck at the most effective Irish method for mobilizing national public opinion. The Bill was passed although it was protested in the Irish Commons by Leinster, Arran and Lord Charlemont as being, "dangerous to constitutional liberty." This Convention Bill, rather than destroying the power of the political societies, had the unfortunate effect of forcing the societies underground and of strengthening their radical elements.

On March 25, 1794, the Lord Lieutenant was forced to inform Parliament,

...that in some parts of the county of Cork, the people, deluded by the artifices of wicked and designing men, have assembled in numerous bodies, and have compelled many to take unlawful oaths.... No attention shall be wanting on my part to the protection of the peaceable and industrious, and to the punishment of offenders against the law, and especially those who have instigated the ignorant to the commission of such dangerous crimes.23

21Hassencamp, op. cit., p. 264.
22Annual Register V. 35 1793, p. 208.
23Annual Register V. 36 1794, p. 156.
Ireland was, in effect, under martial law. Due to the increased numbers which the Militia Bill of 1793 had sanctioned, the Lord Lieutenant now had 14,000 armed men to enforce his will. Irishmen, as a result, felt that their civil liberties had been threatened: first, by the Convention Bill, then by a total disregard for public opinion concerning reform, and topping it all, by the increased evidence of the possible use of military force.

III. THE CATHOLIC ISSUE

It was at this moment that a liberal action was taken by Pitt's government. The Lord Lieutenant, Westmoreland, was replaced by the Earl Fitzwilliam. An avowed supporter of Catholic emancipation, Fitzwilliam was also a close personal friend of Henry Grattan. The Irish liberals viewed this as a sign that the London ministry approved their liberal demands. In reality this step had been dictated by a concern for English party politics. Pitt wanted the support of the Duke of Portland and several of his Whig followers. One of the conditions under which the agreement took place was that Fitzwilliam would be sent to Ireland.

Lord Fitzwilliam arrived in Dublin, where he was enthusiastically greeted, on January 4, 1795. Irish enthusiasm increased as Fitzwilliam responded to the demand

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24 Lecky, op. cit., p. 142.
for reform by removing. John Beresford, Lord Fitzgibbon (later Lord Clare) and Mr. Cooke, all three having been members of the Dublin Castle clique and agents for the British government. A good indication of how people felt about the change is the fact that within a few days over five hundred applications flooded the Government House demanding full Catholic emancipation. Fitzwilliam, although not making emancipation a government measure, did support Grattan's proposals in 1795. According to the account given in the *Annual Register*, these proposals were so in tune with the national temper that they were received by the Irish Parliament with little opposition. Permission was granted to Henry Grattan and a committee to prepare the final bill. The news was joyously received in Dublin, by both Catholics and Protestants alike.

News of the approaching Catholic emancipation, received so warmly in Ireland, was greeted with alarm in London. George III was amazed by the turn of events. In a letter to Pitt he carefully outlined the position on Catholic Emancipation which he was to maintain throughout his life:

Having yesterday, after the Drawing Room, seen the Duke of Portland, who mentioned the receipt of letters from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, which, to my greatest astonishment, propose the total change of

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26 *Hassencamp, op. cit.*, pp. 275-76.

27 *Annual Register V. 37 1795*, p. 225.
the principles of government which have been followed by every administration in that kingdom since the abdication of King James the Second, and consequently overturning the fabric that the wisdom of our forefathers esteemed necessary, and which the laws of this country have directed; and thus, after no longer stay than three weeks in Ireland, venturing to condemn the labours of the ages, and wanting and immediate adoption of ideas which every man of property in Ireland and every friend to the Protestant Religion must feel diametrically contrary to those he has imbibed from his earliest youth.

English Government ought well to consider before it gives any encouragement to a proposition which cannot fail sooner or later to separate the two kingdoms, or by way of establishing a similar line of conduct in this kingdom adopt measures to prevent which my family was invited to mount the throne of this kingdom in preference to the House of Savoy. 28

George III reflected in these two paragraphs both the prevailing English spirit of reverence for the traditional social patterns and his deep personal conviction that he had a responsibility to preserve the Protestant character of English government. William Pitt's subsequent letter to Fitzwilliam, which stated the cabinet's negative response to the proposed emancipation program, placed Fitzwilliam in such a compromised position that he felt compelled to offer his resignation.

Pitt's actions during this period at first seem quite contradictory. It was certainly his influence which had caused the Catholic franchise to be passed on the broad forty shilling basis. In view of the correspondence between Pitt and Rutland during the negotiations for the commercial

28 Barnes, op. cit., p. 343.
union it must be noted that Pitt had agreed in principle to a prudent reform of the Irish Parliament in order to unite the Protestant interest in excluding the Catholics, "...from any share in the representation or government of the country." However, Pitt's attitude toward reform had changed under the fear of a Jacobin conspiracy, and suddenly the Catholics became, instead of a threat, one of the strongest forces for conservatism. By offering the Catholics the vote, Pitt was bargaining for their support. If the Catholics would support the status quo in return for the vote, the radical threat would diminish. However, supporting the Catholic vote was quite different from supporting full emancipation. Pitt balked at giving the Catholics parliamentary representation, either because of his own reluctance to support an act which would ultimately change the Protestant character of the Irish Government or as a result of the firm resistance which the King indicated he would always offer to such a plan.

Lord Fitzwilliam's actions during this period are difficult to evaluate. In a cabinet meeting held before Fitzwilliam left for Ireland, the policy to be followed, according to existing evidence, was somewhat ambiguously stated. Lord Grenville (William Wynham) says that

29 Lord Mahon, Correspondence between the Right Honorable William Pitt and Charles Duke of Rutland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1781-87 (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1890), p. 44.
Fitzwilliam was told not to encourage the agitators of the Catholic question during the current session and instructed that, under no circumstances, was he to commit the King's Government on the question. Fitzwilliam, on the other hand, upon his return from Ireland, maintained that he had accepted the Irish office in full expectation that he was to encourage a final deliverance from all religious inequalities. Grattan confirmed Fitzwilliam's position that in a private conference with Pitt, Pitt had described the cabinet's policy as being, "not to bring forward emancipation as a Government (measure), but if Government were pressed, to yield to it." Lord Fitzwilliam's departure from Ireland in late March, 1794 was distinctive for its ill-boding gloom. In the Irish House of Commons, Sir Laurance Parsons proposed a vote of confidence in the Lord Lieutenant as an expression of the Irish nation's regard for Fitzwilliam's actions. Mr. Duquerry seconded the motion and proposed the impeachment of William Pitt. On the day of Fitzwilliam's departure, all Dublin shops were shut, no business of any sort was transacted and the whole city put on mourning. His coach

30Barnes, op. cit., p. 341.
31Annual Register V. 37 1795, p. 226.
32Lecky, op. cit., p. 32.
33Annual Register V. 37 1795, p. 222.
was drawn to the waterside by the most eminent citizens of Dublin. Every opportunity was taken to express Ireland's disappointment. In contrast, when the new Lord Lieutenant, Lord Camden, arrived five days later, there were many outbursts of violence which were quelled only by military force. Camden's first act was to replace the officials who had been discharged by Fitzwilliam and the sensitive among the Irish quickly realized that the hope of reform was no longer well founded.

On May 4, 1794, Grattan introduced the final bill of this period for Catholic emancipation. Although it had been warmly received when introduced on February 12, the final bill was defeated 155-84. To the people of Ireland this was a humiliating example of their corrupt Parliament and the extent and nature of British control. When Lord Camden prorogued Parliament on June 5, 1795, he concluded his speech with, "to preserve the constitution inviolate is the greatest object of his majesty in the present contest...." These sad events, coming hard upon the departure of Fitzwilliam, destroyed what remained of faith in the possibility of reform through legislative action and constitutional means.

34 Ibid.
35 Annual Register V, 37 1795, p. 160.
IV. SUMMARY

The most significant change which had taken place in Ireland during the eighteenth century had to do with the position of the native Irishmen. From a position of political insignificance the native had risen throughout the century to a position of relative importance. Awakened by the Anglo-Irish and their efforts for legislative independence, the native Irish had discovered that both the Protestants, who favored independence, and the British government, which favored the status quo, would bargain for native support. By failing to grant full emancipation, the British government forfeited Catholic support. The United Irishmen, in contrast, grew in both power and number. A sullen disloyalty began to permeate the island, "'creeping,' in the words of Grattan, 'like the mist at the heels of the countryman.'"

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36Lecky, op. cit., p. 147.
CHAPTER V

THE IRISH REBELLION AND THE UNION OF 1801

The turn of events in France after 1792 had momentarily checked the liberal spirit which prevailed in Ireland up to that time. However, English influence in Ireland after 1794 tended to encourage radicalism as the Irish saw their demands for Reform and Catholic Emancipation consistently ignored by the Dublin Parliament. The constitutional process was challenged as the Irish remembered that only when backed by the armed might of the Volunteers had the will of the people been effective. The revolution movement in France had strengthened the belief that reform by violent methods was possible and helped stimulate the growth of nationalism. The Irish, as they became convinced that violence was essential for imposing reform, did not find it difficult to combine violence with an appeal to Irish national feeling. This chapter will examine the effect of nationalism upon the newly elevated native Irishmen, the influence of the United Irishmen in politics and national life and the political manipulations which led to the Union of 1801.
I. NATIVE IRISH

Irish traditions and culture were briefly described in the first and second chapters of this study, where it was suggested that this highly integrated culture had been maintained by the institutions of the clan, the priests and the bards. British strategy, which attempted to destroy the Irish culture by isolating the natives from the benefits of English institutions and by penalizing the followers of Roman religion, had adverse results. Instead of destroying native culture, it tended to be strengthened by its isolation while its provincialism was further encouraged. This was to have important significance in a century which glorified nationalism.

An article published in the Annual Register in 1801 on the "Character of the Irish; from Cooper's Letters on that Nation" demonstrated the continuance of the native culture in Ireland. Cooper was amused by what he considered an outrageous family pride maintained by each individual and wrote:

I remember to have somewhere read that in the reign of Edward the second, an Ulster prince made a public boast of having succeeded to near two hundred kings of Ireland, his lineal ancestors, down to the year 1170. Would you imagine that the genealogical tree of the meanest individual has an almost equally deep root? The fact is undoubtedly so. With this spirit, and with a similar boast of ancestry, a kitchen-wench, in the service of the celebrated bishop of Cloyne,
refused to carry out cinders, because she was descended from old Irish stock.¹

The old clan system, based as it was upon kinship, had been driven "underground" by the English "reconquest" but it definitely was not destroyed. As to the provincial character of the nationalism of the native Irishmen, Cooper noted with surprise that the natives felt that their country occupied a singular position in world affairs. Holding fast to their old legends, the Irishmen claimed that their history extended beyond the chronological records of "civilized society" and that it was through their Irish ancestors that both art and science had been passed on to the West.²

In addition to the old legends which had been maintained by the bards, it appears that even the bardic method of instruction survived. In a letter to Lord Castlereagh as late as May 11, 1799, it was seriously suggested that if the new college at Armagh materialized, the old system of oral instruction be supplemented by using books and that the practice of private tutoring be supplemented by public lectures, regular professors and honors exams similar to those given at Cambridge.³

¹Annual Register a Review of Events at Home and Abroad 1758- V. 43 1801 (London: Printed for J. Dodsley etc., etc., 1761-19), p. 413.
²Ibid., p. 412.
The central authority of the Roman Catholic Church had traditionally experienced difficulty in maintaining a close connection with the Church in Ireland. This problem was further complicated by the Protestant prejudice against permitting a strong Catholicism to develop in Ireland. As a result, connections between the local priests and the Roman See were extremely weak, with the priests tending to identify themselves more with their local dioceses than with the international organization of the Church. This lack of control and the divergent interests of the central organization and local churchmen became more obvious after the Irish Catholics supported the United Irishmen. The central organization of the Church feared the spread of liberal doctrines and generally opposed movements such as the United Irishmen. As the Bishop of Kilmaoduagh stated in his proclamation against the liberal doctrines of the radical societies, "...witness the atrocities which have marked their steps in every country into which they have intruded themselves." 4 The leaders of the Roman heirarchy were not anxious to encourage a situation which might threaten the newly won position of Catholics in Ireland with a reversal such as that which had occurred in France. Yet, despite the position taken by the high officials of the Church, there are numerous records which describe

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4 Vane, op. cit., V. I, p. 174.
parish priests taking an active position within the United Irishmen. During the rebellion of 1798, it was reported that, "...the priests lead the rebels to battle: on their march, they kneel down and pray, and show the most desperate resolution in their attack."\(^5\) Traditionally, Irish Catholicism had favored provincialism instead of internationalism; therefore, the parish priests tended to support the actions and desires of the local population rather than follow the position outlined by the hierarchy.

The British had lost their appeal for support by the educated Irish Catholics because of the negative position they had maintained on full Catholic emancipation in Ireland. These Catholics, in turn, began to seriously doubt the possibility of gaining full emancipation under the existing system. The native peasants, on the other hand, did not, "...care one farthing about reform or emancipation."\(^6\) They objected to the system of farming out both the collection of Church tithes and land rents to various middlemen. The result was that the peasants were pounced upon by middlemen, who collected an extra profit both in the name of the Lord and in the name of the landlord. The efforts to relieve the peasants from this oppressive system of collection had degenerated into an argument between the established Church

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 219.

\(^6\)Annual Register V. 40 1798, p. 168.
and the landlords as to which group was the real cause of the peasants' oppression. Therefore, no positive policy was formed by the government to satisfy peasant demands. In addition, the Protestant terrorist groups, such as the Peep of Day Boys and the Orangemen, had become connected by peasant association with the existing government. The United Irishmen, therefore, by favoring full emancipation for the educated Catholics, by offering freedom from the tithe to the peasants, and by appealing to the national pride of all Irishmen were able to gain the support of a majority of the native population. This appeal to the native Irishman's provincial nationalism provided a strong anchor for Irish independence.

II. THE UNITED IRISHMEN

The origins of this society and its development from a secret Presbyterian society to an active participant in the issue over Catholic Reform has been described in the previous chapter. The question as to whether or not the leaders of this society had always held radical views is a moot question. It is obvious, however, that, after the passing of the Convention Act in 1793, radical ideas gained

7R. B. McDowell, Irish Public Opinion 1750-1800, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1944), p. 120.

favor within this group. The Convention Act, which aimed at abolishing conventions and meetings, had the curious consequence of actually benefiting and popularizing the societies of the United Irishmen. With the aid of their effective newspaper, the Northern Star, the United Irishmen were able to transmit their propaganda and thereby win the support of the southern peasants. The manifesto of the societies was enunciated at the time of the Donaghadee resolutions, and it declared that all power originated with the people; therefore, when tyrants usurp power or governments turn into tyrants, it is the right and duty of the people to wrest political power from them.\(^9\) The revolutionary character of this manifesto was further intensified by the introduction of secret oaths between the members, thus developing a sense of mutual conspiracy and confidence.\(^10\)

The government in 1796, in order to suppress the continued growth of the societies, passed the Insurrection Act which buttressed the Convention Act by placing penalties as severe as death upon the members of societies which took secret oaths. This Act further agitated the United Irishmen, and it was at this time that a centralized organization was grafted upon these somewhat diverse societies. Originating

\(^9\)Annual Register V. 39 1797, p. 145.

\(^10\)Vane, op. cit., V. I, p. 353-4.
at the base with local peasant committees, the societies were linked together through county and provincial committees in a great pyramid with a national committee at its apex.\textsuperscript{11} After establishing an organization which provided for joint action and inter-communication, the United Irishmen began to subscribe funds and to arm themselves. Every man was urged to provide himself with a musket, bayonet, ammunition, or, if nothing else, a pike.\textsuperscript{12} In Kildare alone 12,000 pikes were manufactured for this purpose.\textsuperscript{13}

The effective mass organization of Ireland by the United Irishmen prompted the French to offer the Irish aid in their struggle for independence. As early as 1794 the French had sent an expatriate Irishman named Jackson to meet with the leaders of the United Irishmen and sound out their desire for revolution.\textsuperscript{14} Unfortunately Jackson was apprehended by the English after talking with the Irish leaders, and no effective liaison with the French was established. However, the organization had expanded to include 150,000 members and was functioning with an effective central organization. On its own initiative it sent Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Thomas O'Connor to Basel

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 363.
  \item \textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 358.
  \item \textsuperscript{13}\textit{Annual Register V. 40 1798}, p. 161.
  \item \textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 156.
\end{itemize}
in 1796 to negotiate with General Hoche for French aid.\textsuperscript{15} The French had several reasons for wishing to aid the Irish. Ireland was still considered a stepping stone to England and, in addition, the Irish provided England with considerable manpower and supplies for use in the war being waged against France. The French were, therefore, willing to offer the Irish 20,000 armed men for a single siege, and to provide an additional guerilla division which would operate on the English coast as a diversion.\textsuperscript{16} The Irish representatives accepted this generous French offer and returned to Ireland to prepare for the arrival of the promised French troops.

On December 16, 1796, 13,897 Frenchmen set sail from Brest for Ireland in what General Hoche himself described as "utter disorder."\textsuperscript{17} The French fleet engaged in this expedition consisted of seventeen battleships, thirteen frigates, and fifteen other vessels. The incompetence of the French fleet was disclosed by this venture. Of the original forty-five vessels, six were wrecked along the way, seven were taken by the British, and several others were lost in the confusion of inadequate orders and directions.\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}.

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Ibid.}.

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 475.
The few ships that successfully completed the voyage were ineffective because General Hoche, who had the command, was aboard one of the missing boats. However, incompetence within the fleet was not a French monopoly. Due to the negligence of the British Admiralty, Lord Bridgeport, who was in command of the main British fleet, did not start pursuit of the French until January 3, 1797. As a result, the French ships that did manage to reach Bantry Bay were unmolested until January 6. In a post incident inquiry conducted by the British Parliament it was shown that the Admiralty, in spite of reports from their secret agents, simply had not believed the French invasion a matter for concern. Sir George Wyndham believed that an invasion was impossible in view of England’s superior naval force. Lord Dundas, who was Secretary of State for the war, described the fear of an invasion as a "bug bear." In truth the invasion was little more than a comedy of errors. Had the French been effectively organized, however, it might well have proved, as Wolfe Tone declared, England’s greatest peril since the Armada. Three subsequent expeditions by the French were also for all practical purposes, failures. One expedition, launched on August 6, 1798, was successful in reaching Ireland. However, it

19 Ibid.

20 Annual Register V. 32 1797, pp. 228-29.

21 Wilson, op. cit., p. 475.
consisted of only 1,099 well armed soldiers; hardly the
20,000 troops expected by the United Irishmen. The other
two French attempts were discovered before reaching Ireland
and deflected by the British fleet. One of the ships
captured by the British carried Wolfe Tone, who was later
convicted of treason. Thus, the most significant effect
of the French effort was the loss to the United Irishmen
of their most popular leader, and, perhaps, the waking
of English consciousness of the threat which a disloyal
Ireland was to British security.

The United Irishmen, however, primed by the expectation
of French aid and provoked by General Lake's 1797 proclamation
which aimed at disarming Ulster, continued with plans for an
insurrection. In February, 1798, the national committee
of the United Irishmen drew up a set of instructions for
the guidance of officers and commanders. The military groups
were to organize themselves in the following manner: a
committee consisting of twelve men would choose a sergeant;
ten sergeants would choose a captain, and ten captains
would choose a colonel. The pass words for distinguishing
the members were, "Be steady. Answer- I am determined to
free my country, or die. Liberty! Liberty!" Certainly
the Irishman's passionate desire for liberty can be noted

\[\text{22} \text{Ibid., p. 476.}\]
\[\text{23} \text{Vane, op. cit., V. I, p. 189.}\]
\[\text{24} \text{Ibid.}\]
in this rather grandiose "password." The insurrection was planned for March 23, 1798, and the siege was to attempt to secure Dublin Castle.

The success of the United Irishmen's organization in withholding the identity of the chief leaders from the Government presaged success for the insurrection. However, due to a last minute defection of an Irish manufacturer named Reynolds, the plot was uncovered, and on March 12, 1798, fourteen of the chief insurrectionists were seized while attending a meeting in Dublin. To further facilitate Government efforts to stamp out the planned rebellion, Lord Camden on March 24, placed Ireland under martial law. Sir Ralph Abercromby, the commander-in-chief in Ireland, received orders to establish military rule, "...without waiting for directions from the civil magistrates," and, "...to crush the rebellion in whatever shape it shall show itself, by the most summary military methods," which instructions were also followed in disarming the citizens.\textsuperscript{25} The Irish militia, consisting mainly of Protestant Irish yeomanry, was bolstered in strength for the task by the dispatch of additional troops from England.

The United Irishmen, now led by Lord Fitzgerald, formed a new directory and continued with plans for the insurrection, which was rescheduled to begin on May 23, 1798. The plans were again frustrated, this time with the betrayal

\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 164.
of the plan by a secret government agent and the capture of Fitzgerald. The rebellion, disorganized and lacking effective leadership, began as planned, but the rebels were hardly a match for the well-equipped Irish militia now augmented by regular British troops. On June 21, 1798, at the battle of Vinegar Hill, they were forced to surrender.

After the defeat at Vinegar Hill the organization of the United Irishmen began to disintegrate. In the north the union broke up rather completely, but in the south it lingered on among the native peasants. Although the southern peasants lacked distinguished leaders, they still possessed the potential for provoking a serious insurrection.

Simultaneously with the Government victory at Vinegar Hill, Lord Cornwallis, a respected military hero who had been the British commander at Yorktown, replaced Lord Camden as Lord Lieutenant. Lord Cornwallis was to find a great many Irishmen tired of a war which had served only to destroy Irish business, disrupt legal processes, and ruin the countryside. The militia, who had been given the right to free quarters, had instituted a veritable reign of terror. As one British officer reported, "...friends or foes are all the same to them, and they will plunder indiscriminately....Drunkenness is prevalent beyond anything I ever witnessed before...."

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27 Vane, op. cit., V. II, p. 342.
In an attempt to restore order, Cornwallis issued a general pardon to all rebels (excepting a few leaders) who put down their arms within a fourteen day period. An uneasy peace settled upon Ireland as the Irish waited for the next action of the Government to settle their grievances.

III. THE ACT OF UNION

The British government's solution to Irish grievances was to propose a Bill of Union. In a letter dated December 24, 1798—approximately a century after the Irish Parliament itself had petitioned for such a union—the Duke of Portland instructed Lord Cornwallis to propose the Union Bill to the Irish Parliament. To insure Irish tranquility during these proceedings, the Lord Lieutenant was invested with powers to suspend the right of habeas corpus, and a law was enacted which assured immunity for any who committed illegal acts in connection with the suppression of the rebellion. After instituting these precautions, the Bill was presented to the Irish House of Commons. This Bill, which provided for a parliamentary union in which Ireland would be represented by 100 members in the House of Commons at Westminster and 32 members in the House of Lords, was

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29 Vane, *op. cit.*, V. II, pp. 53-60.
defeated in the Irish Commons 111 to 106. The year falling between the introduction of this bill in the Irish House of Commons on January 22, 1799, and its final passing in the same house on June 6, 1800, is a distinctive year in the annals of political duplicity.

The final success of the Union Bill was due in no small part to the influence of three men: Lord Castlereagh, William Pitt, and George III. It is therefore important to consider their motivations and interest in the success of this bill.

Lord Castlereagh was at one time a member of the liberal Belfast Whigs. Although it is probably that he was decisively affected by the political reaction after 1792, it is well to remember that the Belfast Whigs, who favored reform and legislative independence, also favored a close connection with England as equal partners under the Crown. In contrast, the United Irishmen in 1797 had declared for a definite severance from the British Crown. In 1798 Castlereagh reflected his preference for a strong Irish-British connection in a letter to William Pitt:

...I consider it peculiarly advantageous that we shall owe our security so entirely to the interposition of Great Britain. I have always been apprehensive of that false confidence which might arise from an impression that security had been obtained by our own exertions.

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30 Barnes, op. cit., pp. 359-360.
31 Vane, op. cit., V. I, p. 337.
To an Irishman convinced of the necessity of maintaining a close connection between the two countries, a union would appear the lesser evil than the independence sought by the United Irishmen.

In addition to his belief in the need to maintain a close connection between England and Ireland, Castlereagh was interested in pursuing a successful political career. In a letter from Lord Camden to Castlereagh the question of Pelham's successor was discussed. Castlereagh held Thomas Pelham's post as Chief Secretary to Cornwallis on a temporary basis only. Although he was admittedly doing an excellent job, he had not received the post permanently due to Pitt's reluctance to assign an important government post to an Irishman. An Irish union with England would definitely tend to remove the stigma under which the Irishman pursued a career in politics.

At a later date, after Castlereagh had been granted his post on a permanent basis, and while the motion for union was being discussed, Thomas Pelham wrote to Castlereagh:

I had an opportunity of expressing to the Duke of Portland my opinion of your claims to that dignity (an English peerage) if the Union took place, and I had the satisfaction of hearing the Duke say...that it was a thing to be expected that Lord Londonderry (Castlereagh) would aspire to....

Therefore, Castlereagh's interest in successfully concluding the Bill of Union was not only that the union would satisfy

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32 Ibid., p. 325.
33 Ibid., V. II, p. 420.
his principle of maintaining a close connection with England but because its conclusion would also further Castlereagh's political ambitions.

To Prime Minister William Pitt the idea of union with Ireland was not new. During the controversy over the proposals for a commercial union (1786), Pitt had hoped by such arrangements to make Britain and Ireland "...one country in effect, though for local concerns under distinct legislatures..." The Irish defeated Pitt's proposals in their Commons, and the defeat was soon followed by their taking of an unfriendly position, in the view of Pitt, on the regency crisis. This position tended to emphasize the continuing constitutional question of the relative positions of the two Parliaments, which had not been settled by the negotiations for Irish legislative independence. Furthermore, frequently Pitt found himself rebuffed by the independence of the Irish Parliament. In 1793 Pitt was once more to be unsuccessful in his attempts to negotiate with the Irish Catholics. The Bill of Union, therefore, would satisfy Pitt's desire for some type of binding union between the two countries. In addition, he felt, the constitutional problem would be solved by the merging of the two parliaments, and, should Catholic emancipation take place, the Protestant character of the government in Ireland would remain intact.

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King George III pictured the union as a means by which he could definitely settle the Catholic issue. In 1793 George III had set forth his position clearly when he stated that by supporting a bill for full Catholic emancipation he would violate his Coronation Oath. In 1801 George III wrote:

My inclination to the Union with Ireland was chiefly founded on a trust that the uniting of the Established Churches of the two kingdoms would forever shut the door to any further measures with respect to the Roman Catholics. 35

Thus, by supporting a Union which would unite the two established Anglican Churches, George III thought he would build an effective barrier against political concessions to the Irish.

Both Cornwallis and Castlereagh placed the blame for the initial failure of the Union proposals upon the members of the Irish Parliament who held vested interests in the continuance of this body. In addition, both men agreed that to prevent serious obstacles to future union proposals they would have to gain the support of the native Irishmen, or rather the Catholics. As Lord Cornwallis described the problem,

In addition to the usual supporters of Emancipation, many of the Anti-Union party will now take up the Catholic cause, the better to defeat the question of Union. They will thus expect to

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detach the Catholics from Government, and to engage the mob of the whole kingdom against the Union. 36

The two men, to insure passage of the second proposal for Union, divided the task between them. Lord Castlereagh attempted to satisfy the demands of the parliamentary members, while Lord Cornwallis attempted to enlist Catholic support.

Castlereagh was certain that the parliamentary opposition could be quelled by pecuniary compensation. Withdrawing £ 5,000 from the secret service fund, he employed young lawyers to flood the country with propaganda pamphlets that described the benefits which Ireland would derive from the Union. 37 He then drew up a plan for compensating the members of Parliament. The main opposition sprang from the borough owners who, under the new proposals, would lose seats, from the barristers who had always considered the Irish House of Commons a place where they could gain fame and recognition, and from the property owners in Dublin who felt that their property values would decline after the dissolution of the Dublin Parliament. 38 Castlereagh felt that the following expenditures would effectively satisfy this opposition:

1. 108 Boroughs at £7,000 each .... £ 756,000
2. 32 Counties at £7,000 each .... £ 224,000
3. 50 Barristers at £4,000 each .... £ 200,000
4. 50 Purchasers at £1,500 each .... £ 75,000
5. Dublin influence (say) .......... £ 200,000

£ 1,455,000 39

36 Barnes, op. cit., p. 361.
37 Lecky, op. cit., p. 168.
38 Vane, op. cit., V. II, p. 149.
39 Barnes, op. cit., p. 363.
Castlereagh also warned the Duke of Portland that, 
"...nothing but an established conviction that the English 
Government will never lose sight of the Union till it is 
carried can give the measure a chance of success." 40 To 
impress this fact upon the opposition in Ireland, Castlereagh 
methodically began to dismiss from office those who opposed 
the plan. Beginning with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 
Castlereagh went on to remove three commissioners of revenue, 
one of accounts and various other minor officials. 41

Lord Cornwallis, after receiving an assurance from 
Portland, began to campaign for Catholic support of the 
Union Bill. Portland urged Cornwallis to present the union, 

...as indispensably necessary for the purpose of 
affording them a reasonable probability of being 
admitted to a full participation of rights in 
common with the Protestants, (the union would)... 
remove and quiet those apprehensions which are 
at present entertained of them on account of the 
superiority of their numbers.... 42

Cornwallis was therefore to dangle the tempting offer of 
full emancipation before the educated Catholics. In this 
way the Government hoped that these leaders among the Catholics 
would influence the peasant class in favor of the union 
and thus prevent the opposition from forming, "...the mob

40 Vane, op. cit., V. II, p. 81.

41 Henry Grattan, Memoirs of the Life and Times of 
the Right Honorable Henry Grattan, V. IV (London: Longman, 
Hurst, Ruse, Orme and Brown (etc., etc.); 1822), p. 33.

42 Vane, op. cit., V. II, p. 156.
of the whole kingdom against the Union." An interesting illumination of the personalities of these two men, Cornwallis and Castlereagh, is reflected by their reactions to the methods they used to insure the future union. The use of bribery and coercion filled Cornwallis with self-contempt and caused him to write,

I despise and hate myself every hour for engaging in such dirty work, and am supported only by the reflection that without an Union the British Empire must be dissolved.  

Castlereagh, in contrast, appeared to have performed his methodical corruption with complete candor. Perhaps this indicates that Cornwallis was essentially a military man while Castlereagh was proving to be an example par excellence of an 18th century politician.

On February 5, 1800, Lord Castlereagh introduced to the Irish Commons the eight proposals which composed the Bill of Union. The eight proposals would establish the following: first, that the Union would be called the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and would be effective from January 1, 1801; second, that succession would remain limited according to the existing laws; third, that there would only be one parliament for the united kingdom; fourth, that the House of Lords would include four

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43 Barnes, op. cit., p. 361.
44 Lecky, op. cit., p. 177.
45 Barnes, op. cit., p. 363.
rotating lords spiritual from Ireland plus twenty-eight lords temporal elected for life by the Irish peers, and the House of Commons would include one hundred members from Ireland, who would be drawn two members each from each county, two members each from Dublin and Cork, one member from Trinity College, and the remaining thirty-one members from the large cities and boroughs; fifth, that the two separate and established Anglican Churches would be united; sixth, that there would be a commercial union following, in principle, a free-trade agreement; seventh, that the support of the new government would be met by Ireland contributing two parts and England fifteen parts; eighth, that all laws and courts would remain as they were now established in the two countries subject, however, to such alteration as the United legislature might deem expedient. After the introduction and explanation by Lord Castlereagh, a vigorous discussion followed over the scandalous methods used by the government to buy off the opposition. Of the members in opposition, Henry Grattan was the most forceful. Grattan objected to the Bill in toto, but in particular he objected to the fact that although Ireland would have a separate government, there would no longer be an Irish Parliament to check its powers. Such a government, he was convinced, would function solely as a source for patronage. He further objected to the free

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46 Annual Register V. 42 1800, p. 114.
47 Grattan, op. cit., p. 11.
trade arrangement, stating that dropping the few duties which had been levied to protect Irish trade would benefit England, not Ireland. In return for dropping their duties Ireland would be allowed to export wool and cotton to England. The benefits to Ireland from this trade Grattan compared to the benefits which Britain might derive from an agreement to be allowed to export Burgundy to France. In spite of the protest against the Bill from the opposition, Castlereagh's efforts enabled the measure to pass in the Commons, 158-115. The Bill was then passed by the Irish Lords on June 13, 1800, with 72 ayes to 22 nays. However, before the Bill passed in the Lords a protest was entered in the Journals of the Irish Parliament, signed by twenty peers, which stated that this bill had been passed against the sentiments of the people and procured by illegal means.

On April 21, 1800, confident of the outcome in Ireland, William Pitt introduced the bill to the British House of Commons where it met with strenuous opposition from the Whigs. Earl Charles Grey objected to considering the proposals as long as the Irish House of Commons was controlled by the English government. Grey claimed:

There are 300 members in all, and 120 of these strenuously opposed the measure, among whom were two-thirds of the county members, the representatives of the city of Dublin, and almost all the towns which

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48 Ibid., p. 12.
49 Barnes, op. cit., p. 364.
50 Annual Register V. 42 1800, pp. 195-96.
it is proposed shall send members to the Imperial Parliament: 162 voted in favour of the Union; of these, 116 were placemen. Some of them were English generals on the staff, without a foot of ground in Ireland, and completely dependent upon Government.51

Another protest pointed to the fact that, while in England the pension list was only £120,000, in Ireland there was, in addition to a pension list of £110,000, a civil list of £104,000. Therefore, this member opposed the union on the ground that it would unduly strengthen the position of the Crown in government.52 In spite of the Whig opposition, the resolutions met with approval and within a few weeks the Bill passed in the British Commons by the sweeping majority of 236 ayes to 30 nays.53

After the proposals were ratified by the Parliaments of both Kingdoms, the Union Bill became law on July 2, 1800, when the royal assent was given. The new royal title, after the Act became effective January 1, 1801, would now be, "George the Third, by the grace of God, of the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, king, defender of the faith."54 In honor of the union a new flag was designed which would bear the three crosses of St. George, St. Andrew and St. Patrick.

51Lecky, op. cit., pp. 181-82.
52Annual Register V. 42 1800, p. 121.
53Barnes, op. cit., p. 364.
54Annual Register V. 43 1801, p. 41.
IV. SUMMARY

The Act of Union of 1801 is difficult to evaluate due to the extreme diversity of interests and attitudes held by those people involved in its support. The diversity of opinion between William Pitt and George III, concerning Catholic emancipation, precipitated Pitt's resignation on March 14, 1801. Pitt's resignation and its full significance is beyond the scope of this study. It is obvious, however, that Pitt was aware of George III's position on the Catholic issue and that he had proceeded to negotiate for a Union through Cornwallis on the basis of Catholic emancipation despite the King's opposition. William Pitt's actions during the proceedings can only be justified by presuming his conviction that a Union during this turbulent period was essential to British security and that he could force his influence upon George III once the Union was an accomplished fact. In the sense of a true union the Act was superficial. Irish tranquility during these proceedings had been maintained by the use of British troops and by indirectly promising the Irish Catholics full emancipation. Therefore, the legislative Act of Union failed to remove the roots of Irish grievances.

In 1800 the Annual Register described the uneasy acquiescence in Ireland during the proceedings for union:
The Irish harp was attuned to strains of lamentation and complaint; but martial music would have aroused the people to arms, if they had not been kept in subjection, by an irresistible armed force, poured in upon them from England. 55

Martial law and the additional English troops necessary to enforce the Union, could not hold Ireland indefinitely. When the restraints were removed, Irish pride would not easily forgive such indignities. In a confession signed by three leaders of the United Irishmen, Arthur O'Connor, Thomas Emmet, and William McNevin, the following statement was made:

...that the house-burnings, arbitrary imprisonments, free quarters, and, above all, the tortures to extort confession...(had the effect of encouraging)...revenge in the hearts of almost all the people in Ireland against those of their countrymen who have had recourse to such measures for maintaining their power, and against the connexion with Britain, whose means have been poured in to aid them. 56

This statement would indicate that the forcing of union during a period when the people held such bitter feelings toward the Irish and English governments augered forthcoming disaster. The promise of full emancipation offered to the Irish Catholics would meet stubborn resistance from George III and as Cornwallis observed, "...they are quiet now, because they feel confident of success. What a reverse must we not apprehend from their unexpected disappointment." 57

55 Annual Register V. 42 1800, p. 113.
56 Vane, op. cit., p. 371.
57 Ibid., V. IV, p. 13.
Catholics were soon to discover that the English government would be unable to fulfill its promise to support full emancipation as a result of pressure from George III. The reversal of Catholic sentiment occurred as Cornwallis had predicted.

The Union of 1801, therefore, was an undiplomatic and artificial creation from the Irish point of view. Interrupting as it did the nationalistic movement of the United Irishmen, it attempted to replace a demand for national independence with a union with England. In the following century England would ruefully discover the true feelings of disloyalty in Ireland, which lay behind the sporadic signs that appeared shortly after the Act of Union. Signs such as the popular couplet which called for:

A high gallows, and a windy day
For Billy Pitt and Castlereagh. 58

58 Ibid., V. IV, p. 24.
CONCLUSION

The popular conception of the native Irish "race" and its ability to resist assimilation into the British culture is misleading. In reality the British, at least up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, made no positive and sustained effort to assimilate the Irish. Isolated from the British society and civilization, and prejudged a wild and uncivilized race, the Irish, who possessed an unusually rich indigenous culture, had little chance for anything but a separate and distinctive development as a "nation" apart.

After the original invasion, English influence did not extend beyond the limits of the Pale. While some English institutions were introduced to this small area, for all practical purposes the greater part of Ireland continued to live by tribal institutions and follow ancient traditions. Indeed, so slight was the extent of British influence that it was long considered a privilege when a native, after petition, was granted the right of entry to the King's courts.

During the "reconquest" of the late 16th and 17th centuries, inspired largely by the religious antagonism between Anglicanism and Catholicism, native culture was somewhat weakened by the dissolution of the clans, the curbing of the influence of the bards, and the tendency to supplant the Roman Church with the reformed Church of England.
After the "reconquest" Ireland was looked upon as a conquered country rather than as an integral part of the British Empire. As a result, no positive effort was made to replace the now weakened native culture with something more akin to that existing across the channel. Rather, to safeguard British territorial control, Ireland was "planted" with English colonists.

Unlike the English colonists who went to the New World, the colonists in Ireland considered themselves primarily Englishmen. Ireland's proximity to England made it easy for the Anglo-Irish to think that they had relinquished none of their English rights and privileges by the mere fact of crossing St. George's channel. Thus, ironically, it was these colonists who led the resistance against British control. However, from the English point of view, conquered Ireland's function was to exist for the benefit of England. In the interest of English merchants, a series of Trade Acts were passed which crippled Irish trade, and, to assure for England supplies and manpower, a firm control was established over the Irish Parliament. This policy tended to force the Anglo-Irish to think of themselves as Irishmen. At the same time the native Irish, trapped by an underdeveloped economy and rarely considered by the Government, were welded together as a cultural group of limited economic means. As the Anglo-Irish began to identify themselves with Ireland, they also began to realize that success in opposing British domination
depended upon enlisting the support of the native race. It was this group that was chiefly responsible for creating the truly national opinion that demanded political independence and economic opportunity.

The demanding of legislative independence brought an age-old problem to the fore: the relationship of the local, and limited, Irish Parliament to the Parliament at Westminster. As early as 1487 the constitutional problems inherent in a system that allowed two parliaments to operate in the governing of one people were made apparent. In that year the Irish body supported Lambert Simnel's claim to the English throne in opposition to the rule of Henry VII. A repetition of this event occurred shortly after the winning of legislative independence for Ireland when the Dublin Parliament supported the Prince of Wales in the regency dispute in 1788-89, rather than George III. Such action, it is clear, could, if not checked, have threatened seriously the stability of any British regime. Thus the authorities in London thought it necessary to strengthen their influence in the Irish body by the wholesale creation of peers from among English placemen, and by constantly bribing members of the Irish Commons with generous pensions. A further complication in the relations of the two countries developed when the growing national consciousness of the Irish led to the strengthening of Catholicism, which the English, as a Protestant nation, considered a threat to their security.
Thus, throughout the eighteenth century the Irish insistence that both parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation were necessary to the solution of the problem of Ireland was not often to find favor in English circles.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the obvious British control of the "independent" Irish legislature led many Irishmen, stimulated by the republican fervor unleashed by the French Revolution, to demand complete independence for Ireland as the only acceptable solution of the problem. In laying their claims for independence upon a resurrected native culture, they posed a problem of the first magnitude for the British, who feared that a fully independent Ireland might be used as a base for foreign operations against them.

At the height of this movement and in the midst of a rebellion for independence, the English government inadvisedly forced an unpopular Act of Union upon Ireland. It appears that the most opportune time for effecting such a union would have been at the beginning of the eighteenth century when it was both desired and proposed by the Irish Parliament. With the passing of this favorable moment, with the bitter Irish reaction to later British policy, and with the resultant British counter-reaction, the basis for a true union gradually disappeared. When the union was forced, the differences which separated the two countries were far greater than any mutual interests that united them. To conquer a resisting country is possible, but to impose a union upon a resisting
country is infinitely more difficult. Further antagonism was the bitter fruit of the Union of 1801.

In conclusion it appears that the most interesting development in the 18th century in Ireland was not that native Irish culture retained its special character but that in reaction to British policy the Anglo-Irish element of society became especially responsible for the revival of this culture. These native Irish traditions were to be further strengthened during the 19th century when they played an ever more important role in a continuing conflict which was intensified by a growing nationalism.
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