

BY JOSEPH M. HERNON, JR.

CELTS,  
CATHOLICS & COPPERHEADS

*Ireland Views the American Civil War*

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

# CELTS, CATHOLICS, AND COPPERHEADS

IRELAND VIEWS THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

*By Joseph M. Hernon, Jr.*

The principal topic of public interest in Ireland between 1861 and 1865 was indisputably the American Civil War. The emigration of large numbers of Irishmen to the New World in the two decades before the war had established strong ties of both affection and blood between the two nations; and the Irish had, more importantly, come to recognize a close parallel between their own recent political history and that of the United States.

The Anglo-Irish Act of Union of 1800, which had abolished the Dublin parliament, had sharply divided the Irish citizenry into two main camps of political opinion: the unionists, who opposed the separation of Ireland from Great Britain; and the nationalists, who advocated self-determination or independence for Ireland. That some representatives of these two factions should be sympathetic, respectively, to the struggles of the American North to preserve the threatened Union, and of the American South to establish its sovereign independence, was doubtless inevitable. Many of the nationalists were able to combine a feeling for the southern rebellion with a particularly strong hostility toward American abolitionism.

But perfect concordances between domestic and American issues were possible for only a portion of the articulate Irish public. Irish unionism was itself fractured into several groups—at the two extremes a small party of social Radicals and a far larger band of conservative Whigs; and if the Radicals could look with equal hope to the American Union for emancipation of the Negro, and to the Empire for an enlightened progressivism, the more reactionary unionists would be by no means displeased at the break-up of the old rebel Republic. Irish nationalist sympathy with the American South was shadowed by a long-standing

*(Continued on back flap)*





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TO MY MOTHER  
AND IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER



## PREFACE

This book is a study of the reaction in Ireland to the American Civil War and deals principally with the dominant issues arising in Irish public opinion. It is not a work in the social sciences: I have not aimed at statistical sophistication in the weighing of conflicting attitudes, though of course I want to indicate roughly the main drifts. It is, rather, a study in the texture of opinion—the moral commitments and the moral ambiguities, the shading of liberal into self-determinist into apologist for a slave power and of reformer into emancipationist into militarist, and through it all, the connections and analogies that men could conjure for themselves between domestic and foreign issues. In order to trace the shades of opinion of the many factions in Ireland on the very complex issues of the war, I found it necessary to mention such diverse subjects as the Copperheads and the cotton famine, the unification of Italy and the Act of Union of 1800, and the Battalion of St. Patrick in the Papal Army and the Irish Brigade in the Union army.

I am indebted to many people who aided me in my research: Mr. T. P. O'Neill and the staff of the National Library of Ireland; Miss McGrath and the staff of the State Paper Office, Dublin Castle; Mrs. Goodbody and the staff of the Friends House Library, Dublin; and the staffs of the Trinity College Library, the British Museum, the Institute of Historical Research (London University), the Irish Folklore Commission, the Public Record of Northern Ireland, the Rhodes House Library (Bodleian), the Edinburgh University Library, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the Catholic University of America Library.

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J. M. H.

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“THE CORPSE  
ON THE DISSECTING-TABLE”

The American Civil War was the principal topic of public interest in Ireland from 1861 to 1865. The size of Irish emigration to the United States guaranteed this. One newspaper rightly remarked: “The American war touches Ireland more nearly than almost any other country in the world. For every parish in Ireland, there is at the other side of the Atlantic an almost corresponding colony of people, bound by ties of affection and blood. In their sufferings our people suffer.”<sup>1</sup> Irish-Americans, in turn, followed the arguments that Irish nationalists in the homeland waged among themselves over the issues of the war. The *New York Irish-American* observed: “. . . ‘The American question’ has taken so strong a hold on the Irish people at home, that its discussion has superseded every other consideration; and the foremost men of our race are gradually taking sides in opposition on it in a manner which threatens to interfere with the harmony which should prevail among men of true national feeling. It is worse than absurd.”<sup>2</sup> The American consul in Dublin was acutely aware of the importance of the Civil War to Irishmen and of a favorable Irish public opinion to the United States. He wrote to Secretary of State Seward in 1864:

As Ireland is the most important foreign country to us, having sent more emigrants during the past year, to cultivate our lands and enrich the republic, than all the world beside, and having also supplied our army and navy with many thousands of brave and hardy soldiers and sailors, it is well to keep an observant eye on public feeling and the press of the country, in order the better to enable us to neutralize both, so far as they may be damaging to our interests, and to shape our course to that end.<sup>3</sup>

Aside from emigration, another fact held the attention of the Irish to the conflict overseas. A close parallel existed between Irish and American political history during the nineteenth century. In the 1820’s

southerners seriously began to "calculate the value of the Union";<sup>4</sup> and from the Act of Union of 1800, abolishing the independent parliament in Dublin and leaving Irish affairs to be decided by an uninterested British parliament at Westminster, Irish nationalists agitated for repeal of the union between Ireland and Great Britain. There was a remarkable forecast in the concluding words of the inscription on the statue of Robert, second Marquis of Londonderry and Viscount Castlereagh (1769-1822), in Westminster Abbey: ". . . And Ireland will never forget the statesman of the legislative union."<sup>5</sup> The awareness on the part of Irish contemporaries of the similarity between the two situations was important in the development of opinion toward the American crisis. Yet the issues of the war appeared very complex to Irishmen; and there were inconsistencies as well as consistent patterns in the forming of public opinion—as evidenced by the editorial of the Confederate propaganda organ in the United Kingdom, the *Index*, which, in explaining the reasons for the lack of prosperity in Ireland in comparison with England, remarked: "It is not the union; that is the one salvation of Ireland."<sup>6</sup>

At the outbreak of the American Civil War, Ireland politically was in very poor condition. There appeared "to be no more hope for the Irish cause than for the corpse on the dissecting-table."<sup>7</sup> A contemporary politician wrote that in 1860 "politics in Ireland had apparently gone to sleep. . . . The surface was as calm as it could be made by pinching want and by dire anxiety to obtain the bare means of existence."<sup>8</sup> In 1861 the Anglo-Irish historian W. E. H. Lecky referred to "the present disorganized state of public opinion, the strange combination of extreme liberal politics with strong sympathies for foreign despotisms, the intense aversion to everything English manifested by the mass of the people." He believed that "national feeling" in Ireland had departed: "We have an English party among us, and an Italian party; but we look in vain for an Irish party." Lecky was speaking of those Anglo-Irishmen who thought of themselves purely as Englishmen and those Roman Catholic Irishmen who placed their religion—or rather, the temporal power of the papacy—above all else. He was uncertain "whether those are further removed from the traditions of nationality who repudiate all national sentiments as Irishmen, or those who would make their country simply the weapon of their church, and sacrifice every principle of liberalism upon the altar."<sup>9</sup> The aristocracy and the Catholic church were the only two well-organized pressure groups in Ireland in 1861. Otherwise, factionalism was rampant. There was no Daniel O'Connell—



no national leader of public opinion and idol of the people—but only leaders of factions within factions.

The principal clash within Irish public opinion was between unionist<sup>10</sup> and nationalist. The unionists supported the Act of Union and considered Ireland in all political matters merely a geographical term for a portion of the United Kingdom. Among the Irish unionists, four political factions existed. Corresponding to their English counterparts were the Liberal-Whig alliance supporting the Palmerston administration, the Conservatives, and the Radicals or left wing of the Liberal party who were followers of Bright and Cobden. The fourth, the Catholic unionists, were Irish Catholic supporters of Palmerston's administration and comprised the vast majority of middle- and upper-class Catholics in Ireland.<sup>11</sup> Many of the Catholic unionists, most of whom were Gladstonian (middle-of-the-road) Liberals, were converts from constitutional nationalism through political opportunism or despair.<sup>12</sup> With the rebirth of the home-rule movement in the seventies, many were reconverted. They were principally concerned with Catholic interests, to which they subordinated all else.

Opposing the unionists were the Irish nationalists, who in turn can be subdivided into two groups. The moderate or constitutional nationalists desired an independent Irish legislature for domestic affairs and sought to achieve this through moral force and political agitation. Most of the moderate nationalists were Catholics, and joined with Catholic unionists on specifically Catholic issues. The extreme or revolutionary nationalists, the Fenians and their sympathizers, desired through revolution to establish a republic in Ireland, completely divested of all political association with Great Britain.

Constitutional nationalism appeared effete in the eyes of many patriotic and idealistic young Irishmen. In 1858, in Ireland and the United States, they formed the Irish Republican Brotherhood or Fenian Brotherhood, a secret organization dedicated to the establishment of a republic. They attacked the constitutional nationalists more vociferously than the unionists and alienated many would-be friends. The I.R.B. claimed to have had many town laborers as members, but it made little headway among the peasants, who were controlled by the parish priests.

Religious issues were very much in the ascendant in Ireland from 1861 to 1865. The Catholic clergy was principally interested in disestablishing the state-supported Anglican Church of Ireland, and this Gladstone succeeded in doing in 1869. Paul Cullen, archbishop of Dublin, a leader of the Catholic unionists, believed the best way to

achieve disestablishment was to support the Liberals; in his view, the Conservatives were unalterably pledged to the establishment. But Irish Catholics also had a grievance against the Liberals: their support for the unification of Italy and opposition to the temporal power of the papacy. A few Catholic unionists believed that the Conservatives should be supported because of their opposition to Italian nationalism. The *Tablet* adopted this attitude, and its editor referred to Archbishop Cullen as "Paul Cullen of Dublin, arch-Whig as well as arch-bishop."<sup>13</sup> With Palmerston firmly entrenched after 1859 and with the Gladstonian section of the Liberals more interested than the Conservatives in the welfare of Irish Catholics, the Catholic unionists followed Cullen's lead.

The attitude of Cullen and most of the Catholic clergy toward Irish nationalism was influenced by their religious beliefs.<sup>14</sup> They viewed the Fenians as anticlericals and red republicans, who were as much a danger to the church in Ireland as were the Red Shirts to the church in Italy. Catholic Fenians, however, were not anticlerical but merely attacked clerical influence in politics, criticizing the self-righteous and omniscient attitude of Archbishop Cullen, an "apple of God's eye," as James Joyce scornfully tagged him.<sup>15</sup> The *Connaught Patriot*, in an editorial supporting the principles of the Fenians, expressed their attitude toward Cullen's condemnation of the secret brotherhood: "If a council, representing the *entire* Church, would pronounce them [the principles of Fenianism] as *dangerous to faith and morals*, then, indeed, would we, at once, and, unhesitatingly, yield implicit obedience." The *Patriot* saw a historical parallel in the anti-Fenian sermons of the Irish hierarchy and clergy: ". . . We know that red crimes had been committed in the name of the Church, when Galilleo [sic] had been persecuted by a few narrow-minded prelates and priests. . . ." <sup>16</sup> Most Catholic Irishmen during the 1860's, however, saw a more basic conflict between Fenian principles and their religious beliefs; and their religion generally received their allegiance. They would be Catholic Liberals or constitutional nationalists, and no more.

Actually, religion had pushed politics out of the limelight. The defection of Cullen and the Catholic Liberal unionists greatly contributed to the disintegration of the feeble independent Irish parliamentary party of the fifties. The remnants of the non-aligned opposition party disagreed over parliamentary tactics, particularly in reference to Palmerston's policy on the question of the Papal States. The party split down the middle in the crucial vote in March, 1859, that brought the

downfall of the Conservative government. Six members voted with the Conservatives because of their foreign policy aimed at the preservation of peace in Italy; and five, with the Liberal opposition. The party collapsed, but individuals professing the principle of independent opposition, such as John Francis Maguire and Daniel "The O'Donoghue," continued to sit in the House of Commons.<sup>17</sup>

During the Civil War, Ireland was in a disastrous economic condition. Through the death toll of the famine of 1845-47 and the excessive emigration thereafter, the country had lost 30 per cent of its population.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, a series of crop failures occurred in Ireland from 1860 to 1863. Available contemporary information revealed that they were of grave proportions. According to the budget report on April 16, 1863, of Chancellor of the Exchequer W. E. Gladstone, Irish distress was apparently worse than the more publicized distress in Lancashire. Gladstone pointed out that as a result of the cotton famine, trade to the United States in British goods fell from £22,000,000 in 1859 to £14,000,000 in 1862, but that at the same time this decrease was more than made up by the £12,000,000 increase in trade to France, such as in woolen goods. But Gladstone's statistics demonstrated a more grimly substantial slump in Irish agriculture. The yearly average value of Irish agricultural produce from 1856 to 1859 was £39,000,000. The agricultural produce for 1860 was valued at £35,000,000; for 1861, £29,000,000; and for 1862, £27,000,000. Thus there was a decrease of £12,000,000 or "nearly one-half of the total estimated value of the agricultural products of the country" and not far short of the established annual valuation of Ireland in 1862, £13,400,000.<sup>19</sup> Irish agriculture was the biggest economic problem for the United Kingdom in 1862, the crucial year in the diplomatic history of the Civil War.

For Lancashire, where ". . . one of the wealthiest portions of the country, and perhaps the very wealthiest portion of its labouring population, [was] in a condition of unexampled prostration and of grievous suffering,"<sup>20</sup> the distress was well known, and money was pouring in from many parts of the world.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the Irish crop failures had been "but partially mentioned" in the House of Commons, and Gladstone doubted "whether the attention of the public had been fully awakened to the amount of calamity which during the last few years has befallen that portion of the United Kingdom." The Irish economy was "partially balanced by the favourable condition of the linen manufacture [in Ulster]." Nor was the distress concentrated like that in Lancashire "at a particular point on the surface of the country"

but was "generally diffused" and "as broad as the area of agricultural industry. . . ." <sup>22</sup> As Gladstone's report revealed and Irish observers pointed out, the Lancashire cotton operatives were in a better position to withstand hardship than were the Irish peasants; and since Lancashire distress was more concentrated, it could more easily be alleviated.

On April 27, 1863, in the House of Commons, John Francis Maguire, one of the leading constitutional nationalists and lord mayor of Cork, expressed even greater concern than Gladstone about Irish distress: ". . . I deeply regret to be compelled to assert that nearly all Ireland is now one Lancashire. I am convinced that there is more actual and terrible distress in many counties in Ireland than in all England put together. There are alas! many districts in Ireland in which the people are literally starving. . . ." <sup>23</sup>

The Conservative *Irish Times*, spokesman for the landlords, which supported Irish contributions to the Lancashire cotton operatives' fund against the wishes of many nationalists who opposed such generosity on the grounds that "charity begins at home," believed that Irish distress was worse than that in Lancashire. <sup>24</sup> Fortunately, 1863 was a better year for Irish agriculture, and famine was staved off.

The Civil War made Irish distress even more unbearable. During 1861 and 1862 uncertainty over conditions in war-torn America slowed emigration when most needed as a safety valve in Ireland. <sup>25</sup> And in creating unemployment in Lancashire, another "El Dorado" for Irishmen, the war deprived many Irishmen there of jobs and of money to send home. <sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the Civil War reduced remittances from America that were very much needed in Ireland, and wives and parents in Ireland were often either overlooked or ineligible for financial compensation for the deaths of husbands and sons in the war. <sup>27</sup> Economically, the Irish peasants were among the worst victims of the war.

The one exception to the general economic state of mid-Victorian Ireland was the condition of Ulster. East Ulster had in 1861 a Protestant preponderance of seventy-one per cent, and Presbyterianism was the leading Protestant persuasion, with Belfast its major stronghold. There was also developing in Ulster Protestant opinion a strong attachment to the union between Great Britain and Ireland and increased opposition to home rule. Because of the Ulster custom of tenant-right, the farmers of that province were much more prosperous than those in the other three. East Ulster, moreover, had become increasingly industrialized, and this reduced emigration during the famine; Belfast could be considered an outpost of industrial Britain. <sup>28</sup>

As Gladstone noted in his budget report of April, 1863, the linen boom in Ulster partially offset the agricultural distress in Ireland. Even the Ulster farmers benefited from the boom through the increased cultivation of flax. However, there was an exception to Ulster prosperity. The cotton famine that increased the demand for linen goods wreaked havoc in the hand-loom cotton-weaving industry in Ulster. In fact, the cotton famine of 1862 to 1863 practically swept out of existence the 20,000 weavers and 80,000 muslin embroiderers who worked within a ten-mile radius of Belfast.<sup>30</sup> Many of them were eventually absorbed into the linen industries, but during the winter of 1862-63 the hand-loom weavers suffered great hardships. The secretary of the Lisburn Relief Committee wrote in January, 1863: "The causes which have produced such distress in Lancashire have acted with still greater severity on our poor operatives, who were only able in the best times to earn bare subsistence, and consequently, when the collapse came, they had no reserve funds to fall back upon."<sup>31</sup> Some of the unemployed cotton-weavers emigrated. The Lisburn Relief Committee sent 253 persons to New York on one ship and 137 to Philadelphia on another.<sup>31</sup>

Culturally as well as economically, East Ulster with its Protestant majority of Scots and other lineage constituted one of the two major social groups that stood separate from the mass of the Irish peasantry. The other was the Anglo-Irish landed aristocracy, almost exclusively Protestant. East Ulstermen and Anglo-Irish landlords shared one political sentiment—with a few exceptions they were British unionists, and deep in their patriotism: for Ulster had long since expunged the old separatist strain of the 1790's. But here the likeness ended. On social and political questions other than that of union, in fact, many of the Anglo-Irish occupied the most reactionary, and a few Ulster Protestants the most reformist, ends of the spectrum. The interest of the landlord aristocracy is obvious; Ulster Radicalism needs a little explanation. Its main source, it would appear, was a dissenting Protestant moralism of the sort that produced the Brights and the Forsters of the century. Its program included support of the abolitionist movement abroad, extension of the suffrage, disestablishment of the Irish—and even, among some Radicals, of the English—Church, and a few measures, land and educational reform, that hinted of social democracy.

These differences within the Protestant unionist ranks made for divergencies of response to American affairs. Among the most reactionary unionists, those who were of the right within the Conservative party, British chauvinism was allied to a long-standing animosity toward

the American republic—and during the Civil War, to a sympathy with a South that Britain envisioned as aristocrat. Most of the East Ulster population, taking a milder view of the issues, would probably support recognition of the Confederacy, not through hostility to the United States but through a desire to an end of an apparently futile war. Radicals, on the other hand, were by nature pro-American; the young republic was their political model, and its war with the slave power was their war. A few abolition unionists went further, finding in the idea of American union a cause analogous to their own.

If unionism could find a certain identity between its domestic aspiration and that of the Yankees, a majority among the constitutional nationalists identified with the separatist rebellion of the American South. But the United States, first rebel nation against the Empire and refuge to the Fenians, had long been held in special esteem among Irish separatists, whose tendency always was to support Washington in its disputes with Westminster. Numbers of Fenians therefore took the side of the North. And in truth, the war created a crisis of sympathies within Irish nationalism, and within the individuals who espoused it.

Finally, it should be noted that, with national hopes at such an ebb as they were in Ireland at the outbreak of the war, the national spirit was nurtured by romanticized accounts of the heroic exploits of Irishmen abroad.<sup>32</sup> The Irish brigades in continental armies had long been a source of pride and inspiration for many young Irishmen and were commemorated in ballads and poems. In 1860 the Battalion of St. Patrick, consisting of about one thousand men, fought futilely in the papal armies; but in the minds of many Irishmen, the Battalion had sacrificed not only for the pope but also "for the cause of nationality in Ireland."<sup>33</sup> The Irish units in the two American armies—and especially the famous Irish Brigade of the Union—gave fresh substance to the Irish national identity.

1. *Cork Examiner*, June 10, 1861.

2. *Irish-American*, December 5, 1863.

3. W. B. West to W. H. Seward, November 26, 1864, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Dublin, Vol. IV.

4. Famous remark of Thomas Cooper, a philosopher of secession and president of South Carolina College, in 1827 (R. G. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* [New Haven, Conn., 1949], p. 140).

5. Personal observation.

6. *Index* (London), September 22, 1864.

7. Statement of Charles Gavan Duffy in announcing his decision to retire from Irish politics in 1855, prior to emigrating to Australia (C. G. Duffy, *The League of North and South: An Episode in Irish History, 1850-1854* [London, 1886], p. 364).

8. W. J. O'N. Daunt, *Ireland and Her Agitators* (Dublin, 1867), p. 241.

9. W. E. H. Lecky, *The Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland* (London, 1861), pp. 3-4.

10. The term "unionist" should not be confused with "Union sympathizer," i.e., an Irishman who supported the American Union in its war against the Confederacy.

11. John Martin to O'Neill Daunt, September 18, 1865, National Library of Ireland, MS 8047-1.

12. The term "Catholic unionist" is used interchangeably with "Catholic Whig" and "Catholic Liberal." A few Catholic unionists occasionally supported the Conservatives.

13. Quoted in E. S. Purcell, *Life of Cardinal Manning* (2 vols.; London, 1895), I, 687.

14. See Peadar MacSuibhne (ed.), *Paul Cullen and His Contemporaries, with Their Letters from 1820-1902* (Naas, Co. Kildare, 1961), I, 391-94, 397-405.

15. James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, quoted in *A Book of Ireland*, ed. Frank O'Connor (London, 1959), p. 116.

16. *Connaught Patriot*, March 26, 1864.

17. J. H. Whyte, *The Independent Irish Party 1850-9* (London, 1958), *passim*.

18. The population fell from 8.1 million in 1841 to 5.7 million in 1861.

19. T. C. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser. (356 vols.; London, 1830-91), CLXX, 207-9.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

21. W. O. Henderson, *The Lancashire Cotton Famine 1861-1865* (Manchester, 1934), *passim*.

22. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., CLXX, 207-9.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 835-37.

24. *Irish Times*, January 6, 1863.

25. Despite the war, emigration increased tremendously in 1863 and 1864 when economic conditions in Ireland improved sufficiently to provide many with money for emigrating. Emigration in 1863 would probably have been closer to 200,000 than 100,000 had there not been a war on. In the speech in April, 1863, quoted above, J. F. Maguire said that "should peace be once established in America, the rush of the people from their own country would be something fearful . . ." (Hansard, *op. cit.* n. 19 above, pp. 835-37).

26. *Cork Examiner*, November 25, 1862.

27. E.g., W. B. West to W. H. Seward, May 26, 1862, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Galway, Vol. I.

28. T. W. Moody and J. C. Beckett (eds.), *Ulster Since 1800, A Political and Economic Survey* (London, 1954), *Ulster Since 1800, A Social Survey*, 2d Ser. (London, 1957), *passim*.

29. E. R. R. Green, *The Lagan Valley, 1800-50* (London, 1949), p. 110.

30. Hugh McCall to Messrs. Richardson, Spence, and Co., Liverpool, January 20, 1863, quoted in Hugh McCall, *The Cotton Famine of 1862-63, with Some Sketches of the Proceedings of the Lisburn Relief Committee* (Belfast, 1872), p. 28.

31. *Ibid.*, *passim*; E. R. R. Green, "The Cotton Hand-loom Weavers in the North-east of Ireland," *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 3d Ser., VII (1944), 39-41.

32. At that time two descendants of the "Wild Geese" were in prominent positions, Marshal MacMahon in the army of Napoleon III and General Leopold O'Donnell as prime minister of Spain.

33. G. F. H. Berkeley, *The Irish Battalion in the Papal Army of 1860* (Dublin, 1929), p. 220.



## MERCENARIES OR MARTYRS?

The American Civil War aroused the intense interest of the Irish people chiefly because of the role of Irish-Americans on and off the battlefield. At that time the Irish were the principal immigrant group in the United States and probably the largest foreign element in the armies of the Union and the Confederacy.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, emigration to America had a much greater effect on Ireland than on any other country. In 1860 the U.S. census commissioner remarked that for every Irish immigrant in the United States only five persons remained in Ireland, whereas the ratio for Germany was 1:33; for Norway, 1:34; and for England, 1:42.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the Irish had a more personal interest in the war than other Europeans. In Ireland, Irish involvement in the war was much discussed, and the tragedy of the fratricidal war hit home. In the Union armies there were at least 150,000 soldiers of Irish birth.<sup>3</sup> Young Irishman John Mitchel claimed there were 40,000 Irish-born Confederate soldiers.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the Union Irish units were the famous New York Sixty-ninth Regiment of Colonel Michael Corcoran and the New York Eighty-eighth Regiment, or "Connaught Rangers," which included Irish veterans of the British army in India and the Crimea—two of the units of Meagher's Irish Brigade; the Massachusetts "Irish Ninth"; the Pennsylvania Twenty-fourth, the Ohio Tenth, the Indiana Thirty-fifth, and the Missouri Seventh regiments; and the Wisconsin Seventeenth Regiment, with companies such as the Mulligan Guards of Kenosha, Corcoran Guards of Sheboygan, Emmet Guards of Dodge, and Peep O'Day Boys of Racine. The Confederate Irish units included the Fifth Confederate Regiment, commanded by General Patrick Cleburne of Arkansas, the Louisiana Irish Tartars, the Emmet Guards of

Richmond, Virginia, and the Emerald Guards of the Eighth Alabama Regiment.<sup>5</sup>

Many famous Irishmen fought in the war. Major General Philip Sheridan was one of the ablest Union generals.<sup>6</sup> Brigadier General James Shields, who defeated Stonewall Jackson in a battle near Winchester, Virginia, had been a general in the Mexican war and at various stages in his political career served as U.S. senator from Illinois, Minnesota, and Missouri.<sup>7</sup> Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher, commander of the New York Irish Brigade, had won renown as a Young Irelander and "Meagher of the Sword." On the Confederate side the most famous Irishman was Major General Patrick Ronayne Cleburne, who was killed at the battle of Franklin, Tennessee, on November 30, 1864. Robert E. Lee called him "a meteor shining from a clouded sky" and Jefferson Davis characterized him as the "Stonewall Jackson of the West."<sup>8</sup> Other Irish Confederate soldiers included the three sons of John Mitchel. The eldest, Captain John Mitchel, Jr., was killed while in command of Fort Sumter on July 20, 1864. Another, Private Willie Mitchel, was killed in Pickett's charge at Gettysburg. The third, James, lost his right arm in a battle near Richmond.<sup>9</sup>

Irishmen were prominent in many other walks of life in America during the Civil War era. Edwin Lawrence Godkin, born in County Wicklow and a "militant Liberal" product of Queen's College, Belfast, was one of the leading northern journalists and a member of the abolitionist "internationale." Writing for the London *Daily News* from 1862 to 1865, he was "the best informed New York correspondent writing to the London press," and his letters were of "great value in encouraging the British friends of the North."<sup>10</sup> Godkin's counterpart in the Confederacy was the proslavery "Forty-eighter" John Mitchel, who during the war was at first editor of the *Richmond Enquirer* and later leader writer for the *Richmond Examiner*. Mitchel was a correspondent to the Irish press who gave encouragement to the nationalist friends of the South.<sup>11</sup> Other well-known Irishmen in the North included Charles G. Halpine, whose letters to the press in the style of an ignorant Irish private under the pen name "Miles O'Reilly" were very popular; Patrick Ford, who began his newspaper career under the abolitionist W. L. Garrison and founded the *Irish World*; and John Savage, journalist, poet, Fenian, and author of "The Starry Flag."<sup>12</sup> On the Confederate side, there was John William Mallet, a talented chemist who was supervisor of the ordnance laboratories of the Confederacy and later a founder and president (1882) of the American Chemical

Society, and W. M. Browne, assistant secretary of state for the Confederacy.<sup>13</sup>

An Irishman was also a prominent song composer of the war: in 1863 Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, the Boston bandmaster who was born near Dublin, wrote the lyrics of the ballad "When Johnny Comes Marching Home."<sup>14</sup>

The leaders of the Catholic church in the Union and the Confederacy were Irishmen. Archbishop John J. Hughes of New York, the principal Catholic Union supporter, and Bishop Patrick N. Lynch of Charleston, South Carolina, chief among rebel Catholics, were both Irish-born. Both were also sent by their governments to Ireland as good-will ambassadors during the war.<sup>15</sup> And finally, our list should include second-generation Americans with Irish-born parents—such as Stephen Russell Mallory, the secretary of the navy of the Confederacy; Mathew Brady, the war photographer; and Father Abram Joseph Ryan, the poet-laureate of the Confederacy.

There were a number of Irishmen, moreover, whose careers brought them to America during the Civil War era and who were important in the history of the war on both sides of the Atlantic. Sir Charles Stanley Monck, fourth viscount Monck, was governor-general of British North America from 1861 to 1867, and of the Dominion of Canada from 1867 to 1868. He was notably successful in his efforts to maintain peace between Great Britain and the United States and to establish the Canadian confederation.<sup>16</sup> William Howard Russell, renowned for his reporting of the Crimean War, was the London *Times's* correspondent from the theater of war during 1861 and 1862. He was very able and fairly impartial in his reports; though not approving of the Confederate cause and abhorring slavery, he did admire the South's determination and ability. His accurate report of the northern debacle at Bull Run was bitterly resented by the northern press, and the *New York Times* labeled him "Bull Run" Russell. Ridiculed and ostracized in the North, he resigned and returned to London; and a bitterly anti-northern successor was appointed.<sup>17</sup> Dion Boucicault, the Irish dramatist, was an important figure of the nineteenth-century American stage. Two of his plays contributed to contemporary Civil War literature. The first, *The Octoroon, or Life in Louisiana*, opened in New York in 1859, and both northerners and southerners thought he sympathized with their own cause. According to a biographer, his "Old Pete" in the play was "far more genuine and human than Uncle Tom"—more of the Joel Chandler Harris type appearing in the romantic literature of the "Lost

Cause," but nevertheless capturing the mental and spiritual horrors of slavery, while underplaying the physical. A second play, *Belle Lamar*, based on incidents in the war, premiered in New York in 1874.<sup>18</sup> The careers of Monck, Russell, and Boucicault reveal the broad spectrum of Irish and Anglo-Irish participation in the war.

## II

Although there was a keen interest in the war throughout Ireland, it was the Irish nationalists who proudly singled out the heroic feats of their countrymen in the war and recoiled the most at the terrible bloodshed. Most of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy took scant notice of the trials and heroism of the Celtic-Irish in the war and were merely concerned with the political and economic implications. The nationalist majority had the most to lose and the most to be proud of.

Public opinion in Ireland on Irish participation in the war addressed itself to two matters: the achievements and tribulations of Irishmen living in the States at the outbreak of the war; and the problem of emigration to the United States during the conflict—or more especially the question of Union recruiting of emigrants in Ireland and in the dockyards of northeastern American ports.

Before the outbreak of war the *Nation* expressed the hope that it would not witness "the horrors of civil war in the States. Irishmen must have a special abhorrence of such a contest, as from the large number of our countrymen scattered through all parts of the Union, it is but too likely that Irish blood would flow on both sides." After Fort Sumter it expressed the sentiments of the constitutional nationalists and most of the Irish people:

Our countrymen in the Northern States desire to defend the Union to which they swore allegiance; on the other hand, we cannot but recollect that in the South our countrymen were safe from insult and persecution, while "Nativeism" and "Knownothingism" assailed them in the North. There are friends of ours on both sides of this quarrel. It is a strife between brothers. We cannot desire to see either party beaten down in blood. We shall look out anxiously for news, not of victories and defeats, but of peace and reconciliation.<sup>19</sup>

After the northern rout at Bull Run, the *Tipperary Advocate* reflected the attitude of most nationalists, who were primarily interested in the welfare of their countrymen in the United States and secondarily concerned with other issues in the war. It commented:

What mattered it to us, whether puritanical North or slave-holding South, carried off the laurels of victory. . . . It was of no moment to us whether the stars and stripes of the Union or the palmetto ensign of the Confederates waved over a triumphant host. Our concern was with another flag—the sunburst of Erin, under whose folds were marshalled the truest, loyalest, and bravest hearts on either side. . . . In our opinion adhesion on the part of Irish-Americans to North or South is a mere question of locality. . . .<sup>20</sup>

But the Fenians could be enthusiastic about Irish participation in the war. In its first editorial on the war, the short-lived Fenian newspaper, *Irish People*, suggested that Ireland benefited from the war: "It has restored the somewhat tarnished military prestige of our race. It has restored the Irish people's weakened confidence in the courage of their hearts and the might of their arms." The war had also "shown to us the Irish people, in our own days, a living example of what a people's army can do—an army officered exclusively by men sprung from the ranks of the people, and (what touches us more nearly) a large proportion of whom are Irish-born." After the war those officers and soldiers of Irish birth "will turn their eyes and hearts fondly towards the land of their birth. . . ." <sup>21</sup>

The Fenians later reconsidered their position, however, in light of the Irish casualty lists, and near the end of the war, the *Irish People* commented: "Whatever be the result of this war it cannot but be painful to us to reflect that so much Irish blood has been shed in any cause save that of Ireland. Doubtless, at the end of the war, many Irish soldiers will remain who will be willing to shed their blood for Ireland. This at least is some consolation." <sup>22</sup> Among the Irish people, at any rate, there was a unanimous desire for peace and among the majority—but with significant dissent—a desire for peace at any price, even ensuring the establishment of an independent Confederacy.

The most important events of the war in the shaping of Irish opinion were the feats of the Irish Brigade—most poignantly and gloriously, its virtual annihilation at the Battle of Fredericksburg in December, 1862—and the New York draft riots of July, 1863.

Meagher's Irish Brigade, like Pickett's soldiers exalted at a moment of heroic failure, had its near predecessor in the Irish Papal Brigade—the Battalion of St. Patrick, of about one thousand men commanded by Major Myles O'Reilly, which had fought in the army of Pius IX in 1860. Many veterans of that earlier unit, in fact, reappeared in the American war, and numbers of these came under Meagher's famous command. According to the Rome correspondent of the *Tablet*, "the greater part of the Irish Brigade in the Papal service . . . passed into

that of the Northern states, where they have greatly distinguished themselves." <sup>23</sup> The Irish public followed the careers of these men, who were in a romantic Irish tradition of military service to causes in other lands.

In an editorial mourning the death of Captain Patrick Clooney of Meagher's Brigade at Antietam, the *Tipperary Advocate* said of the Papal veterans who had fought at Bull Run: "In that disastrous retreat from Richmond, which was only saved from degeneration into a shameful flight by the valorous steadiness of Meagher's command, one and twenty brave youths who had escaped the fire of Piedmontese artillerists unscathed, fell before the Southern rifle." Clooney, the editorial mused, "with two other comrades of Perugia, Costello and Synan, left Waterford in the opening of '61 for the express purpose of taking arms under his townsman Thomas Francis Meagher, whom he loved with all the fidelity and fullness of heart of a clansman for his chief. . . ." Clooney "did not live long to wear his spurs and though he died the death he ambitioned, perhaps, most of all, we do not think he perished quite on the field he desired." With his "indomitable Munster pluck," he "risked his life once for Faith, and following the martial promptings of his breed, he devoted it the second time to Gratitude—a chivalrous, albeit some might deem it an erring, impulse. . . ." <sup>24</sup>

Newspaper references to members of the Papal Brigade were numerous. The commander of Company "H" of Meagher's Irish Brigade at Antietam was Lieutenant John H. Gleeson, "formerly of the Irish Papal Brigade." Killed in battle fighting in the Irish Brigade was Lieutenant Michael O'Connell of Ballybunnion, who had won the Order of Pius IX while in the Battalion of St. Patrick. Other Papal Brigade veterans included Captain John Coppinger, who later rose to the rank of general in the U.S. Regular Army, and probably the most famous, Captain Myles Walter Keogh, who was to be immortalized in death with Custer at the Little Bighorn. Keogh was brevetted as major for gallantry at Gettysburg and later as lieutenant colonel. He wrote regarding his military career and love of adventure to his brother in Ireland: ". . . Now having my order of Chevalier de St. Gregoire and the position of colonel in this army I may rest satisfied that I have carried out some at least of the rather visionary fancies we as boys indulged in in days of long ago." <sup>25</sup>

The first big opportunity for extolling the heroism of the Irish in the war came at the Battle of Bull Run in July, 1861, with Colonel Corcoran and Acting-Major Meagher's New York 69th, soon to form part of the Irish Brigade. News reports on this brigade were followed

more closely than those on any other Irish unit in the war. At Bull Run the Sixty-ninth joined in the retreat of the rest of the northern army and did not particularly distinguish itself, except perhaps in comparison with the other northern units. Yet southern journals praised the valor of the Sixty-ninth; and of the various groups in Colonel W. T. Sherman's brigade at Bull Run, the Sixty-ninth had the largest number killed.<sup>26</sup> The Irish nationalist press attacked the London *Times's* correspondent, W. H. Russell, for supposedly slandering Meagher's courage and overlooking the heroism of the Sixty-ninth during the battle.<sup>27</sup> Meagher's hometown *Waterford News* stated that "every citizen of Waterford feels a just pride in the glory Thomas Francis Meagher has won for himself."<sup>28</sup> The nationalist Dublin *Irishman* contrasted the "noisy 'Native American' regiments running home to their mother's apronstrings as fast as they could" with the "Irish fighting with desperate bravery, under 'Native American' generals of astounding incompetency, for that very people who, a year or two before, burned their convents, insulted their priests, and threatened to rob themselves of all lawful rights of citizenship."<sup>29</sup>

Although the Irish public was proud of the Sixty-ninth, it also regretted the spilling of Irish blood. Though the pro-North *Dundalk Democrat* criticized those Irishmen who hoped the Confederate victory would bring an early peace and end the shedding of Irish blood,<sup>30</sup> the vast majority of Irishmen at this early stage deplored the war that would cost so many Irish lives. Commented the *Catholic Telegraph* after Bull Run: "We deeply regret the large loss of life sustained by the gallant 69th in this fratricidal strife." The *Cork Examiner* hated to see Irish courage wasted in "this miserable war."<sup>31</sup> As the war dragged on, the Irish public became increasingly outspoken advocates of peace. It was the North, in their opinion, that was on the offensive; and it was in northern armies that most Irishmen were dying and with little respect. Upon the North, then, the Irish placed the onus for the continuation of the conflict.

The conduct of Meagher's Brigade at Fredericksburg—which with the New York draft riots had the greatest impact upon the Irish mind of any incidents of the war—involved predominantly the Irish of New York, where there existed the largest concentration of Irishmen in any state or city. They were also the most strategically located, for events in New York through reports of the New York newspapers were well publicized in Europe. An estimated 51,206, or 15 per cent, of the soldiers from New York State were Irish-born.<sup>32</sup>

In the autumn of 1861 the Irish Brigade was formed, composed of the Sixty-ninth, Eighty-eighth, and Sixty-third New York Volunteers. Through political conniving, Meagher was appointed its commander and brigadier general of volunteers. The Brigade had a distinguished record and at the bloody battle of Antietam in September, 1862, was praised for bravery.<sup>33</sup> But it was at Fredericksburg that it won its fame. On the orders of Major General Ambrose Burnside, on December 13, 1862, the Irish Brigade, with every man wearing a sprig of green boxwood in his cap, charged up steep Marye's Heights toward the Confederate installations and was cut to pieces. Meagher wrote that of the 1,200 men he had led into battle only 280 remained the following morning.<sup>34</sup> Confederate generals testified to the magnificence of the ill-fated assault. George Pickett wrote to his wife: "Your soldier's heart almost stood still as he watched those sons of Erin fearlessly rush to their death. The brilliant assault . . . was beyond description. Why, my darling, we forgot they were fighting us, and cheer after cheer at their fearlessness went up all along our lines." James Longstreet said it was "the handsomest thing in the whole war," and Robert E. Lee judged that "never were men so brave" and reported how A. P. Hill had cried out: "There are those d— green flags again!"<sup>35</sup>

Fredericksburg is today the best-remembered incident of Irish heroism in the war. J. I. C. Clarke's poem "The Fighting Race" commemorates it in one stanza. John Boyle O'Reilly wrote a narrative poem about the battle entitled "At Fredericksburg—Dec. 13, 1862," romanticizing the role of the Irish on both sides: he noted the presence of a Confederate Irish brigade on Marye's Heights and its horror at having to shoot fellow Irishmen in Meagher's command.<sup>36</sup>

The reaction in contemporary Ireland was far from jubilant. The nationalists mourned the annihilation of the Brigade and became more hostile toward the Union war effort. The way the Irish were "driven to mere slaughter" upon the heights of Fredericksburg, they grumbled, was yet another example of the northern attitude toward the Irish.<sup>37</sup> A few nationalist northern partisans, while believing that Lincoln should "dismiss the incompetent men he has about him," did not see any use in "wailing" for the Irish Brigade.<sup>38</sup> When Meagher was given permission to recruit another brigade in the autumn of 1863—an unsuccessful venture—the nationalists were cynical: "If by his eloquence, or the prestige of his name, four or five thousand more Irishmen can be trapped into serving in the ranks of President Lincoln, then there is so much trouble saved to the Federal recruiting officers."<sup>39</sup>



Irish unionists generally took no notice of the Irish role at Fredericksburg. Some of the Catholic Liberals, the converts from nationalism, mourned the slaughter of the Irish there.<sup>40</sup> But most of the Protestant and Catholic unionists viewed it as just another battle and seized the opportunity to call on the North to end the war.<sup>41</sup>

The Dublin correspondent of the *Times* did realize some of the implications for Ireland in the destruction of the Irish Brigade and cynically commented in the summer of 1863:

It is something of concession for the *Nation* to rely on votes in parliament instead of fighting men. Perhaps this arises from the dispiriting news about the Irish in America. Great things were expected one day from "Meagher of the Sword" and his Irish Brigade; but the brigade is now annihilated, and the *Nation* trusts that the treatment the Irish generally have experienced from the government of the Northern States will induce them to consider "whether they have not been heedlessly precipitate in their hurry to assist in the attempted subjugation of a young nation which has taken arms in defence of its rights to choose its own rulers and form of government. . . ." <sup>42</sup>

The other incident that made most of the Irish public irrevocably opposed to the war policy of the North and to the forcible restoration of the Union was the New York draft riots in July, 1863. The anti-Negro, anti-draft sentiment of the Irish Americans had been building up to a fever pitch for some time. In the summer of 1862 the Irish had been incited to anti-Negro riots in a number of cities, such as the riot in Brooklyn on August 4, 1862, in which two to three thousand Irishmen assaulted Negroes.<sup>43</sup> John Jay, the grandson of the chief justice, wrote to Secretary of War Stanton that "the minds of the Irish are inflamed to the point of absolute and brutal insanity."<sup>44</sup> During the week of July 12, 1863, "the most violent race riots of American history took place in the streets of New York" as a result of the enforcement of a conscription act that Congress had passed four months earlier. The number of Negroes lynched by white rioters is not known; an estimated 85 per cent of the twelve hundred to fifteen hundred whites killed by policemen and soldiers came from Ireland.<sup>45</sup>

It was not surprising that the Irish figured so prominently in the New York riots, for, living in squalor and comprising about 25 per cent of the population of New York City, they were ideal mob material.<sup>46</sup> In 1862 and 1863, moreover, the Irish had been active in other draft disturbances such as those in Boston; Pottsville, Pennsylvania; Troy, New York; Milwaukee; and Dubuque. In these cities they had been joined by Germans and other laborers, who were the hardest hit by the draft.

These rioters did have a grievance, for the law was grossly unfair in

allowing a draftee to escape by paying three hundred dollars in cash or by furnishing a substitute.<sup>47</sup> The Irish also had another reason for rioting: their opposition to Negro emancipation, an opposition based on the fear of Negro labor competition and what the Irish considered to be the hypocrisy of the abolitionists who were oblivious to white wage slavery in the North.

The Irish-American Copperhead *New York Freeman's Journal* expressed the hostility of most Irish-Americans to the federal draft when it wrote that many immigrants were "beguiled" from other lands "under the pretense of work" and tricked into enlisting; if they attempted to leave the army, they were shot down as deserters. In apportioning the draft quota, complained the journal, the administration discriminated against the poor.<sup>48</sup>

It should be noted that many Irish-Americans disapproved of the riots and suffered at the hands of the New York mobs. In the great disturbance of 1863 a Colonel O'Brien was lynched, and a mob destroyed the house of Colonel Robert Nugent, who had succeeded Corcoran as commander of the New York Sixty-ninth and was in charge of the draft in New York City. "It was not the Irish as Irish who revolted, but the penniless Irish laborer who saw his life thrown away in a cause, abolition, in which he had no interest."<sup>49</sup> Commented a historian of the New York Irish: "The Irish did the rioting, the killing, and the dying, the Irish took the blame for the disgraceful events, but it was American politicians who stirred them up for their own cheap ends. Once more the Irish had proved themselves the tools of men who should have known better."<sup>50</sup> Even Garrison's *Liberator*, in noting the role of the Irish, remarked: "For them we have no burning indignation: they are the wretched victims of intelligent and desperate conspirators, who deal with them as the gambler does with his loaded dice."<sup>51</sup>

But E. L. Godkin, in a report to the London *Daily News*, summed up the attitude of the Irish-Americans in the North, after the riots in New York and other cities:

A soldier in uniform can hardly show himself with safety in the Irish quarter in the great cities. . . . Such men as Mr. Richard O'Gorman, one of the "martyrs" of 1848, are just as passionate in their defence of slavery, as if they had never spouted on behalf of human rights under the shadow of the "ould house in College Green." The only one of the whole company of Irish apostles of freedom who has remained true to his principles and boldly repudiated all connexion with the Democratic party and with his own countrymen, is Thomas Francis Meagher, and he has done so with so much manliness, and honesty, and courage, that it ought, even in the eyes of Englishmen, to cover a multitude of sins.<sup>52</sup>

In Ireland the New York draft riots confirmed the pro-Confederate sympathies of most people. The nationalists had been continually opposing the draft. In the summer of 1862 the *Nation* expressed their attitude toward a new conscription of 300,000 men: "Not an Irishman liable to the conscription will be left behind by the military authorities. Irishmen are good fighting material, . . . and so they will be drafted off to die by sickness and the sword, in the vain attempt to subjugate the people of the Southern States. . . ." <sup>53</sup> Commenting on an Irish draft riot in Pennsylvania in the autumn of 1862, the *Cork Examiner* remarked:

Our countrymen have played the part of the dwarf in this war, to the giant—the Native Americans—the Know-Nothings—the abolitionists. They have fought the battles, got the blows, and bear the wounds, while their companions receive the glory and the plunder. For the latter are the colonelcies and the generalships, the army contracts, and all the other sources of honor and profit which a great war opens to the unscrupulous. Our countrymen seem to be getting tired of this state of things. In Lausarne county, Pennsylvania, a number of them resisted the draft. The military were called out and shot four or five. . . . It is certainly hard that our people should be sacrificed both in the battlefield and at the booths for the gratification of a self-interested political faction. The effect of this tragical incident . . . should be an opening of the eyes of our countrymen to the recklessness of the faction for whose interests they are flinging away their lives. <sup>54</sup>

Thus by the time of the New York riots, most Irishmen were already opposed to the draft and the war.

The Protestant unionists generally took little notice of the Irish role in the New York draft riots. It is interesting to note that those who did comment upon the disturbance demonstrated an unexpected loyalty for their fellow countrymen. Even staunchly pro-British Anglo-Irishmen hated to see the reputation of Irishmen damaged. The Conservative *Irish Times* noted that as usual the Irish were blamed for the riots but asked: "If so, will the Irish soldiers continue to fight for a government which insists that the Irish should struggle for the aggrandizement of the North, perforce, or else be bayoneted, shot down, and blown to pieces by cannon in the streets of New York?" The *Liberal Banner of Ulster* denounced the anti-Negro riots, justified the draft because the North did not have a standing army to rely on, but denied Irish responsibility: "The wretches who composed that lawless multitude were the low Germans . . . the offscourings of other nations . . . and the bitter elements of the slave school." <sup>55</sup>

Among the unionists the Catholic Liberals, who had more in com-

mon with the majority of Irishmen, defended the New York Irish. The Irish-Americans did resist conscription but "were not the authors of the fiendish outrages." "As a body," the New York Irish were not guilty, but "the lowest rabble" were. The New York newspapers and the Yankees, in their attempt to blame the Irish for the ferocities of the riots, "have exhibited the blackest ingratitude to those who have fought their battles. . . ." Though lamenting the riots, which they claimed were the worst in any civilized city since the French Revolution, the Catholic unionists deplored the draft, which "is only adopted by despotic governments of the continent. . . ." <sup>56</sup>

The greatest reaction to the New York riots occurred, of course, in nationalist opinion, for the nationalists had the closest ties in kindred and in politics to the Irish of New York. Shortly before news reached Ireland of the riots in New York, the *Cork Examiner* commented on the new draft: "Three hundred thousand men are to be dragged from their homes to cut the throats of their Southern brethren." When it heard of the riots, it remarked: "The people are at last beginning to shew their disgust at the crimes of [Lincoln's] government." It also noted: "The city, which has given so many of its people for what is called an abolition war, signalled its zeal by the wanton slaughter of about fifty negroes." The *Examiner*, unlike most other nationalist papers, admitted that the Irish were the chief participants in the riots but sympathized with their plight if not their actions: "In those riots we feel a deep interest, for there is no disguising the fact that the chief parties concerned were Irish, our countrymen in New York feeling that they were made the victims of this wretched war. . . . This circumstance has brought out the latent hatred of the Yankee Know-Nothings. . . . This is the fitting expression of Yankee gratitude to the Irish." <sup>57</sup>

The *Nation* ignored the Irish role and said that the "ruffians" who beat and killed Negroes were "deserving of the execration of all honest men throughout the world." Yet it sympathized with the aims of the rioters, believing that the draft dispute was a question of states' versus federal rights and that "the unpopularity of the government" was "plainly at the bottom of the affair. . . ." It steadfastly defended the New York Irish against "all the abolitionist papers, preachers, and politicians" who class "the 'low ignorant Irish' as among the chief authors and actors of the late riots in New York." <sup>58</sup>

Among the nationalist supporters of the American Union the revolutionary nationalist *Irishman*, which had switched its allegiance to the Union, was caught in a predicament. It at first said that the riots were

"a grievous error" and "but a passing ebullition" and that the hands of New York Irishmen were clean, though conscription would have fallen chiefly on them. It was thankful that "no reviler of our race has dared to identify the Irish of New York with these bloody proceedings." But a week later, after the Irish role was starkly apparent, it made an about-face, pointing out that "a high legal tribunal in New York" had pronounced the draft illegal, and, mentioning the elements other than the Irish involved in the riots, criticized the Republican New York press and the London journals for casting "the entire odium of the late unhappy riots upon the Irish population."<sup>58</sup>

Several months after the riots, the nationalist Dublin *Morning News* expressed the general reaction of the Irish public to them. In an editorial on a speech of the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher in London, it quoted him on the New York riot: "It was no more an American riot than if it had taken place in Cork or Dublin. Therefore, when misinformed persons say this riot is a specimen of what Americans can do, I say it is a specimen of what can be done by foreigners, and by ignorance and misrepresentation." The *Morning News* replied that the Irish were treated unfairly in the draft, denied that they instigated the riots, and remarked that the New York atrocities have "a Yankee smell about them. They are redolent of the methodistical canters that pity the slave and kick the coloured man out of an omnibus, or confine him to a particular boundary, even in the house they place under the honours of religion."<sup>59</sup> Thus the New York draft riots further alienated a majority of the Irish from the Union cause and made them more hostile toward the "hypocritical" northern Yankees.

### III

The Irish public was in almost unanimous agreement in condemning the recruiting of emigrants for the Union army in Ireland or as they disembarked at a northern seaport. (Because of the blockade around its coast, the Confederacy did not have access to the Irish soldier market.) Union recruiting was not an important issue in 1861 and 1862 because there was a comparatively small emigration to the United States of 28,000 and 33,000 respectively. But when the number jumped to 94,000 in 1863 and numerous recruiting agents were reported circulating throughout Ireland, a furious storm of public indignation developed. As the emigration remained at 94,000 in 1864 and two instances of alleged

Union recruiting of Irishmen made international headlines, the storm increased in intensity.<sup>61</sup>

During 1861 and 1862 the combination of crop failures in Ireland and the decrease in remittances from America because of the Civil War greatly checked emigration to the United States. The U.S. consul in Dublin wrote: "The condition of the laboring classes of Ireland is so bad that those desirous and willing to emigrate have not the amount of money necessary to buy their passage ticket and outfit. . . ." <sup>62</sup> There was some, if little, public concern about Union recruiting of Irishmen. In the autumn of 1861 recruiting agents were reported in Ireland, and members of disbanded Irish militia regiments were viewed as likely prospects.<sup>63</sup> In the summer of 1862 Secretary of State Seward sent a circular to all U.S. consuls for publication noting "the enhanced price of labour" because of the increased demand for the army and stating: "It may . . . be confidently asserted that, even now, nowhere else can the industrious labouring man and artizan expect so liberal a recompense for his services as in the United States." The *Cork Examiner* believed there was "a smack of the recruiting sergeant about Mr. Seward's circular." <sup>64</sup> The Queenstown correspondent of the *Dublin Saunderson's News-Letter* said that Seward wanted "human material for the war" and graphically described how Irishmen were "hunted throughout the streets of the towns of the Union, as if they were canine brutes affected with hydrophobia in the hope of worrying them into submission to face fatigue, famine, disease, and death in the pestiferous swamps of the sultry South." <sup>65</sup> The *Nation* angrily protested against recruiting in Ireland for either army, and the revolutionary nationalist *Irishman* cited the advice of John O'Mahony, the American Fenian Head Center, to his friends in Ireland, to the effect that even starvation at home was not much worse than "fever, neglect, and mis-government, in the swamps of Virginia." <sup>66</sup>

In early 1862 the American consul in Dublin reported to the Irish undersecretary requests by soldiers in regiments in Dublin to be sent to fight for the Union, and assured Sir Thomas Larcom that he was not sending Irishmen to America and violating the Foreign Enlistment Act.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, applications poured into the Dublin and Galway consulates for free passage to the United States in exchange for enlistment in the army. The Dublin consul wrote to Seward: "Every day applications are made to me for a free passage to the United States to join the army. They are made by stout healthy young men who would make fine soldiers for the army." <sup>68</sup> Wrote the Galway consul: "I have to

contradict repeated rumours that our govt. was recruiting for the army in Ireland, many applications having been made to me in consequence." <sup>69</sup> Undoubtedly, there were thousands of potential Union recruits who could not get to the United States in 1861 and 1862 because they lacked the money for steamship tickets. It was not until the spring of 1863, however, that Union recruiting appeared to be a real threat to the Irish people.

The year 1863 was fairly prosperous for Ireland in comparison with the previous three. The improvement provided an opportunity for emigration to many who had become discouraged after three successive crop failures. The constabulary report for County Waterford in 1863 announced: "The condition of the agricultural classes of this county is certainly better than in any of the last three years, of which the younger portions are taking advantage by increased emigration." <sup>70</sup> The U.S. consul in Cork reported that the good harvest in 1863 "instead of checking emigration . . . only affords the means for a much greater increase. . . ." <sup>71</sup> The Dublin consul wrote in April, 1863: "This spring has opened with such an emigration, as has not been known for many years, and new incentives are being given to increase it. In a few days a new line of screw steamers will commence running between Liverpool and New York, every week to call at Kingstown in this consulate for emigrants. . . ." <sup>72</sup>

The New York correspondent of the *Times* listed some of the causes of the increased Irish immigration into the United States: a growing demand for laborers (he claimed that 100,000 would be absorbed in ten months); Seward's published letter to encourage emigration; a request for 10,000 laborers by a railway in the West, which would pay one dollar per day and passage from Ireland to New York; and a fear "extensively prevalent" that the British government was about to pass a law forbidding emigration to the United States. The reporter, however, believed that there was subterfuge in the Union's campaign to encourage emigration—that Federal officials expected many emigrants to prefer "the rifle to the plough." <sup>73</sup>

It is difficult to say how many army recruits there were among the Irish emigrants to the United States in 1863. Apparently, most of the young men had the intention of filling the labor vacuum in the North, but undoubtedly many fell prey to the snares of the recruiting sergeant. The North profited from Irish immigration in a number of ways, and Union officials were well aware of this. The Galway consul wrote of the prospects of a large emigration in 1863: "The current is now in our

favor; something may occur to change its course. Let us then seize the prize whilst it is within our grasp—it is our most effective recuperative power, and would, I believe, help materially to resuscitate our exhausted resources.”<sup>74</sup>

Throughout 1863 and especially during the spring, there were numerous reports of Union recruiting in many parts of Ireland. Many rumors were published, and Dublin Castle received many reports—most of them based on hearsay—from constables, militia officers, various local officials, and private citizens.

In April, 1863, a subinspector at Queenstown (Cork harbor) remarked in a constabulary report:

Within the last fortnight—1270 have sailed from Queenstown, the greater portion of the number being strong active young men. There can be no doubt from all I can learn that they are intended for the American army. In fact, many of them do not deny it. On Thursday last I was present when about 30 “stowaways” were discovered and brought back from the vessel by the tender, most of whom were I think militia men from Cork and its vicinity, and they stated in my hearing to Capt. Kerr RN, the emigration officer, that they would get from 250 to 300 dollars bounty, and that this was circulated throughout the country generally. I have been informed that the friends of those people in America are paid so much for obtaining and bringing them over to New York. An American officer not long since on landing here asked one of the officials as the agent for the Inman line of steamers if there were many for the next boat. The man said yes they are fighting to get out to fight, when he replied with an oath: “We’ll make them fight well. . . .”

For tomorrow’s vessel there are already booked about 800. It is now freely spoken of that all the young men are going to join the Northern army of which there can hardly be a doubt entertained.

Notwithstanding the company having put on additional steamers, the number of applicants cannot be accommodated. They are obliged to leave several hundred back each week.<sup>75</sup>

An illustration of the kind of report that Irish officialdom was getting was the recounting by the Italian consul to the superintendent of the Metropolitan Police of a conversation he had overheard at an emigration office in Dublin: “He saw one man shake hands with another, and heard him say ‘Good-bye James, and when you go to Italy I hope you’ll cut down many of those B—y Italians as we’ll the B—y English when we go to America.’”<sup>76</sup> It should be noted that Union recruiters appealed to young Irish immigrants to enlist in the Union army in order to fight the English as soon as the Union was restored.

Other reports included one that Union agents were “waiting the disembodiment of [the] Tipperary Militia Artillery—to enlist them for the American service . . .”; one from Coleraine that an American



agent, Andrew Craig of Philadelphia, was "delivering tirades against the English government and inciting the people to go to America"; another from a man in County Clare, who claimed he saw a letter from a major general in the Federal army offering ten pounds a head for each emigrant landed in America; and one from a man in Oranmore, County Tyrone, whose son had gone to the United States on business and had enlisted in the Federal artillery, although he was under age.<sup>77</sup> These rumors reveal the concern in Ireland in 1863 over both Union recruiting and the danger of emigration to the United States, although they are vaguely worded and inconclusive in proving any large-scale Union recruiting of Irishmen.

A concrete report, not based on secondhand evidence, came from a soldier stationed at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, a former Dublin shop assistant, who wrote to his master:

Sorry I am and that to the heart that I should become the dupe of a Federal agent, who does not reside far from the old and welcome home of 70 Thomas Street. I am not the only one. You will find young fellows leaving the finest situations in all parts of Ireland foolishly led to believe the falsifying statements of the Federal agents. They are enlisting young men every day. In fact they are coming out here in thousands and the moment they land they are drafted to the battle field where danger mostly stands. I enlisted in Dublin on the 23rd day of June '63 in the New York Engineers. I received a bounty of 150 dollars which amounts to £30 in English currency.<sup>78</sup>

Some evidence exists of recruiting hoaxes to swindle young men who desired to emigrate. One occurred in Munster in May, 1863. A middle-aged man "with military gait and Yankee dialect and costume" claiming to be a Mr. Pittman from New York visited Fermoy, Mitchelstown, Cahir, Tipperary Town, Newcastle, Kanturk, Charleville, and Mallow, where he signed up young men to emigrate to the States and enlist in the Union army after they had paid him threepence in return for free passage across the Atlantic. He had promised his secretary a "lucrative post in the War Department of the United States." The man disappeared after arriving in Cork, never to be heard from again. In his room was found a list of 2,000 names, but his secretary said that certainly 5,000 had signed up, which meant that he had swindled about sixty-three pounds.<sup>79</sup>

The public reaction in 1863 to Union recruiting was quite vociferous. The unionists charged that "the Yankees want but one thing—to get these fresh young men from Ireland to fight against the Confederates, or rather to be led or driven by incapable and blundering generals

to certain destruction" and that the young emigrants "foolishly imagine that the best thing they can do for their country is to assist America, or any other power, to make war upon England." A parish priest in a letter to the *Cork Examiner* urged the introduction in parliament of measures to improve the Irish economy and prevent Irishmen from becoming "mercenary soldiers in foreign battles." He noted: "One cynic writes—'send off the drunken, thriftless set: they are only fit to stop bullets in America.'" Even the pro-Union and revolutionary nationalist *Irishman* pleaded with its countrymen to heed the advice of Archbishop Hughes of New York and John O'Mahony not to emigrate and not to make the Civil War "their quarrel." It believed young Irishmen would follow the advice because of the way the Irish Brigade was "treated with ingratitude."<sup>80</sup>

The difference in attitude among Irish nationalists toward Union recruiting is evident in two letters to the *Cork Examiner* in April, 1863, from Myles O'Reilly and O'Donovan Rossa. Major Myles O'Reilly, former commander of the Irish Papal Brigade and M.P. for County Longford, wrote that "those who, though not being subjects of either of the contending states, voluntarily engage in the war, are of their own free will undertaking to kill their fellow-Irishmen who are on the other side." He said that he was receiving from Irishmen who had served with him in Italy letters reporting that the condition of the Federal soldiers was "generally wretched." The pay is "nominally large" but arrives months late after the enlistee has had to borrow from money lenders. The food rations are poor. Clothes fall to pieces almost immediately. The hospitals are "inadequate," and there is "useless and purposeless sacrifice of the soldiers' lives. . . ." <sup>81</sup>

O'Donovan Rossa, one of the Fenian leaders, attacked O'Reilly for attributing the increased emigration to Union recruiting and not to crop failures and evictions. While supporting the Union, however, Rossa did not endorse Irish enlistment in the Union army but merely disputed the British attempt to blame the United States for Irish emigration. He wrote to the editor of the *Examiner*:

It is evident that you, too, are "gulled" into believing this landlord, English lie. "That the fearful emigration from Ireland at present is attributable to the exertions of the American recruiting agent. . . ." It is a lie, and a damned lie, circulated for two purposes. It is circulated by the landlord and English interest to blind the world to the patent fact that this emigration is solely attributable to the blighting effect upon our people of landlord and English rule. This rule, under existing circumstances, is terribly afraid of the reunion of the North Americans. It is giving its sympathy, active and otherwise, to perpetuate the division that now

exists amongst them. The Federals are crying out against this sympathy and "perfidy." As a pretext for justification the lie is invented, and the Federals are told they derive corresponding advantage from "recruiting in Ireland. . . ." The failure of the crops these years past, and eviction, with the threat and dread of it this year, together with the existing and the apprehended greater distress, may account for the terrible emigration going on at present.<sup>82</sup>

Rossa had great interest in the Civil War, for his two brothers and his sister were involved. His elder brother John served in the Sixty-ninth Pennsylvania infantry, and his younger brother Conn on the U.S. warship "Troquois." The husband of his sister Mary, Walter Webb, served in the Sixty-ninth Pennsylvania Cavalry. Many years after the war, Rossa wrote to the U.S. secretary of state regarding his family's participation in the Civil War: ". . . All the family were in the American war against England except myself. I was in the Irish war against England."<sup>83</sup> But most of the Union supporters among the revolutionary nationalists disapproved of Irish enlistment in the Union armed forces because it drew men away from service to Irish nationalism.

The government at Dublin Castle believed that Union recruiting was taking place but for the most part not illegally. Undersecretary Sir Thomas Larcom wired the Irish Office in London in March 1863 that he had only received vague reports on "suspicious strangers." In April, Larcom wrote to the Home Office: "From the practice . . . of paying the friends of the emigrants in the United States, instead of employing agents in this country, no proceedings can be taken under the Foreign Enlistment Act against any persons concerned. . . . The law advisor states that the militia men cannot be detained and have not broken the law." In a wire to Sir Robert Peel, the Irish chief secretary, in June, Larcom summed up the government's attitude toward Union recruiting: "The government has no information that recruiting for the Federal States is directly carried on in Ireland—but there is reason to believe that large numbers of emigrants are enlisted as soon as they land at New York."<sup>84</sup>

When the question of Union recruiting of Irishmen became an issue in Anglo-American relations in 1863, Charles Francis Adams, the U.S. minister at the Court of St. James, had an opportunity to score a point on Lord Russell. In a reply to a letter of Russell's on Union recruiting, Adams wrote that high wages and the demand for laborers attracted Irishmen to the United States "in addition to the alleged distress of the population of Ireland. . . ."<sup>85</sup>

Incidents involving enlistment of Irishmen were not limited to the

Union army and navy. In June, 1863, George Moore, the British consul at Richmond, was expelled by the Confederate government because of his intercession on behalf of two "Irish compatriots" who were conscripted into Confederate service, despite their claim to British citizenship.<sup>66</sup> But since Irish emigration to the States during the war was to northern ports, almost all incidents involved the North.

In the first half of 1864 Union recruiting continued to be the chief topic of interest in Ireland, and there were two incidents definitely substantiating Union enlisting of Irishmen. One involved the U.S. warship "Kearsage." After a visit to Queenstown, on November 5, 1863, the "Kearsage" set sail for Brest with sixteen Irishmen who had just embarked. Whether they enlisted or were stowaways became a matter of controversy. The Confederate commissioner James Mason received affidavits of witnesses who saw men being enlisted for the "Kearsage." They were sworn before a justice of the peace at Cork and sent to Mason by Robert Dowling, the Confederate commercial agent at Cork. Mason then wrote to his friend the Earl of Donoughmore asking him to transmit the various affidavits to Lord Russell, which Donoughmore promptly did. Russell had already demanded of Adams what he "could allege in extenuation of such culpable conduct on the part of U.S. officers of the navy, and the U.S. Consul at Queenstown." Adams evidently had contacted Captain Winslow of the "Kearsage," for the ship returned to Queenstown and on December 7, 1863, landed the sixteen "refugees." Here, many Irishmen believed, was definite proof of Union recruiting, and the Confederate sympathizers tried to profit from it.<sup>67</sup>

The ship's officers, however, had another story to tell. The executive officer wrote that while they were at anchor at Queenstown the ship was surrounded by boats filled with men who wanted to enlist, but the boats were not allowed alongside. In fact, he claimed, before the "Kearsage" set sail the crew had to force off stowaways found "in the hold, in the carpenter's lockers and elsewhere . . ." and that the accused men were discovered only after the embarkation. The captain mentioned that the men had concealed themselves on board ship and that since he had to watch the Confederate ship "Florida" at Brest, he was delayed in returning them to Cork. He observed that he had given instructions that no men were to be enlisted at Cork. Captain Winslow also revealed that the main desire of the recruits or stowaways was to get from Ireland to America, no matter whether it was the North or the South. He remarked that while at Brest he directed that the men be

held on board for fear that if they were turned ashore they would join the Confederate warship "Florida."<sup>88</sup>

Lord Russell, however, recommended that prosecution against the recruits under the Foreign Enlistment Act "should be instituted as soon as sufficient evidence is collected to sustain it."<sup>89</sup> Six of the sixteen men were indicted, and their trial took place in Cork on March 14, 1864. The undefended prisoners, in American naval uniform, pleaded guilty. The attorney-general for Ireland did not press for punishment but said that "the law had been vindicated in the first and only case in which it had been possible to prove an infringement of the Foreign Enlistment Act in Ireland. . . ." The notorious "traitor" of the 1850's, Mr. Justice Keogh, who presided, used the occasion to warn other Irishmen against enlistment. The prisoners were ordered to provide twenty pounds recognizance each but were discharged. No American officer was prosecuted, although Adams promised that he would investigate the responsibility of subordinate officers on the ship. Adams continued to maintain that the situation was extremely difficult for the officers, pointing out that 150 to 300 Irishmen had rowed out to the "Kearsage" "eagerly seeking to be employed."<sup>90</sup>

Occurring simultaneously with the "Kearsage" affair was the Finney scandal. Patrick H. Finney, Feeny, or Phinney was an American agent recruiting in Ireland during January and February, 1864.<sup>91</sup> In January he was arrested in Loughrea, County Galway, for Union recruiting and released for lack of evidence;<sup>92</sup> and on January 28 in Dublin, he was brought to court on a debt charge for which he was acquitted. In court a witness claimed to have heard Finney say he was recruiting for the U.S. army, but the defendant produced letters and affidavits from various American companies introducing him as their recruiting agent.<sup>93</sup> He continued his recruiting: the young men he hired signed a contract stating that they would work for Finney for twelve months "either on the Charlestown [Massachusetts] Water Works . . . or the Webster and South Bridge Railroad . . . or on the Pacific Railroad, or for the Bear Valley Coal Company . . . or for the Franklin Coal Company [Pennsylvania] . . . or otherwise or elsewhere, wheresoever labour may be needed. . . ." The law officers of the crown in Ireland, Sir Robert Peel wrote to the Home Office, were of the opinion "that the evidence would not be sufficient to sustain a prosecution" against Finney for Union army recruiting.<sup>94</sup>

On February 16, 1864, the superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police reported that Finney had recruited seventy men from Dublin

and vicinity and a number from the Loughrea-Galway area. The *Boston Courier* noted that there were 102 young men in Finney's group on the "Nova Scotia" that arrived in Portland, Maine, on March 9, principally "fine stalwart fellows, young mechanics, all from the city of Dublin." Eighty-six went on to Boston, where they were informed that there was no work for them and were reportedly told by Finney's employer, a Mr. Kidder, that they could enlist in the Massachusetts Twenty-eighth, an Irish regiment which he recommended. "Recruiting agents hovered round them, and in the course of the day, gobbled up several." Seven had already enlisted at Portland.<sup>95</sup>

Irish-Americans, in their peculiar state of Union loyalism mingled with hostility to the detail of war policy, reacted quickly to the incident. The Boston Irish set up a relief committee for the men. Its consensus upon the facts of the matter—a consensus conditioned by long-standing suspicions about the conduct of the war, official and unofficial—was reflected in the tone of a protest meeting, of which the chairman was convinced ". . . that the original intent of the parties who brought the men over was to make them part of the quota of Massachusetts." Another speaker "had heard at Concord, N.H., long before these men arrived, that this same emigration agent, Mr. Finney, had been engaged last summer in bringing substitutes to New Hampshire and selling them. He became notorious as a substitute broker, and made money by it."<sup>96</sup>

Thomas Tulley, who with six other Irishmen had been enlisted shortly after they disembarked at Portland, claimed in correspondence to the British minister, Lord Lyons, that they were imprisoned on trumped-up charges of drunkenness and refused freedom unless they enlisted in the Twentieth Maine Infantry. There were other reports. One of Finney's recruits wrote from Boston to his brother in Dublin: ". . . We were brought out here for to be made soldiers of, but the Irish people here has made up a subscription for us and treated us very kindly and formed societies for us and got work for us all the boys of us that came out here from Dublin. . . . We can get 400 dollars each bounty here if we have a mind to take it, but thank God we can do better than that." The British consul at Boston wrote: "The bounties both of the U.S. and of the several States added to local premiums amount to 700 dollars and even 825 dollars besides 15 to 25 to the bringer in of a recruit and as the poor Irish are generally made drunk and given at the outside 25 dollars, the sharks who prey on them collect the balance, and thus a cargo of 120 as in this instance would net a very

large profit to the speculators."<sup>97</sup> Throughout the spring Lord Lyons pestered Seward about the case. In the meantime the men had been sent to Virginia; and evidently one had been killed in battle. In June, 1864, Seward half admitted that the men were illegally recruited and had them returned to Portland for an investigation. On their way back to Portland they reportedly were put in chains and maltreated. Portland officials denied any improper recruiting, and no further parliamentary papers were published on the result. To many Irishmen the incident was convincing proof of the Yankee mistreatment of the Irish.<sup>98</sup>

During the first half of 1864 in parliament Confederate supporters made Union recruiting in Ireland an issue against the government. In one debate the Earl of Donoughmore laid the blame on the Fenians—a misconception prevalent among a great many Irish unionists. The purpose of the Fenian Brotherhood, he said, was "to recruit for the American army in Ireland, and to promote a feeling of disaffection to the British Crown" in the hope that "when the American war is finished, the Federal army will turn its arms against this country. . . ." The wily prime minister insisted that the government lacked proof to substantiate legal prosecution, although he did believe Irishmen were being "inveigled" into the Union army. John Bright, a staunch friend of the North, countered by noting the many attractions America held for Irishmen and by remarking: "The only marvel is that any Irishman who is not the owner of land, or a man of some capital, should remain in that blighted and unhappy country."<sup>99</sup>

During 1864 the reaction of the Irish public to Union recruiting came to a head. Most of the factions reacted as would be expected; only among the Fenians and their sympathizers did a significant division of opinion develop.

The Dublin Castle government approved of emigration to aid the Irish economy but regretted the Union recruiting. In a speech at the annual lord mayor's banquet at the Mansion House, Dublin, on February 4, 1864, the lord lieutenant, the Earl of Carlisle, declared that emigration would help Ireland but regretted "that Ireland should part with any of her hardy and generous sons merely to supply food for the vultures which hover over the Lethian plains of Virginia and Tennessee."<sup>100</sup>

For the Liberal unionists Sir William Wills Wilde, father of Oscar, in a lecture in 1864 regretted that so many Celtic-Irishmen were "shedding their blood for hire in an alien cause, in which they feel neither interest nor sympathy."<sup>101</sup> Archbishop Paul Cullen of Dublin,

in a pastoral letter on May 1, 1864, voiced the sentiments of the Catholic Liberals and most of the clergy in denouncing Irish enlistments in the Union army.<sup>102</sup>

The attitude of the constitutional nationalists was summed up by the *Cork Examiner*:

The Northern Irishmen—the Irish-born American citizen—does a lawful and legitimate as well as a natural act in enlisting in the Northern army; but the Irishman who quits Ireland for the purpose of enlisting in the same ranks plays the part of a mere mercenary, who hires himself at so many dollars to kill and destroy so many innocent and unoffending people, or to conquer, subjugate and devastate a country whose citizens are fighting for their independence, and defending their homes and altars.<sup>103</sup>

But among the revolutionary nationalists, a rift developed over enlistment of Irishmen. This was an issue on which the Fenians had to commit themselves, and they were forced to do so by the *United Irishman and Galway-American*. This organ of the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick, a Fenian front throughout the United Kingdom, was edited by an Irish-American, James Roche, formerly of the *New York Phoenix*. Apparently alone among nationalist newspapers, the *United Irishman* wholeheartedly encouraged Irish enlistment in the Union army. In commenting on the first news of the "Kearsage" affair, it remarked: "We do not believe that any men were being shipped, but if they were, it only shows how eager the people are to escape from under the paternal government of Palmerston and Carlisle, Her Majesty's pastoral philosopher for Ireland." At the same time, it went on to attack those nationalists who discouraged emigration and enlisting:

Irish journals were bribed to write up the cause of the South. . . . The Irish were warned in journals which they fondly, but falsely believed their friends, not to emigrate to America, and not to take part in a war which concerned them not. . . . All this has been useless in the end, though it must be owned that immense evil has been done by those corrupt prints, and many of our easily duped countrymen have been fairly blinded by their sophistry. But all will be well. The real state of the case has been discovered, and the patriot no longer laments the departure of every shipload of emigrants. . . .<sup>104</sup>

The *United Irishman*, whose editor was on especially good terms with the American consul William West, publicized the activities of Finney and commented after he left with a hundred men for Boston: ". . . Mr. Finney is expected to return soon again under better auspices, to bring out a large number of the youth of this impoverished country to become citizens of a more favored land. . . ." <sup>105</sup>



These editorials angered the Fenians, and their newly-founded newspaper, the *Irish People*, attacked the *United Irishman*. The *Irish People* had expressed skepticism about Finney's scheme from the beginning and a week after the *United Irishman's* editorial praising him, launched into an attack on the pronorthern newspaper. "The Irishman who can live at home, and who leaves Ireland now," proclaimed the *Irish People*, "deserts his motherland in the hour of her utmost need." It condemned the *United Irishman* and those nationalists who encouraged emigration and enlistment and would reject American Fenian leader John O'Mahony's sound advice to Irishmen at the beginning of the war: "He told them that *they* were not citizens of the republic, and that consequently the quarrel was none of theirs. He told them that the soldier of fortune was but a mercenary, who sold his blood, and shed the blood of others for pay. . . ." <sup>106</sup>

In riposte the *United Irishman* maintained that "the ultimate salvation of this island is centered in 'Irish manhood out of Ireland.'" It accused the *Irish People* of regarding Meagher as a mercenary and added: "The *Irish People* also has placed the Irishman who has joined the American service on a level with . . . one who, 'for a shilling a day becomes a mercenary tool of English tyranny.'" The *Irish People* was fostering "hostility towards the United States" and creating "a feeling of sympathy for the Southern rebels. . . ." Its attitude would "only give aid to the enemy, and strengthen the arm that smites us." <sup>107</sup>

The enlistment of American Fenians, principally in the Union army, also created friction between John O'Mahony and the Head Center in Ireland, James Stephens. O'Mahony permitted fifty branches of the brotherhood in America to become extinct as a result of enlistments, <sup>108</sup> whereas the Fenians in Ireland insisted that Irish independence was more important than the forced restoration of the American Union and should take precedence, even among northern Irish-born Americans. As for the Union enlistment of young men still in Ireland—potential or actual Fenians—the I.R.B. believed it a crime to emigrate for that purpose.

Throughout the rest of 1864 the *Irish People* argued against emigration to the States and any Irish participation in the war. In an editorial entitled "Deserters and Traitors," it said that emigration to America "simply argues the blindest insanity of Irishmen to go there," for they would find appalling difficulties, if not ruin or death. The emigrants were traitors—their emigration from Ireland was "a very good thing in the eyes of our English masters." The *Irish People* emphasized the need

for self-reliance and the duty of all patriots to stay at home in Ireland. At the same time it expressed the hope that "battle-trained exiles" would return with a vengeance: "Let each man do his allotted work as if the fate of his country 'were staked on him alone.' . . . It is for us not to let the field lie fallow. We look for help to our countrymen in America. But let us not forget *that they look to us.*"<sup>109</sup>

Though the Fenians deplored Union recruiting of Irishmen, some of them decided to take advantage of the controversy created by Confederate supporters over the alleged violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act. Members would assume the appearance of American agents while performing public services in behalf of the Brotherhood.

An example is the part played by Fenians at the Rotunda meeting on February 22, 1864, organized by constitutional nationalists to protest the erection of a statue to Prince Albert in College Green, Dublin, and to call for a statue of Henry Grattan instead. The Fenians could not care less what statue stood there and hoped to discredit the moderate nationalists by disrupting the meeting. A large number of Fenians attended, some of whom wore Federal American uniforms—both for dramatic effect and as a symbol of their belief in the use of armed force. At a signal they charged the platform, preventing Alexander Sullivan of the *Nation* from speaking, and broke up the meeting.<sup>110</sup> The *Times* in an editorial on the meeting sneered at the whole affair: "The Fenian Brotherhood have gained their first victory on the sacred soil of Ireland. . . . That long-expected American uniform appeared in Dublin, and if there were any powder in the Irish magazines now was the time for it to explode. . . . The fighters are said to be soldiers from the United States, sent over to drill the mechanics of the city of Dublin."<sup>111</sup>

Another incident involved Patrick "Pagan" O'Leary, one of the most colorful Fenians. A report in *Saunders's News-Letter* from Athlone, dated November 14, 1864, stated that police had in custody a John Murphy, "an agent for the Federal army" who attempted to recruit soldiers of the Twenty-fifth Regiment in Athlone. O'Leary alias Murphy was reported as saying that since America was willing to assist Ireland in her struggle, he thought "that Irishmen ought to aid his adopted country in the present war." Interestingly, he had about twenty copies of the *Irish People* in his traveling bag.<sup>112</sup> The *Freeman's Journal* in an editorial, however, had doubts about Murphy's purpose: "He admits one thing—he did say the Irish were despised in the American as well as the British army. 'They were called the dirty Irish all over the globe.' A man in pursuit of Irish recruits would not enter on his mission

by telling his dupes that their countrymen were despised in the American army."<sup>113</sup>

The doubts were confirmed, for a year later a report of the police raid on the office of the *Irish People* announced that "Pagan" O'Leary had been "convicted under the name of John Murphy and sentenced to penal servitude for seducing or trying to seduce soldiers from their allegiance. . . ." Also, it appears that police reports in March, 1864, of a man referred to as James Murphy, wearing an American uniform and posing as a Federal agent in Dublin and Tipperary but probably a "humbug," refer again to O'Leary and his efforts to recruit for the Fenians.<sup>114</sup>

It is impossible to determine how often Fenian and Federal recruiting were confused; but it is evident that many Irishmen considered the two synonymous. The Fenians took advantage of the confusion.

#### IV

Finally, it should be noted that the participation of the Irish in the Civil War had its effect on the history of Irish nationalism afterward. First of all, it provided the Fenians with over 150 army officers of the Union and Confederacy for key positions in the organization throughout Ireland and Great Britain. In fact, from John Devoy's *Recollections* it appears that an American officer was put in charge of almost every district in Ireland in the plans for insurrection. And in a more romantic way, the Civil War had its effect on Irish traditions. One of the three young "Manchester Martyrs"—hanged for attempting the rescue of two Fenian prisoners in Manchester in November, 1867, during which a policeman was accidentally shot dead—was Captain Michael O'Brien, who had been a non-commissioned officer in the Union army.<sup>115</sup> To commemorate the "Manchester Martyrs," T. D. Sullivan wrote "God Save Ireland," the Irish national anthem until the establishment of the Irish Republic and "The Soldier's Song." "God Save Ireland" was written to the air of "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, The Boys Are Marching," a popular Civil War ballad brought back to Ireland by the American Fenian officers.<sup>116</sup> Indeed, after the bloodshed was forgotten, an aura enveloped Irish participation in the war. It proved to be another reservoir of Irish heroism where the revolutionary nationalists could find stories to inspire their cause.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the great loss of Irish lives in the

war and the manner in which the Irish were treated in the North, where they were principally concentrated, persuaded a majority of the Irish public to oppose the war aims of the Union. Those Irishmen who had relatives or friends in America desired peace at all costs, like the Copperheads. An excerpt from a contemporary poem addressed to Irishmen fighting in the war summed up the sentiments of the Irish public on Irish participation in the war. It pointed out the justified debt of gratitude owed by Irish-Americans to the United States, which had generously befriended them when they were in need. Yet the author believed that Catholic Irishmen should oppose useless bloodshed and should save their sacrifices for the more pressing cause of Irish freedom:

*Enough! enough! Your blood was given,  
As might beseem, a grateful band—  
But mightier is the claim of heaven,  
And urgent that of motherland.<sup>117</sup>*

1. In 1860 there were 1,611,304 natives of Ireland in the United States or 39 per cent of the foreign-born population (Arnold Schrier, *Ireland and the American Emigration, 1850-1900* [Minneapolis, 1958], pp. 160-61). According to my calculations based on statistics from Marcus Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860* (London, 1945), p. 280, and from Schrier, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-68 (both of whom cited U.S. government figures), citizens falling under the rather heterogeneous term of "German" comprised 31 per cent of the foreign-born population, and Englishmen, 10 per cent. After the Civil War, the Germans gradually surpassed the Irish.

2. Schrier, *op. cit.*, p. 5. Actually, the Irish ratio would more accurately be 1:3.6 because the population of Ireland in 1861 was 5,764,543 (*Annual Register*, 1861, p. 367).

3. This figure refers to natives of Ireland. There were, of course, many more thousands of second-generation Irishmen. Carl Wittke places the Irish-born figure at 144,221, basing it on a report of the U.S. Sanitary Commission in 1869. He also states that more than 400,000 foreign-born men fought in the Union army (*The Irish in America* [Baton Rouge, 1956], pp. 135-36). Thirty-nine per cent, the Irish percentage of the foreign-born population, of 400,000 is 156,000. Marcus Hansen places the total foreign-born number at almost 500,000 (*The Immigrant in American History* [London, 1942], p. 142). Thirty-nine per cent of 500,000 is 195,000 men. If one takes into account the thousands who must have been overlooked, those who were registered as British (citizens of the United Kingdom), and the comparative unreliability of statistics at that time, especially those on a civil war, 150,000 certainly seems a safe number.

4. Letter of Mitchel in *Cork Examiner*, February 9, 1863; Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1940), p. 218. Another estimate made after the war is 83,000, which most certainly is an exaggeration unless

second-generation Irishmen were included (Michael Cavanagh, "John Mitchel, Jr.," 1899, p. 2, National Library of Ireland, MS 3225). About all that can be said with certainty is that there were many thousands of Irishmen fighting for the Confederacy and that they comprised the largest foreign element in the Confederate armies.

5. Wittke, *The Irish in America*, pp. 140-41, 147; M. J. McDonald, *History of the Irish in Wisconsin in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C., 1954), p. 141 n.; M. H. Macnamara, *The Irish Ninth in Bivouac and Battle* (Boston, 1867); R. D. Quirk, "The Irish Element in New Hampshire to 1865" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1936); M. E. Walsh, "The Irish in Rhode Island from 1800 to 1865" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1937).

6. Joseph Meehan, *The Birthplace of General Philip Henry Sheridan* (Dublin, 1926): Father Meehan cites fairly convincing evidence that Sheridan was born in Killinkere, Co. Cavan, and taken to the United States as a baby. Various American birthplaces have been attributed to him. According to Sheridan's own account, he was born in Albany, New York (*Dictionary of American Biography*, XVII, 79-81).

7. *Dictionary of American Biography*, XVII, 106-9. Shields emigrated from Ireland during his teens. In 1842 he challenged Lincoln to a duel over an article lampooning Shields, which was written by Mary Todd. Lincoln and Shields did not duel but became friends (Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln, the Prairie Years* [2 vols.; London, 1926], I, 282-83).

8. T. R. Hay, *Pat Cleburne, Stonewall Jackson of the West* (Jackson, Tenn., 1959), p. 14. Cleburne was born in County Cork, served in the British army in Dublin for three years, and emigrated in 1849 at the age of twenty-one. He settled in Arkansas and became a lawyer. He probably would have become a lieutenant general were it not for his early advocacy of enlisting slaves and freeing those who were faithful. He had a brother fighting for the Confederacy and another for the Union. Named in his honor are a town and county in Texas, a county in Arkansas, and a town in Kansas (*ibid.*, *passim*; Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, pp. 60, 442-47).

9. Cavanagh, "John Mitchel, Jr.," p. 26; Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, p. 155 n. James Mitchel's son, John Purroy Mitchel, was elected on an anti-Tammany ticket and served as mayor of New York from 1914 to 1918 (*Dictionary of American Biography*, XIII, 37-38).

10. T. W. Moody and J. C. Beckett, *Queen's Belfast, 1845-1949* (2 vols.; London, 1959), I, 138; *Dictionary of American Biography*, VII, 347-50; E. D. Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War* (2 vols.; London, 1925), I, 70.

11. William Dillon, *Life of John Mitchel* (2 vols.; London, 1888), II, 174, 187-90.

12. See *The Life and Adventures, Song, Services, and Speeches of Private Miles O'Reilly (47th Regiment, New York Volunteers), from the Authentic Records of the New York Herald* (New York, 1864). Halpine, the son of a Church of Ireland clergyman who was the editor of the *Dublin Evening Mail*, was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. A Young Irelander who after 1848 settled in New York, Halpine was active in Democratic politics and became associate editor of the *New York Times*. He served on General David Hunter's staff during the war, prepared for him the first order for the enlistment of a Negro regiment, and helped to overcome the objections of northern soldiers to Negro

recruiting with his poem "Sambo's Right To Be Kilt." Halpine was breveted a brigadier general (*Dictionary of American Biography*, VII, 160-61).

Ford was born in Galway and fought in the war, taking part in the charge of the Irish Brigade at Fredericksburg; and Savage was said to have fought in Corcoran's 69th Regiment (*ibid.*, VI, 518, XVI, 388-89).

13. Born in Dublin, the son of an engineer, Mallet received his B.A. from Trinity College, Dublin, and his Ph.D. from Gottingen (*ibid.*, XII, 223-24; Deasumhan O'Raghallaigh, "John William Mallet: the Irish Director of the Confederate Ordnance Department," *An Cosantoir*, II [1942], 555-57). Browne was "a cadet of an Irish family" who had emigrated some years before the war (W. H. Russell, *My Civil War Diary*, Fletcher Pratt [ed.], [London, 1954], p. 91; F. L. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy* [Chicago, 1931], p. 106).

14. John Howard, *Our American Music* (New York, 1946), p. 651; Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1865* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941), pp. 74, 220; *Dictionary of American Biography*, VII, 312-13. The air of the ballad is the same as that of the anonymous eighteenth century Irish ballad "Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye." The air of another ballad sung during the Civil War, "The Girl I Left Behind Me," is Irish and can probably be traced back to the time of the "Wild Geese" who fought in continental armies.

15. Hughes was born in Co. Tyrone and Lynch at Clones (*ibid.*, IX, 352-55, XI, 521-22). Two men who would become leaders of the American Catholic hierarchy were Irishmen and priest-chaplains during the war. Father John Ireland, who was born in Kilkenny and became archbishop of St. Paul, won renown as the fighting chaplain of the Fifth Minnesota Volunteers. Father James Gibbons, American-born but reared in Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo, from the age of three to eighteen, became archbishop of Baltimore and the first American cardinal. Although he had a brother fighting for the Confederacy, he was a Union sympathizer and chaplain at Fort McHenry (*ibid.*, IX, 494-97, VII, 238-42).

16. Monck, a product of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy, was born at Templemore, Co. Tipperary, and graduated from Trinity College, Dublin (*Dictionary of National Biography*, XXII, 1055-56; W. S. Wallace [comp.], *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* [Toronto, 1926], pp. 284-85).

17. Russell was a County Dubliner educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He won his reputation during the Crimean war. His letters during the first year of the Civil War were very influential; and upon returning to England, he became editor of the *Army and Navy Gazette* (J. B. Atkins, *The Life of Sir William Howard Russell* [2 vols.; London, 1911], I, 2-3, 16-17, II, 3, 25, 68-78; Adams, *Britain and the Civil War*, I, 177-78, II, 229, 277; T. A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* [5th ed., New York, 1955], p. 358).

18. Boucicault was an illegitimate child born in Dublin. Of his many plays, *The Colleen Bawn* and *Arrah-Ne-Pogue* are probably the most famous (Townsend Walsh, *The Career of Dion Boucicault* [New York, 1915], pp. 3-10, 63-69, 122-23).

19. *Nation*, January 12, May 11, 1861.

20. *Tipperary Advocate*, August 10, 1861.

21. *Irish People*, December 26, 1863. It began publication in December, 1863.

22. *Ibid.*, January 7, 1865.

23. Report for the *Tablet*, dated November 24, 1863, quoted in *Cork Examiner*, December 8, 1863; Berkeley, *Irish in the Papal Army*, *passim*.

24. *Tipperary Advocate*, October 11, 1862.

25. *New York Times*, quoted in *ibid.*, October 18, 1862; *Munster News*, quoted in *Cork Examiner*, September 6, 1864; Berkeley, Irish in the Papal Army, pp. 218-19; Keogh to "Tom," Fort William, Kansas, November 30, 1867, National Library of Ireland, MS 3885.

26. R. G. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher: An Irish Revolutionary in America* (Boulder, Colo., 1949), pp. 96-98.

27. Russell replied to criticisms of his report that his account of the battle was misinterpreted and that he had not demeaned Meagher's conduct (*Cork Examiner*, August 12, 1861; *Nation*, September 14, 1861).

28. *Waterford News*, August 9, 1861.

29. *Irishman*, August 10, 1861.

30. *Dundalk Democrat*, August 10, 1861.

31. *Catholic Telegraph*, August 10, 1861; *Cork Examiner*, August 12, 1861.

32. F. E. Gibson, *The Attitudes of the New York Irish toward State and National Affairs, 1848-1892* (New York, 1951), p. 122.

33. Athearn, *Meagher*, pp. 117-18 and *passim*.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 120. The *Nation*, January 3, 1863, reported that 250 out of 1300 survived, and the *Tipperary Advocate*, January 3, 1863, 250 of 1350.

35. Quoted in Athearn, *Meagher*, pp. 120-21. John Devoy in his *Recollections of an Irish Rebel* (New York, 1929), p. 34, relates how John C. Hoey's poem "That Damned Green Flag Again" was frequently recited by the Fenians. It refers to this incident.

36. O'Connor, *A Book of Ireland*, pp. 65-67; John Boyle O'Reilly (ed.), *The Poetry and Song of Ireland* (New York, 1889), pp. 756-58. See Hugh F. McDermott, "Meagher's Brigade" (*ibid.*, pp. 922-23).

37. *Tipperary Advocate*, January 3, 1863; *Nation*, January 3, 1863; *Cork Examiner*, January 1, March 27, 1863.

38. *Dundalk Democrat*, January 3 and 10, 1863.

39. *Cork Examiner*, November 23, 1863. Meagher was reinstated as a brigadier general in December, 1863, but had no Irish brigade to command. He was shunted about in minor posts by various generals because he was considered a political and not a military general (Athearn, *Meagher*, pp. 131-32).

40. *Galway Vindicator*, January 3, 1863.

41. *Belfast News-Letter*, January 2, 1863; *Banner of Ulster*, January 6, 1863; *Catholic Telegraph*, January 10, 1863.

42. *London Times*, June 1, 1863; hereinafter referred to as the *Times*.

43. *New York Evening Post*, August 5, 1862.

44. Quoted in B. L. Lee, *Discontent in New York City, 1861-1865* (Washington, D.C., 1943), p. 104.

45. A. P. Man, "The Irish in New York in the Early Eighteen-sixties," *Irish Historical Studies*, VII (September, 1950), 87-88.

46. B. L. Lee, *Discontent in New York City*, p. 104 n. The 1860 census showed that there were 203,000 people of Irish nativity and 169,000 of German birth in New York City.

47. Wittke, *The Irish in America*, pp. 143-44.

48. *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 18, August 1 and 3, 1863, April 16 and 30, 1864, quoted in M. A. Kwitche, *James Alphonsus McMaster* (Washington, D.C., 1949), p. 136.

49. Lee, *Discontent in New York City*, p. 105.
50. Gibson, *New York Irish*, p. 157.
51. *Liberator*, July 24, 1863.
52. Report from New York, dated November 2, 1864, for the *Daily News*, quoted in *Dublin Warder*, November 19, 1864.
53. *Nation*, August 23, 1862.
54. *Cork Examiner*, October 20, 1862.
55. *Irish Times*, July 29, 1863; *Banner of Ulster*, August 1, 1863.
56. *Catholic Telegraph*, August 1 and 8, 1863; *Freeman's Journal*, July 27, August 4, 1863; *Galway Vindicator*, July 29, August 1, 1863.
57. *Cork Examiner*, July 20, 26, and 29, 1863.
58. *Nation*, August 1 and 15, 1863.
59. *Irishman*, August 1 and 8, 1863.
60. *Morning News*, quoted in *Cork Examiner*, October 27, 1863.
61. Emigration statistics are from Schrier, *Emigration*, p. 157: Only a little more than half of the emigrants were males, and many of these would be ineligible for enlisting.
62. H. B. Hammond to W. H. Seward, August 28, 1862, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Dublin, Vol. III.
63. *Dublin Evening Post*, quoted in *Nation*, September 21, 1861.
64. *Cork Examiner*, August 29, September 4, 1862.
65. *Saunders's News-Letter*, August 30, 1862.
66. *Nation*, November 15, 1862; *Irishman*, August 16, 1862.
67. H. B. Hammond to Sir T. Larcom, March 29, 1862, State Paper Office, Registered Papers, 1862, MS 12,846.
68. H. B. Hammond to Seward, July 31, 1862, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Dublin, Vol. III.
69. W. B. West to Seward, October 11, 1862, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Galway, Vol. I.
70. H. J. Brownrigg, *Report on the State of Ireland in the Year 1863* (Dublin, 1864), p. 44.
71. Edwin G. Eastman to Seward, October 15, 1863, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Cork, Vol. VI.
72. Hammond to Seward, April 23, 1863, *ibid.*—Dublin, Vol. IV.
73. *Times*, June 4, 1863.
74. West to Seward, January 23, 1863, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Galway, Vol. I.
75. P. George Graves to Dublin Castle, April 8, 1863, National Library of Ireland, MS 7585.
76. Daniel Ryan, Superintendent, to the Comms. of Police, April 27, 1863, State Paper Office, Registered Papers, 1863, MS 3837.
77. Mr. Pennefather to the Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, May 22, 1863, *ibid.*, MS 4704; J. D. Judkins to Sir T. Larcom, January 16, 1863, *ibid.*, MS 5468; Will Smyth to Sir Robert Peel, June 22, 1863, *ibid.*, MS 5677; W. W. Scott to the Chief Secretary, July 22, 1863, *ibid.*, MS 6544.
78. John Egan to Mr. John Keane, October 10, 1863 (copy), *ibid.*, MS 9965.



79. *Saunders's News-Letter*, May 22, 1863. See also *Freeman's Journal*, May 22, 1863; *Dublin Evening Post*, May 21, 1863; *Cork Examiner*, May 20, 1863; Mitchelstown Constabulary to Sir Thomas Larcom, May 14, 1863, State Paper Office, Registered Papers, 1863, MS 4372; Patrick Wallis, Emigration Office, Bruff, to Lord Carlisle, May 21, 1863, *ibid.*, MS 4736; J. Arthur Butler, R. M., Cahir, to Larcom, *ibid.*, MS 4608.

80. *Dublin Express*, April 8, 1863; letter from Father Cornelius Corkran in *Cork Examiner*, November 24, 1863; *Irishman*, June 6, 1863.

81. Letter to the editor, *Cork Examiner*, April 22, 1863.

82. Letter, *ibid.*, April 25, 1863.

83. Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa to James G. Blaine (rough draft), January 17, 1891, National Library of Ireland, MS 8648-2.

84. Wire of Larcom's, March 25, 1863, National Library of Ireland, MS 7585; Larcom to H. Waddington, April 10, 1863, *ibid.*; wire of Larcom's, June 1, 1863, *ibid.*

85. Adams to Russell, April 18, 1863, in *Dublin Evening Mail*, April 30, 1863; "Correspondence with Mr. Adams Respecting Enlistment of British Subjects in the Federal Army," *Parliamentary Papers*, 1863, Vol. LXXII.

86. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, pp. 495-98.

87. Russell to Adams, November 20, 1863; Mason to Donoughmore, November 23, 1863; Donoughmore to Russell, November 25, 1863; Captain James Winslow to Admiral Sir Lewis Jones, Queenstown, December 7, 1863 (State Paper Office, Registered Papers, 1863, MS 12,284; "Correspondence Respecting the Enlistment of British Seamen at Queenstown, on board the United States Ship of War 'Kearsage,'" *Parliamentary Papers*, 1864, Vol. LXII).

88. Lt. Comm. J. S. Thornton to Capt. J. A. Winslow, December 7, 1863; Winslow to Admiral Jones, December 7, 1863 (*ibid.*).

89. E. Hammond, undersecretary of state, Foreign Office, to H. Waddington, undersecretary, Home Office, December 12, 1863 (*ibid.*).

90. *Dublin Evening Mail*, March 16, 1864; Adams to Russell, April 2, 1864 ("Further Correspondence Respecting . . . 'Kearsage,'" *Parliamentary Papers*, 1864, Vol. LXII).

91. "Finney" will be used because it occurs most frequently.

92. *Ballinasloe Western Star*, quoted in *Cork Examiner*, January 21, 1864.

93. Police Report, dated January 28, 1864, State Paper Office, Registered Papers, 1864, MS 12,170.

94. Copy of contract in H. Waddington to Sir T. Larcom, January 25, 1864, *ibid.*, MS 11,847; Peel to Waddington, February 15, 1864, *ibid.*, MS 12,577.

95. Superintendent Daniel Ryan to Comms. of Police, February 16, 1864, *ibid.*, MS 12,615; *Boston Courier*, March 12, 1864, quoted in *Dublin Evening Post*, March 31, 1864.

96. *Boston Courier*, quoted in *Dublin Evening Post*, March 31, 1864.

97. John Connor to Thomas, March 12, 1864, State Paper Office, Registered Papers, 1864, MS 14,056; F. Lousada to Lord Russell, March 15, 1864, *ibid.*, MS 14,058.

98. "Correspondence Respecting the Enlistment of British Subjects in the United States' Army," *Parliamentary Papers*, 1864, Vol. LXII; "Further Correspondence Respecting . . . United States' Army," *ibid.*

99. T. C. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., Vol. CLXXIII, 1328-30, 1916-26.

100. J. J. Gaskin (ed.), *The Vice-Regal Speeches and Addresses, Lectures and Poems of the Late Earl of Carlisle*, K.G. (Dublin, 1865), p. 102.

101. W. W. Wilde, *Ireland, Past and Present, the Land and the People* (Dublin, 1864), p. 29.

102. *Catholic Telegraph*, May 7, 1864.

103. *Cork Examiner*, January 9, 1864.

104. *United Irishman and Galway-American*, November 14, 1863.

105. *Ibid.*, February 27, 1864.

106. *Irish People*, January 23, March 5, 1864.

107. *United Irishman and Galway-American*, March 12, 1864.

108. William D'Arcy, *The Fenian Movement in the United States: 1858-1886* (Washington, D.C., 1947), pp. 21-22.

109. *Irish People*, August 6, November 19, 1864.

110. *Cork Examiner*, February 25, 1864.

111. *Times*, February 24, 1864.

112. Quoted in *Dublin Warder*, November 19, 1864. "Pagan" O'Leary lived in the United States for a while, at first studying for the priesthood but leaving the seminary to fight in the Mexican War. He believed that Saint Patrick had demoralized the Irish by teaching them to forgive their enemies. O'Leary liked to refer to the "Eyetalian" church (Devoy, *Recollections*, pp. 133-34).

113. *Freeman's Journal*, November 19, 1864.

114. Report, *ibid.*, October 4, 1865; Police Reports, March 1864, State Paper Office, Registered Papers, 1864, MSS 13,062, 13,120, 13,325.

115. Devoy, *Recollections*, pp. 92, 239-40, 244.

116. T. D. Sullivan, *National Songs and Recitations* (Dublin, n.d.), p. 2; Devoy, *Recollections*, p. 39.

117. "The Kilkenny Man," "A Voice from Ireland to the Irish," *Nation*, September 7, 1861.

ENGLAND'S DIFFICULTY:  
IRELAND'S OPPORTUNITY

The Irish attitude on relations between the United Kingdom and the United States was almost completely conditioned by the Irish question itself. As a general rule in Anglo-American disputes, the unionists—save for the Radicals—supported the English and the nationalists the Americans. But in the context of the Civil War, Irish nationalism—though never the champion of the Westminster position—came to complicate its feelings about the meaning of United States diplomacy.

The Trent Affair—the first major wartime confrontation between Britain and the United States—crystallized Irish opinion on American diplomacy. The brief facts of the Trent incident are these: Captain Wilkes of the Union sloop “San Jacinto” in an unauthorized action on November 8, 1861, intercepted the British steamer “Trent” on its journey from Havana to England, forcibly removed the Confederate Commissioners James Mason and John Slidell, and permitted the “Trent” to continue on her journey. Northerners were jubilant, and there was a war scare in the United Kingdom. Lord Russell in an ultimatum demanded the release of the prisoners and an apology. In a note to the British ambassador in Washington on December 26, 1861, Secretary of State Seward admitted that Wilkes had erred and ordered the commissioners released, thereby satisfying the technical claims of the British government. Seward, however, introduced another note into the business. Wilkes’s mistake, the Secretary observed, had been not to have seized the entire ship and hauled it into court; and he noted sardonically that Great Britain had at last accepted the principles fought for by the United States in the War of 1812. These qualifications appeased warmongering elements in the North, and—in the absence of an Atlantic cable—the war threat blew over.

Among the Protestant unionist factions the Trent Affair prompted a

very belligerent attitude toward the United States. The incident, proclaimed one Conservative spokesman, "seems to leave us no alternative but to declare war or to abandon for ever our boasted sovereignty of the seas."<sup>1</sup> The Liberals were more reluctant to chime the wargong but nevertheless believed that "silence and submission under such an insult was impossible" and that if the United States withheld all redress for the insult ". . . in the high-handed insolence of manner with which it had been perpetrated, there will be one course open to this nation. It will be our duty to fight, and England will do her duty."<sup>2</sup> Both Liberals and Conservatives consoled merchants by claiming that if war broke out, the interruption of trade with the Union would be compensated for by an abundance of cotton and an opening up of southern ports.<sup>3</sup> Even reform-minded men such as the abolitionist Professor W. Neilson Hancock believed that the Trent case could not be arbitrated, for it involved a violation of "human rights and liberties," and that England's example in advancing liberty for mankind necessitated "promptness to stop the further barbarism of the Americans. . . ."<sup>4</sup> After the threat of war abated, however, the Lord-Lieutenant, the Earl of Carlisle, undoubtedly reflected the sentiments of the Protestant unionists when in a speech of February 4, 1862, he expressed his relief that "without any sacrifice of national honour" Britain could refrain from unsheathing "the avenging sword. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

The Protestant unionists blamed Irish nationalists and their American friends for the strained relations between the United States and the United Kingdom over the Trent Affair. In January, 1862, the *Dublin University Magazine* criticized Irish-Americans: "It is the Irish element in New York which has dragged down Mr. Seward to its level. The accident that his mother's name was Jennings . . . seems to have led him to conclude that he must take Celtic nationality under his especial patronage, and get a seat in the senate as the champion of an oppressed nationality." The following month, the same journal in an amusing but scandalously snobbish article, charged the "Celtic" Irish-Americans with responsibility for the Trent Affair:

We have not far to look for the cause of all this. Two operations in British husbandry have been carried on side by side, and often by the same agency. We have planted America, and at the same time weeded the old country. We sent out the choice of our citizens—the adventurers who planted Virginia, Maryland, Carolina, and Georgia, but we also shipped off the famine-stricken remains of the Celtic population of the west and south of Ireland.

America is thus of two minds on all international questions with this country. Much as we may despise the cock-a-doodle-doo of Meagher, Mitchel, and the

other stage rebels, who look daggers though they can use none, this leaven of Celtism is that which keeps up the estrangement and suspicion between the two branches of the Anglo-Saxon race. The struggle going on in Mr. Seward and other native Americans [is] between pride and principle—between the shame of being taunted as cowards by the New York Irish, and the conviction that the old country has both might and right on her side. . . .

We cannot hope to conciliate Young America. It is his boast to be half-Indian, half-alligator. The dash of Celtism does not come amiss in such a fine hybrid as this. We only hope, that in the course of improvement, such a gorgon, hydra, or chimaera dire, may be improved off the face of the American continent; or, if Mr. Darwin's principle of natural selection be preferred, that in the struggle for existence the old homely Smiths, Joneses, and Robinsons may get the better of the Indo-Celtic alligator.<sup>6</sup>

The Catholic unionists were caught in a predicament in the controversy over the Trent Affair: how to keep a foot in both camps on an issue that divided the unionists and the Catholic nationalists. The obvious solution was to call for peace between the United States and the United Kingdom—appease the British by ignoring the nationalists' desire to make something of the opportunity, and mollify the nationalists by failing to join in the British warcry. The Trent Affair was an "unfortunate dispute," and its settlement should be by "goose-quill," not gunpowder. "No people," Catholic unionists would admonish the North, "ever suffered in their dignity in admitting an injustice and making compensations." The Catholic and extreme anti-nationalist *Tablet* warned: ". . . The designs of the revolutionists, . . . flattering the lower orders of the Irish people with the hopes of a successful insurrection, or of . . . [an] American invasion, must bring them into collision with the spiritual authority of the Church."<sup>7</sup>

The small Irish Radical faction, which supported the North, naturally hoped for a peaceful solution and urged both parties in the dispute "to look at the question involved as a point of law to be settled, rather than as an insult to be avenged or a right to be maintained. . . ." The *Northern Whig* warned against taking seriously the warlike editorials of the *New York Herald* and the *Dublin Nation*: "To imagine that the *New York Herald* speaks the governing sentiments of America is a more serious error even than to identify the people of Ireland with the sentiments of the *Nation* newspaper."<sup>8</sup>

The constitutional nationalists reacted as might be expected in proclaiming their sympathy with the United States in the dispute with Great Britain. They were divided, however, on the question of whether Ireland would derive any advantage from a war between the United States and the United Kingdom. The *Nation* believed that ". . . at this

hour, the nation begins its onward march, and takes the first step in advance." Noting that "rapidly the tremendous contest, which shall shake the earth approaches," it proclaimed: "Sursum corda! Lift up your hearts ye peoples who have long been bowed beneath oppression. . . ." The *Waterford News* hoped that "the liberation of the Southern commissioners will never be acceded to whilst a fortress on American soil can hold them."<sup>10</sup> The *Cork Examiner* dissented. Although it had "no great sympathy with British boasting . . .," yet it called for a realistic Irish appraisal of the situation: ". . . We in interests which may be called selfish, that is, in the interest of our own immediate country, Ireland, rejoice that there is a probability of averting war." A war would be "a sentence of death to thousands of our people," because "hunger . . . would be the direct result. Our own crops having failed and the scarcity in France absorbing all European superfluities, the Northern States of America alone can afford a sufficient supply of food for our people," and war would choke off this source. And whereas England would profit by opening up the cotton supply, "we, alas, have no cotton manufacturers and must endeavor to keep out of a contest where like those famous allies the dwarf and giant, our neighbour would reap all the profit and we all the misery and the blows." Furthermore, the war would be "fratricidal," for many of the best British regiments were Irish, and those Irishmen in the American navy who should be captured would be hanged.<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, the *Examiner* heartily praised Seward's decision ending the crisis and blamed the British government for bringing the two nations to the brink of war. Even the *Nation* and the *Waterford News* supported Seward's action. It was "most beneficial to the great family of nations," for it prevented increased expenditures for British armaments, which would have affected the Irish economy, and also avoided additional bloodshed. The *Nation* summed up well the final reaction of the moderate nationalists to the Trent crisis:

It is not unlikely that the government of England will very much regret the peaceable surrender of the Southern commissioners. England is now strong, and America, divided against itself, is weak. . . . But America will not always be unprepared and distracted as she is at present, . . . and a war with England will come sooner or later. . . . [Americans] know also what would be the feelings of Ireland in the contingency of war between their country and Great Britain.<sup>12</sup>

Revolutionary nationalist newspapers shared the view of the more belligerent among the constitutional nationalists on the Trent crisis. The pro-Fenians hoped that Ireland would profit from an Anglo-

American war. The *Irishman* stated that "in any war with America, England will find that the whole sympathy of the Irish people is with the United States."<sup>13</sup>

The attitude of the Irish-Americans closely paralleled that of Irish nationalists on the Trent Affair. Both were unanimous in their hatred of the British government. The Cincinnati *Catholic Telegraph* claimed that England was "the general disturber of the human race, the enemy of peace, the conspirator against God and man," and that one of her reasons for hostility toward the United States was that "we gave a home to the Irish, who were wanted to fill the army and people Australia. . . ." <sup>14</sup> Irish newspapers carried a speech of Meagher's favoring war with England and suggesting that the Yankees would fight the southern rebels while the Irish-Americans would invade Canada.<sup>15</sup> John Mitchel proclaimed for the Irish-Americans in the Confederacy: "Our hearts go with any enemy of England," even the North, provided it recognize the independence of the Confederacy.<sup>16</sup> The New York *Irish-American* referred to the affair as a "*casus belli*" and predicted war. But it undoubtedly expressed the sentiments of most Northern Irish-Americans when it heartily approved of Seward's statement bringing a peaceful solution yet at the same time rebuffing Britain.<sup>17</sup>

The only practical demonstration of the Irish nationalists' sentiments during the Trent Affair was a public meeting at the Rotunda in Dublin, ostensibly to avow their joint support for the United States in the crisis. The meeting became ensnared in a hidden power struggle between the constitutional and revolutionary nationalists. According to John O'Leary, the Fenians were aware that the Trent Affair had produced in Ireland "a feeling, almost universal in the ordinary average mind, that another war than that of words was becoming fast inevitable."<sup>18</sup> It was the moderate nationalists, however, who organized the meeting at the Rotunda on December 5, 1861, to profit from the general sentiment. Placards announcing the meeting papered the walls of Dublin with such slogans as "War between America and England—Sympathy with America—Ireland's Opportunity!" The significant purpose of the meeting, though, was the formation of a new open nationalist organization, which the I.R.B. viewed as a "covert attack" on itself.<sup>19</sup> Wrote one Fenian:

The intriguers [A. M. Sullivan of the *Nation* and the moderate nationalists] craftily added that the time at length had come for the formation of a new patriotic organization—to be not a villainous secret one, as ours was said to be, but honest, open, above board; in short, blatant, of the old stereotyped canting,

humbugging stamp. Resolutions sympathetic with Federal America were to form the first act of the drama. But then was to come the cream or true significance of the business. A resolution calling for the establishment of the brand new organization was to be proposed and seconded.<sup>20</sup>

James Stephens, the Fenian Head Center, decided to oppose the new organization, and the Fenians packed the meeting, with seven or eight hundred members on the floor and many on the platform.<sup>21</sup>

The meeting passed one resolution, proposed by P. J. Smyth, proclaiming that Ireland could not remain indifferent to a struggle between England and America, and another recalling the generous aid Ireland had received from the republic. Both avoided the issues involved in the Civil War and referred only to Anglo-American relations. Then a Lieutenant Crean of the Papal Brigade of 1860, "the officer-hero of Spoleto" and a constitutional nationalist, proposed a strategic resolution seconded by T. D. Sullivan, associate editor of the *Nation*: "That the events of the hour imperatively dictate to all Irishmen a forgetfulness of past differences and a united rally for the old cause of their country." But Jeremiah Kavanagh, a Fenian from California, offered an amendment to the effect that a committee—whose members had already been selected by the Fenians, packing it with their own men and certain popular figures like The O'Donoghue—be first appointed to investigate whether the crisis demanded a new organization. The amendment was passed; and with the Fenians controlling the committee, the new organization was doomed.<sup>22</sup>

The issues relevant to Anglo-American relations, then, were of secondary importance to both moderate and extreme nationalists as they battled for leadership of the Irish people. The moderate nationalists had used the Trent episode as window-dressing in their campaign for popular support. The Fenians had tricked them and through the Rotunda meeting had "vigorously fanned the growing popular belief in [Fenian] power and audacity,"<sup>23</sup> yet at the same time smothered the latent sympathy for themselves among many constitutional nationalists.

The Trent Affair and the Rotunda meeting produced an incident worthy of a Dion Boucicault play. In a speech in the House of Commons on February 21, 1862, on the state of Ireland, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Sir Robert Peel the Younger, said of the meeting:

. . . The people of Ireland now, I believe, have yielded to the good influence of the age in which we live, and to the efforts, for her regeneration, of wise and enlightened statesmen. Of the justice of that opinion no more remarkable proof can be addressed than that which took place the other day when there was danger of a rupture with America, and Ireland was filled with American emissaries who



were trying to raise there a spirit of disloyalty. A meeting was then held in the Rotunda. I well recollect what took place there, at which a few mannikin traitors sought to imitate the cabbage-garden heroes of 1848; but, I am glad to say, they met with no response. There was not one to follow. There was not a single man of respectability in the country, who answered the appeal. And why is that so? It is because Ireland is changed.<sup>24</sup>

The O'Donoghue, who had chaired the Rotunda meeting, took offense at Peel's comments and through a second, Major Gavin, challenged Peel to a duel. Undoubtedly, The O'Donoghue was encouraged in this action by a similar attempt of William Smith O'Brien.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, Palmerston intervened and in a speech to the House of Commons on February 24, 1862, quoted his letter to Peel, notifying him that it was a breach of parliamentary privilege for O'Donoghue to take offense outside the House for comments made within the House and that if Peel accepted the challenge he would be a party to the breach of privilege. O'Donoghue immediately expressed regrets over any action of his that might violate the privileges of the House of Commons.<sup>26</sup>

There was no affair of honor, but the wags had a field day. At the Rotunda, said the *Times*, The O'Donoghue behaved like "a self-declared enemy of the British flag, the British law, and the British people" and performed "on the stage of parliament an old Irish farce of as thoroughly fictitious a character as the *Colleen Bawn* or the *Lily of Killarney* . . . —the best thing he can do."<sup>27</sup>

The Irish nationalists were full of praise for The O'Donoghue and contempt for Peel. O'Brien congratulated O'Donoghue for "having vindicated" his honor and that of his country.<sup>28</sup> Though the nationalists thought duelling evil, they believed that Peel deserved "to be ignominiously expelled from the society of gentlemen" and deplored the *Times's* shabby attempt to "whitewash" him.<sup>29</sup> Numerous nationalist poems commemorated the event, one of which, "Bob Acres," was written by an Irish priest in London:

Oh! can it be the news is true  
 Or have you joined the sect of Quakers?  
 Your ruddy hue is turned to blue  
 And fright you show, not fight, Bob Acres!

Oh! when we heard you talk so big,  
 And roar so loud, it made us merry;  
 We thought you were the bravest Whig  
 That ever led the boys of Derry.

*And thus, when Gavin sought you out,  
 He found you under Pam's broad aegis,  
 And satisfaction, 'twas no doubt,  
 You'd only give in banco regis.<sup>30</sup>*

## II

Throughout the rest of the war the Irish question was a principal cause of friction between the United States and Great Britain. Many Englishmen, angered by the anti-English statements of prominent Irish-Americans, reacted in a condescending and ridiculing manner. Said the *Times*: "No longer cooped up between the Liffey and the Shannon, he [the Irishman] will spread from New York to San Francisco and keep up the ancient feud at an unforeseen advantage. . . . We must gird our loins to encounter the nemesis of seven centuries of misgovernment." In an editorial on Archbishop Hughes's speech to the New York draft rioters in July, 1863, the paper caustically observed that "hatred of England was the key-note of Archbishop Hughes's specific harangue . . ." and that "the forcible enlistment of citizens having been resisted as illegal and oppressive, the archbishop reminds them that it is nothing to the oppression endured by the subjects of Great Britain." In another on a threatened invasion of Ireland by the American Fenians, the *Times* remarked: "They are more likely, we fancy, to find their way to Tennessee than to Tipperary. . . . The Federal government is more disposed to get men from Ireland than to send men over there."<sup>31</sup>

The Irish Protestant Liberals and Conservatives generally adopted the attitude of their English counterparts. After counseling peace during the Trent crisis, however, the Catholic unionists in their ambiguous position soft-pedalled the Anglo-American friction, generally underplaying the various disputes. So as not to arouse Catholic nationalists, they overlooked the role of Irish-Americans in exacerbating American public opinion. The "Castle Catholics" had little to say on Anglo-American relations as such but of course attacked the Fenians, who hoped to profit from an Anglo-American war.

The Irish Radicals were the eloquent advocates of a new era of good feelings in Anglo-American relations and criticized both the bellicose British imperialists and the warmongering Irish-Americans. The leading

Radicals such as Professor John E. Cairnes had a special affection for the New England intellectuals, who were also staunch advocates of peace and friendly relations between the United States and the United Kingdom. In reference to a possible Anglo-American war, Cairnes wrote: ". . . What a spectacle would England present in such a war? England, who submitted patiently to every conceivable insolence from the U. States while the nation was powerful, and govt. in the hands of a clique of slaveholders, now when the reins are transferred to honest men, taking advantage of its moment of weakness to pay off old scores!" He also scorned the idea that the United States was a threat to the security of the United Kingdom: "That a people absorbed in industry, held together by a federal tie, and lying across the Atlantic, should be seriously formidable to England as an aggressive power is simply an absurdity, and the writers who employ this topic so industriously know this well."<sup>32</sup> Another Radical, editor Frank Harrison Hill of the *Northern Whig*, shared Cairnes's views, attacking the hostile neutrality of the Palmerston administration and even endorsing Senator Sumner's bitter criticism of the English role in abetting the destruction of northern commerce.<sup>33</sup>

The Irish nationalists' views of Anglo-American relations were influenced by their attitudes toward southern independence. Nationalist supporters of the American Union claimed that the northern cause was in the best interest of Ireland, for a reunited America would declare war on Great Britain and liberate Ireland. Confederate supporters argued that war against Great Britain was much more likely with two independent aggressive nations on the American continent, and that the South had always befriended the Irish immigrant more and was much more anti-English than the North.

The moderate nationalists, who were almost unanimously sympathetic toward the Confederate separatist movement, reacted accordingly on the question of Anglo-American relations. The *Nation* stated: "The chances of a war with England are far more numerous in case the North should abandon the attempt to conquer the South before both parties have been utterly exhausted. . . . Should the South be conquered, small indeed will be the chance of a war between America and England for many a weary year to come." It also claimed that "the Southern party were always the most inimical to England, and that the abolition party, who are now in power, were her friends, admirers, and toadies."<sup>34</sup>

After bitter reflections on the Cromwellian campaign in Ireland, former Young Irelander John Martin linked the "New English" with the old:

Glancing over Northern American papers that are sent me I am sometimes struck with the resemblance between those New English, the present Yankee rulers of America, and the Old English of our 'sister country' that have been confiscating, robbing, and slandering the Irish these centuries past, in the name of religion and virtue,—of civil and religious liberty, humanity and Christian civilization. What a greed for other people's lands and money both the old and the new have! What a heroic, all-sacrificing, ruthless selfishness! <sup>35</sup>

The *Cork Examiner* warned its countrymen against the North's "affected animosity against England" for the purpose of winning Irish support. In fact, if the United States should go to war with Great Britain, it would be for American interests "and not from a romantic Quixotism in favor of Irish liberty; and it is *not* for the interest of America to go to war with England, no more than it is for the interest of England to go to war with America." <sup>36</sup>

The *Nation* took note of Lincoln's apparent desire for a peaceful settlement of international difficulties arising out of the 1864 Confederate raid from Canada on St. Alban's, Vermont, and the journal observed: "The election and reelection of Mr. Lincoln mark the triumph of the New England and pro-English party, and give assurance that on the suppression of the Southern difficulty an era of thorough agreement, of unparalleled civility, of mutual flattery, will open on the two nations." Common ancestry will be emphasized, "and the 'foreign element'—the Irish more especially—will be more than ever disregarded and despised." <sup>37</sup>

And so both the *Cork Examiner* and the *Nation*, the two leading constitutional nationalist papers, managed to be anti-English, pro-American if not pro-Yankee, and at the same time sympathetic to the Confederacy. The *Examiner* did not want war between the United States and the United Kingdom and insisted that Irish nationalists were very naïve if they supported the Union, whose leaders were innately pro-English, on the assumption that the Union would eventually wage war on Great Britain. The *Nation* hoped for an Anglo-American war and believed that those Americans who were most pro-English were most hostile toward southern independence and that those Americans who supported the aims of the Confederacy, both Confederates and Copperheads, were more favorably disposed toward a war against Great Britain for Irish independence.

The revolutionary nationalists also related the issue of southern

independence to that of Anglo-American relations. Some of them abandoned their southern sympathies because of English support for the South: such was the course of the *Irishman*, which proclaimed that a Union triumph meant "America preserved, England humiliated, and Ireland freed!" The pro-southern *Tipperary Advocate*, on the other hand, predicted that the formation of independent northern and southern republics would lead to "the erection of two powerful empires, the former of which will ultimately absorb the flourishing province of Canada, and the latter all the territory that encircles the Gulf of Mexico and the Spanish and British possessions in that quarter."<sup>38</sup> The extreme nationalist supporters of the Union considered the intervention of a reunited America necessary to the establishment of an Irish republic. When the American Union is restored, wrote P. J. Smyth, "a million of men in arms, a first-class navy, a government in which Irish influence will be supreme, a people filled with bitter memories will demand for Ireland Irish freedom."<sup>39</sup> At the end of the war the *Irishman* expressed the attitude of the revolutionary nationalists on the effect of the war on Anglo-Irish-American relations: "War has not weakened her [the United States]; in battles she has mightily increased; in the strife her broad blade has been tried and tempered till every flash of it sends a ray of hope and courage to downtrodden nations."<sup>40</sup>

Irish-Americans generally shared the Irish nationalist view of England's role in the Civil War. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* commented: "This rebellion is England, but it is not England open armed, but England in her own masked, assassin, slimy, serpentine character."<sup>41</sup> John Mitchel was convinced that England hoped to profit from the war and really cared for neither section, but he realistically acknowledged that the South was ready to use English friendship to gain independence, although the Confederacy "in her inmost soul" despised England.<sup>42</sup> In 1866 the *Irish-American* claimed that fear of the Fenians had prevented Great Britain from intervening in the Civil War.<sup>43</sup>

### III

The belief held by many constitutional nationalists that the northern government only affected anti-English sentiments would seem to have been correct. In a conversation shortly before the election of 1860, Senator Seward reportedly informed the Duke of Newcastle of the likelihood of his appointment as secretary of state and commented: "I

shall be forced to insult you [Great Britain]. My position will oblige me, but I have not the least intention of war." <sup>44</sup> Irish-American voters were appeased by the Lincoln administration with words, the British government, with conduct. Irish nationalism, of course, had its many American well-wishers. Seward wrote to Charles Francis Adams: "The sympathy of the whole American people goes with such movements, for the reason there is a habitual jealousy of British proximity across our northern borders and especially for the reason that this nation indulges a profound sense that it sustained great injury from the sympathy extended in Great Britain to the rebels during our Civil War. . . ." <sup>45</sup> But the feeling for Ireland on the part of Seward and some of his fellow countrymen was quite detached from any impulse to intervention.

The Fenian John Devoy believed in retrospect that if an insurrection had broken out in Ireland in late 1865 or early 1866, it would probably have occasioned war between the United States and England and that the split in the American Fenian organization prevented the raising of 30,000 Irish-American soldiers to be led by General Philip Sheridan in a war against Great Britain. Devoy pointed out how much the Irish Fenians hoped for American help and for an early American recognition of Ireland's independence, once the insurrection had begun. <sup>46</sup> But Devoy and his fellows were overlooking many important questions. How was the United States to press claims against Great Britain for acts, such as violations of neutrality, that involved important rights and principles and millions of dollars, if the American government aided Ireland? How was the government of the republic to whip up popular enthusiasm for a war against Great Britain after such a bloody Civil War and such a costly one for American merchants? What about the Monroe Doctrine and the principle of American non-interference in European affairs in return for European detachment from American matters? The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* remarked that the Fenians had knocked the Monroe Doctrine "in the head with an Irish shillelah"; <sup>47</sup> and by the 1860's, according to Dexter Perkins, "the principles of Monroe's pronouncement had taken deep root in the consciousness of the American people. . . ." <sup>48</sup> Certainly, the United States could not oppose the puppet regime of Napoleon III in Mexico if America went to war with England to win Irish independence. Evidently, even Philip Sheridan's American patriotism was stronger than his Irish nationalism, for in 1865 after the Civil War, he wanted a vigorous policy on the Mexican question in defense of the Monroe Doctrine. <sup>49</sup> The Irish Fenians overestimated the possibility of an Anglo-American war; and though they preached the slogan "Ourselves Alone,"

they depended too heavily on Anglo-American friction to spark a successful Irish revolution. The Fenians on each side of the Atlantic were out of touch with reality on the opposite shore.

In effect, the most intransigent unionists and the revolutionary nationalists when discussing Anglo-American relations could not distinguish between the vital and the secondary interests of Great Britain and the United States as the British and American governments defined them. This confusion led to unjustified expectations of war among the extremists in Ireland. The reactionary unionists considered John Bull much prouder and more spirited than he actually was; the extreme nationalists thought Uncle Sam more the avenging foe to Britain than in fact he was.

1. *Belfast News-Letter*, November 28, 1861.
2. *Banner of Ulster*, November 30, 1861.
3. *Ibid.*, December 7, 1861; *Belfast News-Letter*, November 29, 1861.
4. Hancock to Jonathan Pim, January 2, 1862, Pim Letters, Friends House, Dublin. See W. N. Hancock, *The Abolition of Slavery, Considered with Reference to the State of the West Indies since Emancipation* (Dublin, 1852).
5. Gaskin (ed.), *Vice-regal Speeches of the Earl of Carlisle*, p. 96.
6. *Dublin University Magazine*, LIX (January and February 1862), 124, 251-52.
7. *Catholic Telegraph*, December 7, 1861; *Freeman's Journal*, November 29, 1861.
8. *Tablet*, December 7, 1861.
9. *Northern Whig*, December 7 and 30, 1861.
10. *Nation*, December 7 and 14, 1861; *Waterford News*, December 13, 1861.
11. *Cork Examiner*, November 28 and 30, December 27, 1861.
12. *Ibid.*, January 9, 1862; *Waterford News*, January 10, 1862; *Nation*, January 11, 1862.
13. *Irishman*, December 7, 1861.
14. *Cincinnati Catholic Telegraph*, January 1, 1862, quoted in M. C. Paluszak, "The Opinion of the *Catholic Telegraph* on Contemporary Affairs and Politics, 1831-1871" (unpublished Master's dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1940), pp. 119-20.
15. *Waterford News*, January 3, 1862.
16. Letter in *Cork Examiner*, December 14, 1861.
17. *Irish-American*, November 23, December 21, 1861, quoted in Gibson, *New York Irish*, p. 139.
18. John O'Leary, *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism* (2 vols.; London, 1896), I, 171.
19. Joseph Denieffe, *A Personal Narrative of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood* (New York, 1906), p. 72.
20. Thomas Clarke Luby quoted in O'Leary, *Recollections*, I, 172. See T. C.

Luby, "Synopsis of Early Fenian Events in Ireland and America," p. 129, National Library of Ireland, MSS 331-33.

21. Denieffe, *Personal Narrative*, p. 73.

22. *Ibid.*; *Tipperary Advocate*, December 7, 1861.

23. Luby, quoted in O'Leary, *Recollections*, I, 177.

24. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., CLXV, 575.

25. O'Brien wrote to Peel, February 22, 1862 (National Library of Ireland, MS 3262), that he would duel him in any part of Europe Peel desired. O'Brien then wrote The O'Donoghue (*ibid.*, MS 3263) asking him to be his second if Peel accepted his challenge.

26. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., CLXV, 617-19, 623-25.

27. *Times*, quoted in *Cork Examiner*, February 26, 1862.

28. O'Brien to O'Donoghue, February 25, 1862, National Library of Ireland, MS 3264.

29. *Cork Examiner*, February 25 and 26, 1862; *Tipperary Advocate*, March 1, 1862.

30. Rev. John Doherty, quoted in T. D. Sullivan, *Recollections of Troubled Times in Irish Politics* (Dublin, 1905), pp. 154-55.

31. *Times*, quoted in *Nation*, May 5, 1860; *Times*, August 1, October 20, 1863.

32. Cairnes to Professor William Nesbitt, October 9, 1861, July 22, 1862, National Library of Ireland, MS 8941-6.

33. Hill to Cairnes, September 27, December 11, 1863, *ibid.*, MS 8952.

34. *Nation*, November 1, 1862, January 3, 1863.

35. Martin to W. J. O'N. Daunt, August 9, 1865, National Library of Ireland, MS 8047-1.

36. *Cork Examiner*, April 8, 1863, January 9, 1864.

37. *Nation*, January 7, 1865.

38. *Irishman*, October 25, 1862; *Tipperary Advocate*, April 27, 1861, also August 23, 1862.

39. Smyth to W. S. O'Brien, n.d., National Library of Ireland, MS 3307.

40. *Irishman*, May 6, 1865.

41. *Milwaukee Sentinel*, August 12, 1862, quoted in M. J. McDonald, *History of the Irish in Wisconsin in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C., 1954), p. 141.

42. Letter in *Nation*, September 21, 1861.

43. *Irish-American*, June 16, 1866.

44. M. C. M. Simpson (ed.), *Conversations with Distinguished Persons during the Second Empire from 1860 to 1863 by the Late Nassau William Senior* (2 vols.; London, 1880), II, 143.

45. Seward to Adams, March 28, 1867, *Great Britain Inst.*, XXI, MS Dept. of State, quoted in D'Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, p. 255.

46. Devoy, *Recollections*, pp. 116, 185, 399.

47. *Plain Dealer*, March 14, 1866, quoted in Wittke, *The Irish in America*, p. 159.

48. Dexter Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-67* (Baltimore, 1933), p. 4.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 503.



## THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Irish public opinion during the Civil War years on the abolition of slavery in America had behind it a long antebellum history. In the 1830's antislavery sentiment had been very strong in Ireland. The outstanding figure among Irish abolitionists was Daniel O'Connell, "The Liberator," who, though not officially a member, spoke in the Irish provinces at many meetings of the Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>1</sup> During the 1830's O'Connell's position on slavery was accepted by Irish nationalists without dissent. In 1833 he was one of the leaders in the movement to emancipate Negro slaves in the West Indies. Aware of the anti-Catholic prejudices of many abolitionists, he did not permit this to diminish his zeal for their cause.<sup>2</sup> In March, 1838, in the House of Commons, he spoke eloquently on West Indian Negro apprenticeship and was influential in abolishing it. In 1840 he proved more radical than John Bright and Richard Cobden by advocating the exclusion of slave-grown produce through prohibitive duties—sanctions which they opposed because of their belief in free trade.<sup>3</sup> In the same year he was one of the stars at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London where he met and was admired by abolitionists from Great Britain and the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Although O'Connell championed the antislavery cause, the moving spirits of the antislavery movement in Ireland were the Dublin radical reformers, most of whom were Quakers; between them and O'Connell's followers existed a close sympathy, though not, perhaps, an actual alliance. The Irish abolitionists had more in common with the New England radical and anticlerical abolitionists—such as William Lloyd Garrison, who advocated the secession of the Free States from the Union—than with the evangelicals of western New York State and Ohio, led by Theodore Weld, who called for political action within the constitutional framework of the Union and broke with Garrison in

1840.<sup>5</sup> Of a visit to Dublin that Garrison and Nathaniel Peabody Rogers made after the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, Rogers reported having "a great-souled time" with the Dublin antislavery group, people of "darling human character" and "daring" reforms.<sup>6</sup> Like the Garrisonians, these radicals were champions of anything that caught their moral eye. Alfred Webb, son of the prominent Irish abolitionist R. D. Webb, wrote that during the years 1834 to 1845 Richard Allen and the Webbs were

the centre of a general movement for reform, and the amelioration of the ills of humanity in every direction. . . . Slavery, temperance, British India, anti-opium, anti-capital punishment, anti-corn law, mesmerism, coldwater cure—everything was taken up. . . . They were called by a jocose newspaper editor "Anti-everythingarians."<sup>7</sup>

The Irish radical abolitionists shared Garrison's uncompromising attitude toward slavery. Richard Allen disapproved of the decision of the Irish Society of Friends to accept contributions from slaveholders during the famine:

I know that Henry Clay, the prince of orators and of slaveholders, has raised his eloquent and potent voice in favour of our suffering countrymen and that M'Duffie, Calhoun, and other eminent slaveholders, unite in this career of benevolence with the purest and best spirits of that land. . . . But let us remember . . . that slavery is not the less wicked or less hateful because of the wretchedness and depredation of the Irish peasant.<sup>8</sup>

During the 1840's a divergence of opinion developed among Irish nationalists over the question of American slavery. In its first form the controversy centered on the question of whether the nationalists should temper their public position on slavery to the sensibilities of anti-abolitionist Irish immigrants and other Americans whose continued support was valuable to the nationalist movement. Here the reformist idealism of O'Connell and his followers conflicted with the pragmatic politics of Young Ireland.

In 1842 O'Connell, Father Theobald Mathew, and 70,000 Irishmen, including many of the Dublin Quakers, signed an address to Irish-Americans, calling on them "to cling to the abolitionists in America, and to unite with them to put an end to slavery . . . by all peaceable means in their power."<sup>9</sup> In an antislavery speech in Conciliation Hall, O'Connell exhibited a resolute unwillingness to compromise. He lectured his fellow countrymen in the United States: "Over the broad Atlantic I pour forth my voice, saying, come out of such a land, you

Irishmen; or if you remain, and dare to countenance the system of slavery that is supported there we will recognize you as Irishmen no longer. . . ." Recognizing that it was impolitic for him to speak on the subject, as the Young Irelanders argued, he believed that the freedom of mankind should take precedence over all political interests: "Let them execrate me in America—let their support be taken from Ireland—slavery, I denounce you wherever you are." He reasoned as a true liberal, in no way insular in outlook: "Though this be a blow against Ireland, it is a blow in favour of human liberty, and I will strike that blow. Come freedom—come oppression of Ireland—my conscience shall be clear before God. We may not get money from America after this declaration, but we do not want bloodstained money."<sup>10</sup> But many nationalists were now prepared to argue that the great perennial issues of liberty must wait upon the tangible case of Irish freedom.

The annexation of Texas by the United States in 1845 deepened the quarrel within the nationalist ranks. As a result, two diametrically opposed attitudes on American slavery developed in Irish public opinion. The abolitionists were hostile to the annexation of Texas, considering it a conspiracy of slaveholders in an attempt to enhance their political power in Washington. In a speech before the Loyal National Repeal Association, John O'Connell, the son of "The Liberator," deplored the annexation and criticized those Irish-Americans who supported it. Irishmen in America, he accused, "were warped by the vile influences of slavery which are experienced in that unfortunate country." The "noble people of Texas" were "brigands, gamblers, swindlers, assassins[;] every man who found that he could not remain in the Southern States of America . . . went to Texas . . . rife as the Southern States were in crime of every sort, all proceeding like some foul exhalation from the abominable substratum of slavery." Even if a "particular good" were to be won for Ireland through the American annexation of Texas, insisted the speaker, Ireland would forgo that benefit rather than support slavery.<sup>11</sup>

The "particular good" to be gained for Ireland from the annexation was the resulting setback to British imperialism and the strengthening of the United States. Great Britain desired an independent Texas to serve as a buffer state against expansion on the part of the United States. The British also thought Texas would be a valuable source of cotton and a duty-free market for British-manufactured goods. Daniel O'Connell's rejection of the opportunity created for Ireland by annexation—for on the subject, his son's views were his also—is another

illustration of the mental breadth that accompanied his humane brand of nationalism.

Richard Scott, a solicitor, objected to the opinions of the younger O'Connell. It was too much for "humble Irishmen as they were in that Association when placed in comparison with America, to expect that anything that could be said in that Association could at all put down American slavery, or slavery in any other country." Since they did not have the power to abolish slavery, maintained Scott, they should be "cautious how they injured those who were anxiously assisting them to effect their own emancipation." He concluded by expressing his regrets that the Repeal Association was made "the vehicle of a slanderous attack upon the Americans." Later in the week, the *Dublin Nation*, representing Young Ireland, editorialized: "Ireland cannot grow ungrateful for the care and zeal of America. . . . No man in that league is pledged to anything save repeal . . . and the discussion of topics on which its members differ cannot serve the cause they have joined in adopting."<sup>11</sup> During succeeding meetings of the Association the controversy continued to rage, and many opinions were expressed that would play a prominent part in the development of public opinion on the slavery issue during the Civil War.

At one point John O'Connell commented on the criticism of his father's abolitionism in pro-Irish journals in the United States. An article in *Brownson's Quarterly Review* had accused The Liberator of diluting his nationalism—or at any rate rejecting valuable aid from abroad—in order to win British abolitionist support. To the contrary, said the younger O'Connell, his father was merely performing his duty as a Christian ". . . and was throwing aside all considerations of mere policy, and acting in a manner that could not fail to injure the interests of the Repeal movement as far as those interests are involved in mere pecuniary considerations. . . ." John O'Connell went on to point out that because the abolitionist movement had an anti-Catholic tinge to it, The Liberator had rejected any connection.<sup>12</sup>

By the late 1840's Irish nationalism was becoming increasingly hostile to the American abolitionist movement. An illustration is the clash between James Haughton and Young Ireland early in 1847. A leader of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society and a Repealer, Haughton was of the same mind as O'Connell<sup>13</sup> but also in his devotion to many other humanitarian causes, such as teetotalism and abolition of capital punishment, fitted well in the mold of the typical radical abolitionist. His crusading zeal met its match in the blunt pragmatism of the Young

Irelanders in January, 1847. The Irish Confederation had decided to send an address requesting famine relief to James Polk, the slaveholding President of the United States. When at a meeting of the Confederation Haughton attempted to deliver a speech condemning slavery and the address, his fellow members refused him a hearing. Consequently, he withdrew from the Confederation.<sup>15</sup>

Father Mathew's American crusade for temperance from 1849 to 1851 dealt the abolitionist movement in Ireland a further setback, especially among Catholic nationalists who had adopted O'Connell's attitude on slavery. In 1842 Father Mathew had urged Irish-Americans to support the abolitionists; but when Garrison approached him in 1849, he refused to aid the abolitionists in any way. He pleaded that the sole purpose of his mission was to save men from the "slavery of intemperance, without attempting to overthrow any other kind of slavery." The abolitionists were furious. Garrison reported his interview with Father Mathew in the *Liberator* and by contrast printed a copy of the address of 1842.<sup>16</sup>

The storm had just begun. Not only had Father Mathew alienated the extreme abolitionists, but after Garrison publicized the address of 1842, a number of prominent southern slaveholders became hostile to Mathew's mission. Governor T. F. Lumpkin of Georgia withdrew an invitation to him to visit and preach temperance there, and Father Mathew became the center of controversy during his visit to Washington in December, 1849.

During Mathew's stay in the nation's capital, a resolution was introduced in the U.S. Senate "that the Rev. Theobald Mathew be allowed a seat within the bar of the United States Senate during the period of his sojourn in Washington," which would make him the first foreigner since Lafayette to be so honored. Several senators, however, opposed the resolution because of Mathew's abolitionist background. Then three personalities who figured prominently in the American slavery controversy entered the debate. Henry Clay, the "Great Pacificator," deplored associating the slavery question with the resolution, saying that it was merely intended to honor a distinguished Irish patriot. But Senator Seward of New York, a favorite of the abolitionists, attempted to make Father Mathew a stalking-horse for abolitionism; he remarked that the vote on the resolution would reveal the abolitionist sentiment of the Senate. Seward's speech, responded Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, revealed that Father Mathew came to the United States covertly as a "wolf in sheep's clothing" and, as an ally of O'Connell's, was

*persona non grata* to senators from slaveholding states. The resolution was carried by a vote of thirty-three to eighteen.<sup>17</sup>

Father Mathew's modification of his original position coincided with the thinning of the nationalist abolition ranks after O'Connell's death. In his biography of Father Mathew published in 1863 John Francis Maguire, proprietor of the *Cork Examiner*, could justify the conduct of the priest on the issue. James Haughton, one of the few faithful abolition nationalists, in 1862 had still not forgotten one of the "few dark passages in Father Mathew's life, which served to show us that even the best men have serious imperfections of character" and which brought divine retribution in the form of poor health.<sup>18</sup>

Much of the reason for the rejection of the abolitionists does lie in an increasing provincialism among the nationalists, a narrowed concentration upon the single issue of freedom for Ireland. To this issue, events in America were to be subordinate. The United States was a potential ally to the separatist aspiration, and the Irish immigrants were a major base of support. The abolitionist question was weakening the Union and distracting the attention of Irish-America; the nationalists in Ireland, therefore, were not unexpectedly irritated at the Yankee reformers. But beyond the tactical considerations that concerned the Irish nationalists, Young Ireland was learning from the Irish-Americans, and from observation of their plight, to despise the abolitionist crusade.

Part of the Irish-American antipathy to the abolitionists derived from the historical alliance between the Democratic party—now the chief defender of slavery—and the immigrant. Ever since the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, the Federalists, the Whigs, and their successors the Republicans, had been more inclined to favor the nativist and isolationist point of view. The Irish-American preference for the Democrats could be shared by Irish nationalists, who believed it to be in their interest for the states to remain unified and strong—for in the 1850's the Democratic was the more national party, and the Republican the sectional. The nationalists also considered the Democratic party more hostile toward England than was the Republican, whose abolitionist element eagerly sought support for its cause in England, and whose pro-English bias stretched back to Alexander Hamilton and John Adams.

A more concrete basis for the Irish-American attitude toward the abolitionists was economic. As one historian has noted: "While Irish support of slavery probably started as part of their Democratic party

loyalty, its continuance and the intensification of their hatred toward the Negro was probably economic."<sup>19</sup> And allied to the economic problem was a state of mind that we would recognize today as blue-collar racism.

From 1840 to 1860 unskilled Irish laborers accepted menial employment in the northern states at low wages and drove out Negro competitors. In 1830, for example, Negroes had comprised the majority of servants in New York City, but twenty years later Irish servants outnumbered the entire Negro population of the city by ten to one. Northern Negroes disliked losing their jobs to the Irish, to whom they referred as "white niggers" or "white buckra." Frederic Douglass, the Negro abolitionist leader, warned that the Irishman would find "that in assuming our avocation he also has assumed our degradation." Once they had established themselves within the unskilled labor market, the Irish-Americans had concrete reason to fear the effect of emancipation. To Frederic Douglass, Irish Roman Catholics were "the enemies of human freedom, so far, at least, as our humanity is concerned."<sup>20</sup>

The Irish-Americans—and the Irish nationalists who followed events in the new country—were confirmed in their sentiments by a reciprocal hostility on the part of the abolitionists themselves. In New England a fusion of reformism and the Native American movement occurred. To a considerable extent, of course, the abolitionist point of view toward the immigrant was itself effect, as well as cause, of the Irish-American posture toward reform. In addition, the abolitionists perhaps inherited and brought into their post-Protestant Unitarianism and Transcendentalism something of the traditional Protestant antagonism to Rome; and as reformers, they doubtless found added reason to oppose the reactionary institution of Catholicism.

The Irish-Americans were under the constant derisive barrage of the abolitionist press and prominent abolitionist authors. A typical example would be the comments of Hinton Helper, the North Carolina abolitionist, in his famous book, *The Impending Crisis of the South*, published in 1857 and quoted during the war by the *Cork Examiner*. Helper said that the Irish "are a more brutal race and lower in civilization than the negro. . . . The Irish are coarse-grained, revengeful, unintellectual, with very few of the finer instincts of humanity." He predicted a fusion of Irishmen and Negroes which would be of great service to the Irish and improve their character.<sup>21</sup>

Statements of Lydia Maria Child, prominent abolitionist author, and

Mike Walsh, congressman from New York, sum up the conflict of opinions between the Irish-Americans and abolitionists. Lydia Child wrote that the Democratic party was "ready to compromise any principle of freedom for the sake of securing and retaining the Irish vote; and the Irish hate the negroes and their protectors." She also believed that "the Roman priesthood, and the Catholic powers of Europe, wish, and expect, to undermine our free institutions by means of the influence of Catholic voters, who, under their guidance, will go to the death to maintain the infallibility of the Pope in politics, as readily as they would to maintain his infallibility in religious matters."<sup>22</sup> Reflecting the opinions of the majority of Irish-Americans, Michael Walsh said that the only difference between the Negro slave of the South and the white wage slave of the North was that "the one is the slave of an individual; the other is the slave of an inexorable class. . . . If a dozen of us own a horse in common, we want to ride him as much as possible, and feed him as little as possible. But if you or I own a horse exclusively, we will take good care to feed him well, and not drive him too much to endanger his health, but just enough to keep him in good traveling order."<sup>23</sup> The northern Irish-American did not favor slavery as an institution, but he also did not believe it was necessarily a sin against humanity that must be eliminated at any price.

A final factor buttressing Irish-American, and to an extent Irish nationalist, opposition to the abolition movement was the conservatism of the American Catholic church. Official Catholic doctrine taught that "slavery, thought of theoretically and apart from specific abuses to human dignity, was not opposed to the divine or natural law" but that Catholic slaveholders were morally obligated to treat their slaves with justice and charity. Abolitionism, moreover, constituted in its very tone an affront to decent order: it made the slaves dissatisfied, and among the whites encouraged opposition to established law. Bishop Francis P. Kenrick, the leading American Catholic theologian of the period, viewed slavery in the United States not as the "peculiar institution" that then existed but as the "classical concept of slavery—which was preferable to the destruction of society. . . ." <sup>24</sup> Although he had a horror of slavery, Archbishop Hughes of New York opposed the manifesto of Daniel O'Connell and Father Mathew in 1842.<sup>25</sup> Many prominent American Catholics were or had been slaveholders, such as Roger Brooke Taney, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and Archbishop John Carroll. The hierarchy considered abolition a political question to be decided by the individual, and most of the Irish-Americans "reacted



favorably to a system which for the first time in their lives had placed others at the bottom of the social ladder." <sup>26</sup>

At any rate, by the early 1850's the main body of Irish nationalists had no use for American abolitionism. For them, now, the dour Yankee reformers were the re-emergence of that Puritan fanaticism that had historically warred upon the Irish people, and that remained alien to the more richly expressive spirit of the church.

## II

Irish public opinion during the Civil War years on the abolition of slavery went through two phases. One occurred immediately prior to the war and during its early stages; the other became apparent after editorial policy on southern independence had hardened into clear-cut positions.

Irish Protestant Liberals at the beginning of the Civil War were abolitionist almost to a man, acting as true Palmerstonian Whigs, who were liberal abroad and conservative at home. The Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Carlisle, deplored "the crowning evil—the capital danger—the mortal plague-spot—slavery." The Presbyterian *Banner of Ulster* believed that the one great abolition principle was worth all the bloodshed of war. William Henry Gregory, a self-styled Liberal-Conservative M.P. from Galway, revealed in his autobiography that he was very much an abolitionist at heart. The *Dublin University Magazine*, a supporter of the bipartisan domestic policies of Palmerston, proclaimed that the "Sebastopol of slavery must fall," and announced: "We hate slavery, not as loudly, but as deeply as any abolitionist in the North." <sup>27</sup> To favor abolition was the decent and gentlemanly course; and abolitionist literature of a lurid sort was very much in vogue. How superficial these sentiments were became apparent later in the war.

The majority of Liberals in Ireland were middle- and upper-class Catholics. Their ties with England were stronger than any association with exiled countrymen in the United States. Consequently, they could afford to be antislavery and were not afraid of being associated with abolitionists. A number of Catholic Whig newspapers bitterly denounced slavery. <sup>28</sup> The *Freeman's Journal*, which justly claimed that it was "looked to as a guide by the commercial and mercantile classes," <sup>29</sup> especially denounced the Fugitive Slave Act. But *Freeman's* could not totally neglect the Irish Catholic disapproval of abolitionists and would

occasionally refer to the "fanatical abolitionists."<sup>30</sup> The Catholic Whigs, however, did not indulge in vituperative attacks on the abolitionists for their anti-Catholicism, as did the Catholic nationalists.

The Irish Conservatives, who differed with the Liberals mainly on party affiliation and not issues, were little concerned with the question of slavery. The *Irish Times* did go on record against the institution, and a month before the war insisted that "England can by no means support slaveholding States in their resistance to the authority of the Federal Government" but called the affair "an unpleasant complication" because "England will not sacrifice a trade of twenty millions yearly, unless the Washington Government has a naval force adequate for the blockade of the entire seaboard of the South." The *Belfast News-Letter* was also principally concerned with the effect of the war on trade and with the economic impact in Ulster.<sup>31</sup> Thus the Conservatives from the very beginning of the war revealed that their disapproval of slavery was at the most very shallow.

Among the unionists one very small faction was staunchly abolitionist from the beginning—the Irish Radical supporters of Bright and Cobden. The two principal propagandists for this group were Frank Harrison Hill, editor of the *Belfast Northern Whig*, and John Elliott Cairnes, professor of political economy at Trinity College, Dublin, and later Queen's College, Galway. The *Northern Whig*, full of abolitionist fervor, commented at the firing on Fort Sumter:

That chivalry of the South which attacks unarmed and unsuspecting enemies in the halls of legislative deliberation, and beats them by unseen blows [Preston Brooks's brutal caning of the fiery abolitionist Senator Charles Sumner]—which in duels slays with the bowie-knife the enemy shot to the earth by the revolver much as the highland sportsman puts the hit stag out of his pain—will probably re-open pages doomed to be closed in the annals of war.

It spoke also of the North's superior "moral energies and intellectual aspirations which find expression in letters and philosophy," and of its higher vitality nurtured in its "devotion to the principles of order, obedience to law, and reverence for freedom."<sup>32</sup>

An editorial in the *Cork Examiner* provided the key to interpreting Irish nationalist appraisals of slavery: "On the slavery question the Catholic Church in America does not, as we may say, take sides; though its members are free to form such opinions as their reason may dictate. Some judge it from the point of view of its inherent evil; others from that of the difficulties in the way of abolition."<sup>33</sup> It was from the latter point of view that Irish nationalists judged slavery, reflecting the opin-

ions of the vast majority of Catholic Irish-Americans. The nationalist papers at first occasionally revealed a tinge of remorse on the subject, but full use was made of rationalization in justifying the system of slavery as it existed in the southern half of the United States.

Nationalists defined English support of the abolitionists as hypocrisy, for "the English people would renounce Christianity itself, ten times over, rather than yield to a proposition which would be likely to affect them as injuriously as abolition would affect the Slave States. . . ." It was noted that "the non-slaveholding tax-payers of Ireland, England, and Scotland, had to pay twenty millions of money to a few British subjects to make their tender consciences recognize 'the sin of slavery.' " <sup>34</sup> Abolition movements in America were in the wrong, ran a typical nationalist view, because "philanthropy is employed in hatred"; emancipation would represent not a repudiation of sin but a desire "to deprive the enemy of property." The Know-Nothing party, moreover, "was a direct emanation from that of abolition," and Secretary of State Seward was "the idol of the 'Downeast' Levellers." Enemy to the "puritanical North," the slaveholding South was sure to gain many friends among the Irish nationalists. <sup>35</sup>

In sum, the Irish unionists can be classified as superficially abolitionist in sentiment, with the exception of the Radicals and some Presbyterians who gave the movement their whole-hearted support. Catholic Whigs made some distinction between the just cause of abolition and the fanaticism that attended it. Among the nationalists violent opposition to the views of the abolitionists was evident from the very beginning of the southern rebellion.

### III

After the war had become full-scale following the Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861, opinion among the unionists—the Radicals again excepted—centered on the effort to dissociate slavery from the southern cause. By the autumn of 1862 the unionists almost unanimously sided with the South in one way or another. But since in the early part of the war they had proclaimed themselves abolitionists, they had to reconcile this position with their support for the South.

William Henry Gregory, a leading champion of the southern cause in the House of Commons, revealed in his autobiography some of the reasons proposed by Irish unionists to justify their conduct. He claimed

to believe, as did Lord Russell, that if the Confederacy were established as an independent state, slavery would disappear within a short period. He also asserted that many Union supporters were insincere abolitionists. How sincere this Galway M.P. was in his own abolitionism is apparent in a letter he wrote to a southerner in 1863. He said that Confederate independence was of such importance to England's interests that he "would not have hesitated to risk a war" and that he was proud of the way the British government "resisted all the strong appeals to the anti-slavery feeling of England."<sup>36</sup>

The Irish Protestant Liberals proclaimed their abolitionist sentiments throughout the war and agreed with the Lord Lieutenant, who said in February, 1862, that Britons should not "recede one jot from their undying abhorrence of slavery." But since they were sympathetic toward the South, the Protestant Liberals worked to discover strains of northern repugnance to abolition. The *Dublin University Magazine* attacked the Irish and Roman Catholics of New York:

The two strongest antipathies of the low classes of New York are Old England and New England. They hate Old England because she is the great conservative and Protestant state of Europe, and they hate New England, because in these six Puritan states is collected the intelligence and virtue of America; and because like the mother country, they have a deep hatred to slavery, the Diana for which the merchants of New York make silver shrines.

Yet in August, 1862, while praising the increased determination of the North to limit slavery, the *Dublin University Magazine* sympathized with the South and praised its heroes and achievements. The *Banner of Ulster*, also prior to the Emancipation Proclamation, declared that the slavery question should not prevent the recognition of the Confederacy, for the North was not attempting emancipation and its citizens hated the Negro as much as did the southerners, if not more. This Presbyterian paper was throughout the war in a difficult position in attempting to defend the slaveholding South. Numbers of Irish Presbyterians, we must suspect, would agree with the sentiments expressed in a letter to the editor of the *Banner* signed "A Voice from Wilberforce," accusing the paper of trying to drag the British people into a "war against the cause of freedom, and in aid of the most diabolical species of slavery that ever brought down the vengeance of heaven upon our guilty world."<sup>37</sup>

The preliminary emancipation proclamation, issued by President Lincoln on September 22, 1862, to go into effect on January 1, 1863, failed to impress the Irish Protestant Whigs. Pointing out the deep-rooted

hostility to the Negro in the North, the *Dublin Evening Post* said that the manifesto "adopts the principle of the abolition of slavery only where the maintenance of the Federal Union may be thereby promoted." Sir Robert Peel, the chief secretary for Ireland, criticized "the odious and abominable proclamation of President Lincoln, in which he said, 'You who are rebels, your slaves shall be emancipated, but you, States that remain united, shall keep your slaves.'" He said that an independent Confederacy would further the emancipation of the slaves and that the "God of Battles" was fighting for the South.<sup>38</sup>

From the time of the Proclamation to the end of the war, Irish Protestant Liberal opinion concentrated on repulsing the antislavery and reform campaign of the Radicals and on rationalizing the Whig position on the role of slavery in the war. The *Dublin University Magazine* realized that the slavery issue could have an effect on reform movements in the United Kingdom if the Radicals had their way. In December, 1863, with the Radical antislavery crusade in mind, it remarked that because of the conduct of the North in the war "all moral considerations, and religious principles have been trampled out, with a sanguinary fanaticism unparalleled in the history of the world." Later it praised the "moral superiority of the Confederates" and denied that support for the "peculiar institution" was their motive for secession. The magazine even tried to outmaneuver the Radicals by decrying any attempt to "Americanize" British institutions, and by claiming that were "republicanism" all it was made out to be, it would have been able to cope with slavery in a constitutional and peaceful way as England had done with Catholic emancipation and electoral reform.<sup>39</sup>

After their protestations of abolitionist sympathy at the beginning of the war, the Catholic Liberal newspapers conveniently neglected the slavery issue as they openly avowed their support for the South. The Emancipation Proclamation gave them a rude jolt and forced them to attempt to reconcile their antislavery views with support for the Confederacy. They echoed the point stressed in prominent English papers that the Proclamation would only free slaves in states over which Lincoln had no power and would encourage servile rebellion. The Catholic Liberals asserted throughout the war that there would be greater freedom for the Negro and a better opportunity for genuine emancipation with an independent Confederacy.<sup>40</sup>

The Irish Conservatives, from the early part of the war, supported the Confederacy and had an even more pronounced southern bias than the Liberals. Early in 1862 a Tory wrote that "the bubble of abolition burst,

and dominion and political power were unveiled in all their deformity." The Conservatives were constantly concerned about the campaign of the Radicals, charging that Bright cared little for Negro emancipation but was making it a "stalking-horse" for universal suffrage in the United Kingdom. And in the grain of their own political philosophy, the Irish Tories believed the Emancipation Proclamation was "unconstitutional and revolutionary" and thus "illegal, as it is certainly immoral."<sup>41</sup>

The Irish Radicals were at the very beginning ardently abolitionist and pointedly sympathetic to the cause of the North. Their free-trade and antislavery sentiments clashed at the outbreak of the conflict, as did those of Richard Cobden, when the northern protectionists, who had just increased duties in the Morrill tariff, insisted that they did not want to interfere with slavery, and the slaveowners announced that they believed in free trade. The Radicals, also, received little encouragement from an organ of the American abolitionists, the *Boston Liberator*, which on March 1, 1861, advocated letting the South go in peace "as a good riddance."<sup>42</sup> But it did not take the Radicals long to conclude that the real issue in the war was the abolition of slavery, which was an implicit aim of the North. As John Bright began his great antislavery campaign in the interest of democracy and reform in the United Kingdom, the *Northern Whig* supported him and continued to do so throughout the war: "We believe that Mr. Bright is quite correct in referring the rebellion entirely to slavery." The paper was not, however, completely satisfied with the attitude of the North on slavery. It believed that for the Union to triumph it would have to proclaim publicly its intention to abolish slavery. There were those whose ears were "stuffed with cotton, and ring, even in dreams, to the chink of their pence"—words originally applied to Bright—and others "to whom slavery is less hateful than democracy." The *Northern Whig* viewed the war in light of Presbyterian predestination. It was "a conflict between the opposing powers of good and evil, of light and darkness, between justice and the foulest wrong and oppression." Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln were "but the bubbles on the surface of the stream, the straws and other mean fragments which it carries with it in its course. . . . A Higher Power is using them for the purpose of a higher wisdom than man's." It was a war between the Declaration of Independence and "the principle which the Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy announced [that the Confederacy was founded on] . . . the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man."<sup>43</sup>

The leading Irish propagandist for the abolitionist movement was Professor John Elliott Cairnes. Along with Frank Harrison Hill and Richard Davis Webb, the Dublin printer and publisher of the *Anti-Slavery Advocate*, he formed the small band of Irish Radical supporters of the pronorthern British Emancipation Society. In May, 1862, he published a book on the slavery issue and the Civil War, *The Slave Power*, written from notes of lectures delivered at the University of Dublin in 1861. Viewing history in the light of economic determinism and stating that slavery was the cause of the war, Cairnes made it the purpose of the work "to hold up to the world the new Confederacy as the most formidable antagonist of civilized progress which has appeared in modern times."<sup>44</sup> Cairnes argued that the economy of a slave society retarded the growth of regular industry and was incompatible with civilized progress. In his view, a slave society had a bad effect on modern commerce by enhancing the value of crude labor and eliminating the necessity of education. Though urging moral support for the North, Cairnes concluded that the North should not subjugate the Confederacy but should hem it in east of the Mississippi, isolating the South until slavery had disappeared.<sup>45</sup> The book came under bitter attack from Conservative and Liberal journals for its doctrinaire "infallibility," its extreme liberalism, and its low estimate of Negro intelligence.<sup>46</sup> Friendly critics found *The Slave Power* one of the best contemporary works on the subject, for it was "scientific rather than sentimental."<sup>47</sup> It "influenced in a marked degree" many of the thinking people in the United Kingdom and was considered "one of the finest specimens of applied economical philosophy."<sup>48</sup> Leslie Stephen, one of the leading advocates of the northern cause in England, wrote that *The Slave Power* was "the most powerful defense of the cause of the Northern States ever written" and "made a great impression both in England and America. . . ."<sup>49</sup>

The Emancipation Proclamation provided a great boost in morale for the Irish Radicals. It was the "most important news that has been received since South Carolina declared itself out of the Union." They immediately leapt to its defense: "That the emancipation of slaves, as a belligerent measure, is thoroughly justifiable, is . . . as clear as any proposition in the ethics of war."<sup>50</sup> They attacked the press for misleading the people and answered the charge so frequently made that the northerners were hypocrites on the slavery issue. Cairnes admitted that the North had not on the whole been opposed to slavery; but "slavery had come to stink in the nostrils of the Northern people, as a social

nuisance, as a political pest; and the Northern people are therefore resolved to be rid of it. They are learning their duty, as nations for the most part learn their duty, through the medium of their interests." The real hypocrites, the canters, are in the United Kingdom, Cairnes claimed:

Amongst those here who lift up their hands in pious horror at the thought that *they* should countenance slavery—and here we all do this—even the *Times*, while defending slavery on Biblical grounds, affects to pronounce against it—are there not some who are never weary of paliating its enormities and eulogizing its champions? Are there not people amongst us who, two years ago, were shocked that the North should have gone to war for any cause less holy than emancipation, but who now, when emancipation is the policy of the North, are shocked that emancipation should be accomplished by means so unholy as war? <sup>51</sup>

The unionists, save for the Radicals, were caught between abolitionist principles and sympathy for the South—or at least antagonism toward the gory, hopeless, and internationally dangerous northern effort. Among most of the nationalists the intellectual situation at the beginning of the conflict was far different. They had been, with some dissensions, anti-abolitionist since the disintegration of the O'Connellite movement; and upon the advent of the war, their hostility to abolitionism could go in perfect tandem with their instinctive empathy toward a separatist rebellion. Theirs was not, then, the dilemma of the Irish unionists, nor was it the opposite predicament of the Federal yet anti-abolitionist Irish-Americans, and of that minority among Irish nationalists who thought like them. Suppressed—with difficulty and considerable dissent—were the practical and sentimental considerations that once had held the nationalist ranks to a special friendship toward the policies of the United States.

All this is not to say that the nationalists resolved the deepest moral question that their southern sympathies posed. For if they had long denounced the abolitionist movement and therefore did not have to resolve the extreme opposites that existed within the position of many unionists, they nevertheless could not brush away the fact of slavery, nor would their consciences permit them to favor it.

Their solution, prior to the Emancipation Proclamation, was simply to dismiss abolition as impractical and as irrelevant to the issues of the war. Admitting that "the ugliest blot on the Confederate cause is the existence of slavery," they would reason: "On principle we are totally adverse to slavery, but we think it would be best to let it die out with the present generation; while in the meantime the code of slave-laws



could be so ameliorated as to make the present race much more comfortable, better housed and fed than the Irish peasant." Nor should the South be censured for slavery any more than the North, which supported the institution in innumerable ways: "It is impossible, therefore, for one to produce it as a reproach against the other, and the question at issue between the two sections of the States must be decided altogether independently of that consideration." Finally, the nationalists argued that ironically the northern campaign against the South was "an endeavour to enslave a people determined to be free."<sup>52</sup>

Lincoln's great Proclamation altered the terms of the problem. For suddenly, and despite the limitations in the program outlined in the document, the liberation of the slave had become a concrete, definable possibility, and an apparently squalid war of political subjugation was touched with transcendent purpose.

The Proclamation had little immediate effect on nationalist sentiment. The purpose of the Proclamation was to encourage an uprising of the slaves that was desired by the "canting hypocrites who rave about the Sabbath, and temperance, and godliness, and all anti-Popery shams." It was "hollow, futile, and hypocritical," for Lincoln had as much power over the slaves in the South as he did "over the serfs in Siberia." Despite the Proclamation, the North had made the war "not a war to free slaves but to enslave whites."<sup>53</sup>

But about a month after news of the Proclamation reached Ireland, an element within the nationalists, small yet suggestive of a more general moral crisis, began to rethink its position. The *Dublin Irishman*, until then pro-Confederate, was spokesman of the change. The British, said the *Irishman*, were generally proslavery and opposed to the Emancipation Proclamation, which "has had at least, one good effect in Europe—it has unmasked England," who would be afraid to recognize the Confederacy after Lincoln's Proclamation. Ireland must therefore consider the Union cause anew. The paper was not prepared to sympathize with the abolitionists, but now it supported the restoration of the Union, somewhat in the manner of a "War Democrat." It hoped the American people would crush the two factions responsible for the war, the "Black Republicans" and the southern slaveholders.<sup>54</sup>

The attempt of the *Irishman* to revise its pro-Confederate views was not particularly successful in influencing nationalist opinion. No other nationalist paper followed its example. The *Nation* expressed its reason for refusing:

In this country, previous to the war, there was among the popular party a disposition to speak leniently of the slave system. The English taunts against America on that score were replied to by the remark that the slaves were better cared for than the peasantry of Ireland. But now it would seem that some Irishmen are willing to charge as a heavy crime on the Southern Confederacy that which they considered no crime while it was chargeable upon the Union! The Exeter Hall arguments, the point of which our writers laboured so hard to blunt, have suddenly come into favour; and the use of the lash, the horrors of the middle passage, and of the slave market are now descanted on in excited language by men who would sneer at them some eighteen months ago!

To the *Irishman's* argument "that England having taken one side of the question, we must be right in taking the opposite," the *Nation* replied that Irish nationalists should not give the English the right of thinking for them and that "the opinion of Irishmen should be based on the merits of each question."<sup>55</sup>

The *Irishman*, at this time the most pro-Fenian of Irish newspapers, was trying to adopt the northern Irish-American point of view, in which support for the Union proved stronger than hatred of the abolitionists. In 1864 the *Irish People*, the official organ of the Fenians, expressed more precisely the opinion of the revolutionary nationalists on the slavery issue. In urging Irish nationalists to avoid the abolitionist crusade, the *Irish People* stated that "Catholic emancipation was accelerated by the attitude taken by the American-Irish" but that

in after times, during his struggle for "Repeal," O'Connell deprived himself of these potent auxiliaries. His eternal philippics against slavery divided the American-Irish, and paralyzed their exertions in behalf of their native land, and instead of the old cry which carried the Reform Bill—"To stop the Duke, run for gold"—O'Connell himself became a banker! At one and the same moment he flew in the face of the Democratic party in America, with which the exiles were identified.<sup>56</sup>

As the Radical abolitionist campaign intensified, the nationalists were even more harassed by the moral issue of slavery. They continued the attempt to emphasize that the war was not "an anti-slavery crusade." An act of philanthropy was proclaimed by President Lincoln in order to "spite a partner who had quitted the firm."<sup>57</sup> The campaign waged by the nationalists to discredit the abolitionists became even more intense. Henry Ward Beecher came in for the largest share of abuse. Stories were even reprinted from the enemy *Times* ridiculing him. His anti-Irish comments were publicized.<sup>58</sup> Even a northern sympathizer in Ireland wrote that Beecher's "slanders" on the Irish would "go far to damp the zeal of many thinking men for what they have hitherto

imagined to be a good cause." <sup>59</sup> Horace Greeley, the abolitionist editor of the *New York Tribune*, was criticized for his anti-Irish prejudice in accusing the Irish population in the North of being the great enemy of the slave race. An Irish-American, replied the *Cork Examiner*, "picks up Yankee prejudices as fast as he learns to speak through his nose, and damns a nigger just as readily as he chews tobacco." <sup>60</sup> The nationalists claimed to dislike the "lack of real philanthropy in the crusade for abolition, as well as the absence of moderation in the interest of the slave." <sup>61</sup>

Among the nationalists one paper was consistently antislavery and refrained from attacks on the abolitionists—the pro-North and pro-Fenian *Dundalk Democrat*. It attributed the cause of the war entirely to slavery and interpreted every event from this point of view. After the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation it commented: "When the first hostile gun was fired by the South, the President and the Senate should have decreed the abolition of slavery. Had they done so, it is more than probable that the rebellion would have long since exploded." It later noted that the Proclamation had all but wiped out the "vile institution of slavery" and that if anything could save the Union, it was the Proclamation.<sup>62</sup>

The one prominent abolition nationalist, James Haughton, continued to oppose slavery throughout the war, but his Quaker principles prevented him from approving of war as a means to abolition. He wrote that "the sword has ever been an effective instrument against human freedom, but in *favour of it*, never." In October, 1862, in a letter published in the *Anti-Slavery Advocate*, the organ of the British abolitionists, he stated: ". . . I am clearly of opinion, that those members of the Anti-Slavery Society, who started on the principle that moral power alone should be used, have made a sad mistake in policy and in principle in giving the least support and countenance to a resort to violent measures." <sup>63</sup>

The Union propaganda organ in Ireland, the *Galway-American*, later amalgamated into the *United Irishman and Galway-American*,<sup>64</sup> was antislavery but not with the zeal of an abolitionist. It quite naturally played to the prejudices of Irish nationalists and proclaimed the admiration of the Irish aristocracy for the "slave oligarchy of the Southern States" and for the "chivalrous nigger whippers." <sup>65</sup>

## IV

Throughout the Civil War there was little organized support in Ireland for the abolitionist movement.<sup>66</sup> Two antislavery meetings were held in Belfast, the chief value of which, according to F. H. Hill, was to provide "an expression of the feeling of the Presbyterian clergy whose influence in the north [of Ireland] is . . . very considerable on political as well as on religious subjects."<sup>67</sup> The Presbyterian ministers at these meetings, however, were not supported by the General Assembly and received little backing from their congregations.<sup>68</sup> The Church of Ireland<sup>69</sup> and the Irish Catholic church<sup>70</sup> also refused to support the antislavery movement actively. The ultimate symbolic meaning of the slavery issue, its implication for the domestic struggle between social reform and the aristocratic establishment, was for the moment largely, though not wholly, hidden beneath the surface of British public opinion. In reality the abolitionist cause, and its coming triumph, would contribute significantly to the moral undermining of the political old order in the United Kingdom—already weakened by the degree of its assent to the liberal postulates of the century. The Irish aristocracy realized this, as did the Radicals in their electoral-reform movement. Their intensive campaign after the Emancipation Proclamation evidently met with considerable success among the dissenting and laboring classes of England and Scotland,<sup>71</sup> though with cold indifference among the Irish people.

Several general observations upon Irish opinion of the slavery question are in order. Although the Protestant unionists sincerely proclaimed their abolitionist sentiments, their attitude was most compromising; in fact, the Anglophile Irish were even more equivocal on the matter than the upper and middle classes in England.<sup>72</sup> As in most other issues—except, of course, in religion—the Catholic unionist outlook was that of the English Liberals; the unionists would agree with Gladstone that support for the South as a nation struggling against military coercion did not signify support for slavery. In short, the slavery issue did not significantly shape Irish unionist opinion on the war—save among the Radicals, who here as in all issues pursued their own special moral course.

Also evident is the blindness of the Irish nationalists to the ultimate importance of the slavery issue for the United Kingdom. The victory of abolitionism, along with that of a republican American Union, gave

new impetus after the war to the British reform movement, from which Ireland would benefit, particularly in the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and in land reform. Perhaps it was the nationalists' general antipathy toward any English-based movement or their attitude toward southern independence that blinded them. Perhaps, like Lord Acton, they found the "abstract, ideal absolutism" of the northern abolitionists incompatible with the Roman Catholic spirit.<sup>73</sup>

There appears to have been a substantial amount of potential support for an antislavery movement in Ireland during the Civil War among the impoverished pro-American peasants and laborers,<sup>74</sup> who could have been organized and would have rallied around a leader with the stature of an O'Connell. Unfortunately, this source of potential abolitionist sentiment, which cannot be accurately estimated, was not adequately represented in Irish public opinion. The Civil War coincided with the nadir of constitutional nationalism in post-emancipation Ireland and with a resultant intensification of the revolutionary impulse. At a time when tempered, disciplined, and articulate nationalist thought was nearly absent, opinions on such a complex issue as the abolition of slavery were perhaps doomed to confusion and sterility.

1. William Fagan, *The Life and Times of Daniel O'Connell* (2 vols.; Cork, 1847-48), II, 239.

2. Before the Cork Anti-Slavery Society, whose members had "strong anti-Catholic prejudices," O'Connell delivered an antislavery address in which he "quoted the scriptures familiarly in favour of human liberty." On concluding, he was enthusiastically applauded (*ibid.*, p. 240). Apparently, during the 1830's O'Connell was well supported on the slavery issue by all religious and political factions in Ireland (F. J. Klingberg, *The Anti-Slavery Movement in England: A Study in English Humanitarianism* [New Haven, 1926], p. 249; R. Coupland, *The British Anti-Slavery Movement* [London, 1933], p. 138). For O'Connell's relations with American abolitionists, see R. B. Nye, *William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers* (Boston, 1955), and Lorenzo Sears, *Wendell Phillips: Orator and Agitator* (London, 1909).

3. Stephen Hobhouse, *Joseph Sturge* (London, 1919), pp. 42, 106.

4. F. B. Tolles (ed.), *Slavery and "The Woman Question": Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840* (London, 1952), *passim*.

5. See G. H. Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse 1830-1844* (New York, 1933), which discusses the controversies among American abolitionists. Garrison evidently was much more popular among British than among American abolitionists.

6. Quoted in H. M. Wigham (comp.), *A Christian Philanthropist of Dublin: A Memoir of Richard Allen* (London, 1886), pp. 38-39.

7. Quoted, *ibid.*, pp. 13-14. Another Dublin abolitionist, Dr. R. R. Madden, at that time was serving first as a special magistrate in Jamaica, appointed to aid

in abolishing slavery, and later as a judge and protector of liberated slaves in Havana (T. M. Madden [ed.], *The Memoirs [Chiefly Autobiographical] from 1798 to 1886 of Richard Robert Madden, M.D., F.R.C.S.* [London, 1891]).

8. Richard Allen to the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, March 29, 1847, quoted in Wigham, *Memoir of Richard Allen*, pp. 62-68.

9. Quoted in Gov. T. F. Lumpkin to Father Mathew, September 4, 1849, in J. F. Maguire, *Father Mathew: A Biography* (London, 1863), p. 474.

10. Quoted in Samuel Haughton (comp.), *Memoir of James Haughton* (Dublin, 1877), p. 287.

11. Quoted in *Nation*, August 9, 1845; Haughton, *Memoir of James Haughton*, p. 72.

12. Speech and editorial in *Nation*, August 9, 1845.

13. Quoted in *Freeman's Journal*, August 19, 1845.

14. *Ibid.*, August 12, 1845.

15. Haughton, *Memoir of James Haughton*, p. 85.

16. Maguire, *Father Mathew*, p. 471.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 475-86.

18. James Haughton, "Ireland and Father Mathew," a paper read before the International Temperance and Prohibition Convention, September, 1862, quoted, *ibid.*, p. 473 n.

19. Gibson, *New York Irish*, p. 142. See also D'Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, p. 64.

20. L. F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago, 1961), pp. 163-66.

21. *Cork Examiner*, April 4, 1864.

22. Quoted in D'Arcy, *Fenian Movement*, p. 362.

23. Quoted in A. M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (London, 1947), p. 490.

24. J. T. Ellis, *American Catholicism* (Chicago, 1956), pp. 87-88.

25. *Dictionary of American Biography*, IX, 354.

26. Ellis, *American Catholicism*, p. 89.

27. Gaskin, *Speeches of the Earl of Carlisle*, p. 420; *Banner of Ulster*, August 6, 1861; Lady Gregory (ed.), *Sir William Gregory: An Autobiography* (London, 1894), p. 215; *Dublin University Magazine*, LVII (June, 1861), 752, LVIII (July, 1861), 119.

28. *Catholic Telegraph*, March 23, 1861; *Galway Vindicator*, April 27, 1861.

29. P. D'A. Newton (ed.), *The Newspaper Gazetteer, An Annual Register of Newspapers* (London, 1860), advertisement appendix.

30. *Freeman's Journal*, January 2 and 5, 1861.

31. *Irish Times*, March 18, 1861; *Belfast News-Letter*, January 1, April 26, 1861.

32. *Northern Whig*, April 26, May 7, 1861.

33. *Cork Examiner*, November 27, 1861.

34. *Nation*, January 5, 1861.

35. *Cork Examiner*, August 28, 1861; *Waterford News*, March 22, 1861; *Tipperary Advocate*, August 10, 1861.

36. Gregory, *Autobiography*, p. 215; Adams, *Britain and the Civil War*, II, 89; W. H. Gregory to John Rutherford, March 5, 1863, quoted in N. M. Tilley (ed.), "England and the Confederacy, a Letter of Sir William Henry Gregory," *American Historical Review*, XLIV (October, 1938), 59.
37. Speech at Mansion House, Dublin, February 4, 1862, quoted in Gaskin, *Speeches of the Earl of Carlisle*, p. 96; *Dublin University Magazine*, LIX (January, 1862), 127, LX (August, 1862), 246-56; *Banner of Ulster*, September 6, 1862; letter to editor, signed "A Voice from Wilberforce," *ibid.*, December 12, 1861.
38. *Dublin Evening Post*, October 7, 1862; *Dublin University Magazine*, LXIII (April, 1864), 472; Peel quoted in *Cork Examiner*, January 31, 1863.
39. *Dublin University Magazine*, LXII (December, 1863), 716, LXIII (February, 1864), 214-21, LXIV (November, 1864), 483, LXVI (August, 1865), 228.
40. *Galway Vindicator*, October 8, 1862, January 3, 1863; *Freeman's Journal*, October 8, 1862.
41. *Belfast News-Letter*, January 1 and 25, 1862, January 14, 1863; *Irish Times*, July 24, 1863.
42. F. J. Klingberg, "Harriet Beecher Stowe and Social Reform in England," *American Historical Review*, XLIII (April, 1938), 543; Adams, *Britain and the Civil War*, I, 46 n.
43. *Northern Whig*, December 9, 1861, January 1, 1862.
44. J. E. Cairnes, *The Slave Power* (2d ed., London, 1863), p. xii.
45. See below, p. 88.
46. *Belfast News-Letter*, April 4, 1863; *Dublin University Magazine*, LXI (May, 1863), 607-11. F. H. Hill wrote that the *Times* confused "the question of slave and free, as treated by . . . [Cairnes], with the question of black and white,"—in effect, that Cairnes had a low estimate of slave intelligence and not Negro intelligence, as the *Times* claimed (F. H. Hill to Cairnes, December 23, 1863, National Library of Ireland, MS 8952).
47. Donaldson Jordan, and E. J. Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War* (London, 1931), p. 74.
48. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1960 ed., IV, 534; *ibid.*, 11th ed., 1910-11, IV, 950. E. L. Godkin wrote to Cairnes, October 10, 1865, that *The Slave Power* was "the most valuable contribution to the literature of the crisis . . ." (National Library of Ireland, MS 8944-11).
49. *Dictionary of National Biography*, VIII, 216-17.
50. *Northern Whig*, October 6, 1862; Cairnes, *Slave Power*, p. xxii.
51. J. E. Cairnes, *Who Are the Canters?* (London, 1863), pp. 5-7. Cairnes wrote to Professor Nesbitt: "The truth is that the bulk of the anti-slavery feeling in the North is based on purely political grounds, and has for its object to break the political power of slavery, not to emancipate negroes. This may not be high ground, but it is perhaps as high ground as we have any reason to expect the majority of a nation to act upon. If we wait till slavery is put down for purely philanthropic motives, we shall give it a long day." (Cairnes to William Nesbitt, August 23, 1862, National Library of Ireland, MS 8941-6).
52. *Cork Examiner*, February 11, 1862; *Tipperary Advocate*, September 20, 1862; *Nation*, September 13, 1862.

53. *Nation*, October 11, 1862; *Tipperary Advocate*, October 11, 1862; *Cork Examiner*, October 8, 1862.

54. *Irishman*, October 25, November 1, 1862.

55. *Nation*, November 8, 1862.

56. *Irish People*, December 3, 1864.

57. *Cork Examiner*, November 11, 1862, January 15, 1864.

58. *Tipperary Advocate*, November 1, 1862; *Cork Examiner*, October 15 and 27, 1863.

59. Letter to editor of the *London Daily Telegraph*, Co. Tyrone, October 25, 1863, quoted in *Cork Examiner*, October 28, 1863.

60. *Cork Examiner*, August 15, 1863.

61. *Ibid.*, October 29, 1863.

62. *Dundalk Democrat*, October 11, 1862, January 17, 1863.

63. James Haughton to Henry C. Wright, September 8, 1861, quoted in Haughton, *Memoir of James Haughton*, p. 161; letter to *Anti-Slavery Advocate*, quoted, *ibid.*, p. 162.

64. In an editorial, James Roche mentions that he is an American citizen (*United Irishman and Galway-American*, December 26, 1863). The *Galway-American*, February 14, 1863, calls for subscriptions to aid in the publication of a propaganda book written by the U.S. consul at Galway.

65. *United Irishman and Galway-American*, September 12 and 19, 1863.

66. Accompanying a letter to J. E. Cairnes from the British Emancipation Society, December 8, 1863, was a circular listing about eighty towns and cities in the United Kingdom where antislavery meetings were held. Not one Irish town was mentioned (National Library of Ireland, MS 8949). The C. F. Adams correspondence to Seward up to March 20, 1863, which reports meetings in various English and Scottish towns that had sent antislavery resolutions to Adams, fails to mention one meeting in an Irish town (Adams, *Britain and the Civil War*, II, 107 n.).

67. Hill to Cairnes, April 24, 1863, National Library of Ireland, MS 8952.

68. *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Belfast, 1861-70), III, 295-96 and *passim*; *Banner of Ulster*, *passim*.

69. Archbishop Whately to H. B. Stowe, quoted in *Belfast News-Letter*, January 16, 1863.

70. The Irish hierarchy was undoubtedly influenced by the anti-abolitionist policies of the American Catholic bishops.

71. Jordan and Pratt, *Europe and the Civil War*, p. 163; Adams, *Britain and the Civil War*, II, 108.

72. E. D. Adams claims that particularly among the British provincial press there was a less unfavorable attitude toward the Radical antislavery movement during the first half of 1863 (*ibid.*). This was certainly not true of the Irish unionist press. The books of E. D. Adams and of Jordan and Pratt both stress heavily the organized meetings and propaganda of the abolitionists and northern sympathizers in the United Kingdom.

73. Lionel Kochan, *Acton on History* (London, 1954), pp. 48-49.

74. H. J. Brownrigg, *Report on Certain Topics Connected with the State of Ireland in the Year 1862* (Dublin, 1863), pp. 41-44, 54; *Report on the State of Ireland in the Year 1864* (Dublin, 1865), p. 37.



## “MANACLED” UNIONS

The question of independent nationhood for the American South was a heatedly debated issue in Ireland during the Civil War. At the very forefront of the campaign for recognition of the Confederacy in the House of Commons were certain Liberal and Conservative Irish members. On June 7, 1861, William Henry Gregory, Liberal-Conservative M.P. for County Galway and later governor of Ceylon and husband of the famous dramatist Lady Gregory, became the first member to call for the United Kingdom's recognition of the Confederacy. He participated in many of the debates and was furnished with information by the Confederate commissioner James Mason.<sup>1</sup> James Whiteside, Conservative M.P. for the University of Dublin and later lord chief justice of Ireland, presented on July 18, 1862, a lengthy lawyer's case for recognition.<sup>2</sup> Other Irish M.P.'s who actively supported the southern cause were Colonel Fulke Greville, Liberal M.P. for County Longford, who was a member of the organization committee of the Southern Independence Association; Sir Hugh Cairns, Conservative M.P. for Belfast, who protested the arrest of the Confederate commerce destroyer "Alexandra" and the government seizure of the Laird rams; and Major W. S. Knox, representing Dungannon.<sup>3</sup> Seymour Fitzgerald, "the Conservative spokesman in the Commons on foreign matters" who supported the Confederacy, though an M.P. for Horsham, was an Irishman, the son of Lord FitzGerald and Vesey of Clare and Inchicronan.<sup>4</sup> The prosouthern Catholic unionists were represented in the Commons by such men as Sir Colman O'Loughlen, M.P. for Clare, who prosecuted the Irishmen who had enlisted on the "Kearsage,"<sup>5</sup> and Lord Acton, M.P. for Carlow city, who supported the Confederacy for religious and political reasons.<sup>6</sup>

In the upper house Irishmen also played a leading role in advocating

the southern cause. One of the most eager Confederate supporters in the Lords was Richard John Hely-Hutchinson, fourth Earl of Donoughmore,—“a tory friend of the South with whom [Mason] had long been in close touch.”<sup>7</sup> Another active champion of the southern case and Mason’s close friend was the disreputable Marquis of Clanricarde, former lord privy seal and lord lieutenant of County Galway.<sup>8</sup> Among the Irish gentry and aristocracy who were not representative peers in the upper house but who actively supported the South were Lord Naas, during the Civil War M.P. for Cockermonth; his younger brother, the Honorable Robert Bourke, a member of the committee of organization of the Southern Independence Association; and Lord Fermoy, the lord lieutenant of County Cork and M.P. for Marylebone.<sup>9</sup>

The ranks of Union supporters among the Irish members of the Commons were very thin; among the Lords, actually non-existent. The major Irish Union sympathizer was The O’Donoghue, M.P. for Tipperary. Evidently, the only other Irish M.P. to share O’Donoghue’s views on the American question was another nationalist, Edward MacEvoy, M.P. for Meath.<sup>10</sup> John Blake Dillon, a Dublin alderman during the war who became an M.P. in 1865, indicated his sympathy for the Union cause late in the war but refused to get involved in the public controversy for fear of offending friends.<sup>11</sup>

The prime minister of the United Kingdom during the war was of Irish heritage, though not of Irish birth or education. Henry John Temple, third Viscount Palmerston of Palmerston, County Dublin, and Baron Temple of Mount Temple, County Sligo, inherited a distinguished Irish peerage. In addition, his maternal grandfather was “a respectable Dublin tradesman.” “Pam” was also an absentee Irish landlord.<sup>12</sup> Palmerston’s career, like Wellington’s and Salisbury’s, demonstrated how inseparable and interrelated were Irish and English politics at that time. Though craftily pro-Confederate in a number of diplomatic maneuvers, and with no love for the American Union, yet Palmerston as a prudent practitioner of nineteenth-century diplomacy was greatly responsible for the maintenance of neutrality, hostile though it was.

## II

Irish Protestant Liberals (or Whigs) from the early stages of the war sympathized with the movement for southern independence. Their

position was one of liberalism in diplomatic concerns and conservatism in concrete matters of politics and social structure. They asked: "How is it that Americans who were so quick to see the error of England in 1776, cannot see their own in 1861?" and commented: "It is curious to remark, the phases of European politics repeating themselves on free American soil. President Lincoln is a legitimist of the first water; he stands on the divine right of the Declaration of Independence. He talks in the brave old Tory style of the right to revolt as a contradiction in terms." But hidden behind their support for the southern rebellion, despite a professed dislike of slavery, was hatred of the democratic Union:

Never before did democracy so disgrace itself in the eyes of civilized nations; never before did it furnish such complete proof of its utter incompetency for all the purposes of a government. . . . We may look forward with more composure than Americans do to the disruption of the boasted union, and the formation out of it of several smaller communities.<sup>15</sup>

The Protestant Liberals, really more anti-Union than pro-Confederacy, decided shortly after the South's success at Bull Run that the Confederate states had "virtually established their utter and complete independence," and in the autumn of 1861, a Liberal paper noted: "It has appeared to us that the Yankees, in trying to conquer the revolted Southern States and bring them into subjugation to the old Union—for that is the object, so far as we understand it, of the war—are but sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind." When recognition of the Confederacy appeared imminent and Gladstone made his famous pronouncement that President Davis had made a nation, the Protestant Liberals supported recognition and intervention, if necessary. They did, however, laud Palmerston's "caution and prudence" and believed that "the government [had] acted with praiseworthy patience and masterly vigour and frankness, in their management of [the] American policy. Individuals have prematurely pressed for a recognition of the Southern States, but no responsible person has felt justified in distinctly moving that such a course be taken."<sup>16</sup> Thus Irish Protestant Whigs, while favoring the southern cause, preferred a policy of official neutrality to one of recognition and intervention by the United Kingdom. They would favor the Palmerstonian approach.

The bulwark of the Liberal party in Ireland was the Catholic Whigs or middle- and upper-class Catholics who supported the government, chiefly because it was politic to do so. These Catholic unionists had to walk the tightrope of expediency between the Protestant Liberals and

the Catholic nationalists. They were primarily loyal Catholics and secondly loyal unionists. In the political arena they were courted by the English Liberals in return for immobilizing the nationalists, most of whom were Catholics, and this the Catholic Liberals accomplished, quite sincerely, by playing up Catholic disabilities and playing down nationalist agitation. On Civil War issues the Catholic Liberals were Catholic antiwar humanitarians, deploring the southern rebellion but deploring even more the northern attempt to suppress it.

The Catholic Whigs opposed the "illegal and unconstitutional course adopted by the secessionists" and accused them of being "the aggressors and the originators of the bloody conflict." Yet as humanitarians, they denounced any use of force by the North and attacked the abolitionists, "who would lecture the seceders at the point of the bayonet," because "a compulsory return to the Union would be productive of far more destructive consequences than voluntary secession."<sup>15</sup>

As the war began in earnest combat and as the tide first turned toward the South, the Catholic Whigs called for recognition of the Confederacy to prevent further bloodshed, since they saw no possibility of the restoration of the Union.<sup>16</sup> In the crucial months of September and October, 1862, even the cautious progovernment organ, the *Free-man's Journal*, read and respected by the Catholic clergy, called for recognition: "Now, at least, mediation is opportune. . . . If Europe mediates at all, it must be on the basis ignored by the North—a peaceable separation. . . . In the case of America mediation involves recognition. . . . It may be mortifying to their pride but other nations have swallowed draughts more bitter—England when she acknowledged American Independence. . . ." But in their repugnance at the bloody course of American affairs, the Catholic Liberals continued to deplore the secession, even while calling for its recognition on practical grounds.<sup>17</sup>

Irish Conservatives were at first upset over the disturbance of the status quo by the South, but the Morrill protective tariff also frightened them.<sup>18</sup> Immediately after the commencement of hostilities at Fort Sumter, the *Belfast News-Letter* supported the southern claim to independence, believing that the North could not "on republican principles, conquer back and govern some ten or a dozen states" and that consequently "the Republic has utterly failed. . . ." The *News-Letter* was proud that it was "the very first Journal in the British Isles which ventured to state the case of the South, and put it before its readers in its true colours."<sup>19</sup> The *Irish Times*, immediately after the first Battle of

Bull Run, supported the southern cause. The Conservatives became impatient with the Palmerston administration, "whose motto is to rest and be thankful," and were anxious—much more so than the Liberals—for recognition or mediation (which would be tantamount to recognition) by the United Kingdom. The Conservatives predicted that Gladstone's words on the success of the Confederacy would "ring through North and South, tolling the death-knell of re-union in the one, and pealing forth in honour of the newborn nationality in the other. . . . Hitherto, perhaps in subserving to the Manchester supporters of the ministry, the recognition of the South has been unfairly delayed."<sup>20</sup> The Conservatives differed from the Liberals mainly in tactics, banking on the military might of Britain to back up her recognition of the Confederacy, and failing to see the merit in Palmerston's policy of strategic detachment.

The only element among the Irish unionists supporting the North was the Radicals. The rights of local independence did not interest them; these were of no consequence beside the greater right proclaimed by the abolitionists, and the preservation of the great republic. While being liberal in the truest sense of the word, they were at the same time loyal subjects to the queen. Consequently, they felt compelled to prove to their fellow unionists that it was in the best interests of Britain to support the North and that the southern slave power was in the long run a greater threat to the United Kingdom than was the democratic North.<sup>21</sup>

And yet even Radicals, in the hopeless early days of the war, had a moment of doubt as to whether the North should attempt so great a task as the conquest of a rebel empire. A peculiar blend of sympathy for the Union and resignation at its partial dismantlement, temporary at least, existed among some of them, whose spokesman was John E. Cairnes, the principal Irish abolitionist.

Shortly before the publication of his famous *Slave Power*, Cairnes wrote that the object of his book was "to awake the public mind to a sense of the kind of power they have to deal with in the Southern Confederation in the hope that when the terms of its independence come to be settled, as I expect they soon will be, people may know the danger they have to encounter and the most effectual means of meeting it."<sup>22</sup> The book itself presented a distinctive and curiously if skillfully poised view of the war. Cairnes denied that it was impossible for the North to conquer the South; the southern states were not analogous to the colonies in the American Revolution, he insisted, for the North had

"greater facility of conquest in the present struggle . . ." than had Great Britain then. But Cairnes would not have the North conquer the South and thereby succumb to the techniques of despotism: "The task of holding the South in subjection would thus, as it seems to me, inevitably imperil the cause of popular institutions in North America. . . . The loss of popular government would be a heavy price to pay for subjugation of the South, even though that subjugation involved the overthrow of the Slave Power."<sup>23</sup> Instead, the North should employ what was popularly termed a "Mississippi Compromise"—the military containment of the "Slave Power" east of the Mississippi. The implication in Cairnes's argument was that the South, blockaded by river and ocean, would eventually wither and come to terms with the Union. Cairnes's views were supported by F. H. Hill, the other prominent Radical in Ireland and editor of the Belfast *Northern Whig*, as "a nice balancing of probabilities," although some northern supporters disapproved of the "halting policy" of the compromise. Naturally, American abolitionists such as G. W. Curtis, though praising Cairnes's work as "most masterly and exhaustive," could not agree with his conclusion calling for a "desirable conditional disunion."<sup>24</sup> Later in the war, Cairnes discarded his compromise.

Professor Cairnes had no difficulty in demonstrating that moral support for the North and the Republican party was in the best interests of Britain. His reasoning followed logically from his thesis on the menace of the "Slave Power" not only to the United States but to civilization throughout the world:

You speak of the fear inspired by a gigantic Confederation which never lost an opportunity of expressing its ill-will toward this country [the attitude adopted by the Irish unionist press, following the example of the *Times*]. Now is it not a fact that this Confederation was simply the Slave Power in possession of the Federal government, that all its aggressive acts and language arose directly out of the exigencies of slavery and the habits of mind which that accursed institution engenders? What were the practical illustrations of the doctrine of "Manifest Destiny"? Were they not the seizure of Florida, of Texas—the war with Mexico, the expeditions of Lopez and Walker—conquests and adventures all undertaken in the interests of slavery, and, with the exception of the war with Mexico, all undertaken in the teeth of the protests of the great majority of the Free States. And what were the occasions in which the insolence of the Confederation was most flagrant towards us? Was it not in disputes directly growing out of slavery, as, for example, those connected with the question of the right of search; and, even where slavery was not immediately in question, the controversy was carried by men bred in the school of slavery, and under the influence of the overbearing passions and vulgar arrogance which the practice of domestic tyranny cannot but produce. These, I believe, are facts notorious to all the world, and I believe it is not less true that the party now predominant in the North is the fruit of a

reaction against the aggressive tendencies and insufferable insolence from which we in common with the rest of the world have been suffering. I believe it will not be denied that there are generous and cultivated minds in the Northern States, [and] now that these are all comprised in the Republican party. . . .<sup>25</sup>

Thus, Cairnes concluded: ". . . That party in the North which is now the soul of the war, represents, as I believe, all that is healthy and hopeful in American society, in such a sense that on its defeat or triumph depends the defeat or triumph of the best interests of the human race in the new continent."<sup>26</sup>

Cairnes used practical arguments—in effect urging the government to stall for time—in order to refute the pragmatic reasons advanced for a quick recognition of the Confederacy on the grounds of its "success":

. . . It should not be forgotten that the conditions of the problem for the South were altogether simpler than those with which the Northern leaders had to deal. Every man in the South was bound together by the tie of the fundamental institution, while the institution of their society was aristocratic and the lead fell at once into the hands of a few men. In the North interests and views were multiple, the leaders were numerous, and the government was surrounded with traitors and spies.<sup>27</sup>

The Irish Radicals were interested primarily in the triumph of the North and the Republican party, which would ensure the abolition of slavery and aid the advancement of democracy and reform in the new world and the old. Like the English Radicals, to be sure, they were for a time skeptical of the possibility that the United States could be completely restored to its old boundaries. Cairnes, in a published letter, wrote that ". . . the idea [of a United States] has been no more than a dream from the day when the interests growing out of slavery suggested the thought of making it the basis of political power [the Missouri Compromise]. The loss of that inspiring hope is a portion of the penalty entailed on North America by the great curse."<sup>28</sup> But as the war continued without decisive triumph for the rebels, and the Union armies and statesmen held to their purpose, as commitments hardened on both sides of the Atlantic—and ultimately as the North added to its arms the luster of the Great Proclamation—Radicalism came to desire no less than the total victory of the Union.

### III

The question of the South's right to revolt against the Union precipitated a great debate among Irish nationalists, both constitutional and

revolutionary, on both sides of the Atlantic. The cause of rebellion dramatically coincided, or collided, depending on the point of view, with Ireland's right to reject the Act of Union of 1800. Nationalist Confederate sympathizers would refuse to reconcile support for one union with opposition to another. For nationalist Federal supporters, the restoration of the Union was essential for the assistance a united America could render Ireland in her struggle for self-determination. The most pressing issues in American and Irish history confronted each other in the formation of Irish public opinion on southern independence.

Many American and British witnesses of this Irish nationalist debate were well aware of the implications that the struggle over the American Union held for the union between Great Britain and Ireland. George Francis Train, a prominent American promoter of the Union cause in Britain, remarked to a group of Confederate sympathizers in London on June 7, 1862:

All the speakers tonight have been arguing that the Southern Confederacy ought to be acknowledged. . . . Observing this, I am disposed, for argument's sake, to agree with you, and apply the rule to Ireland. . . . Let me say to the Irish people—come to America—where you are appreciated—come over in thousands and hundreds of thousands, where a welcome shall await you—for Americans cannot forget your deeds of bravery in the dark pages of our war. . . . If you think disunion in America beneficial, how much more so would be disunion between these islands.<sup>29</sup>

William H. Seward, while senator from New York and still dependent on the Irish vote there, was a great champion of Irish independence. In 1853 he described a visit to the Irish parliament house in College Green, Dublin, the home of the independent Irish parliament from 1783 to 1800:

Whilst traversing its apartments, I reverted to the debate when the degenerate representatives surrendered their parliament; and I thought that had I occupied a place there, I would have seen English armies wade in blood over my country before I would have consented to so disgraceful a union. . . . I confess that, overleaping all obstacles which are deemed by many well-wishers of Ireland insurmountable, I wish the Repeal of the Union.<sup>30</sup>

As secretary of state, however, Seward carefully avoided giving any overt support to Irish nationalists and adhered to the Monroe Doctrine so as not to provide Great Britain any pretext for intervention. In a letter to Smith O'Brien, a Young Irelander, in December, 1861, he



carefully omitted any public comment on the relationship of Ireland to England or the United States' sympathy with Irish nationalism—a policy he followed throughout the war.<sup>31</sup> When this letter was made public, the London *Times* seized the opportunity to compare the American and Anglo-Irish unions:

Singularly enough, the Secretary owes the opportunity of defending the cause of union to his "generous friendship" with a man who only became known by his attempts to break in sunder the United Kingdom, and thus destroy a connexion, not of 70, but of 700 years. Indeed, the arguments which the American politician uses apply with tenfold force to the union between England and Ireland. . . .<sup>32</sup>

Thomas Colley Grattan, an Anglo-Irishman and a leading Confederate propagandist in the United Kingdom, wrote regarding the parallel between the American Union and the United Kingdom:

The powerful Confederacy called the United States of America did not really possess a national character, although their amalgamation in some measure sanctioned their claim to one. . . . The United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland have distinct and distinguishing characters. It is only the accepted superiority of the larger of these two states that justifies the application of the admitted term *national* to the character of England, typifying as it does that of all the integral parts of the British Empire in Europe. The term *American* has been in the same manner, but rather loosely, applied to designate the general character of the United States, but only as long as they held together by a common bond. Henceforth a distinction must be made between the separated communities, who will clearly display the difference between North and South, now that the spread of pure Yankee preponderance is overthrown.<sup>33</sup>

James Bryce, an Ulsterman and student at Oxford during the Civil War, commented in 1921, during the "War of Independence" in Ireland, on the hypocrisy of Englishmen who had viewed the Civil War as proof of a fatal flaw in the American Constitution and yet overlooked the Irish problem in their own backyard:

The [U.S.] national government tried for forty years to settle this question [the extension of slavery]; but no settlement could be reached, and the result was civil war. English critics used to think this a fatal blot, and praised the efficiency of their own system, but they have latterly come to perceive their own government may succeed no better. The British parliamentary system has for more than eighty years failed to settle a question less formidable indeed, but always threatening strife and deranging the proper working of its own machinery, that of securing peace and good government in Ireland.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, Justin McCarthy, who rose to prominence in the Parnell era and was the lone Young Irelander to support John Bright's pro-Union policy on the Civil War, wrote in his *History*:

Not a few Englishmen condemned, boldly and out of hand, the whole principle of coercion in political affairs [as exemplified in the war policy of the Union]. . . . Yet the same men would have drenched, if need were, Ireland in blood rather than allow her to withdraw from a partnership into which, after all, unlike the Southern States, she had never voluntarily entered.<sup>36</sup>

The great debate among the leading Irish nationalists, most of whom had been Young Irelanders, began with William Smith O'Brien's letter of October, 1861, to Thomas Francis Meagher, the commander of the Irish Brigade. O'Brien opposed northern subjugation of the South and criticized Meagher for not stating fairly the case of the southerners. O'Brien contended that

. . . the Irish in America ought to appear as mediators, instead of participators, in the fratricidal strife. . . . Instead of denouncing as 'a conspirator' and as a 'propagandist of national dishonour and of national ruin' the man who seeks to re-establish peace in America, you ought rather to hail such a mediator as a friend to the great nation of which you have become a citizen. Perhaps it may still be possible to preserve the Union by peaceful adjustment; but if this be impossible, let the separation be conducted on amicable terms.

Observing that he was acquainted with the leading statesmen of the North and South as a result of his visit to the United States in 1859, O'Brien offered to go to America "as an unostentatious missionary of peace" to mediate between the contending factions.<sup>36</sup>

O'Brien followed this letter with one to Secretary of State Seward, written during the Trent Affair. O'Brien urged the North to make peace with the South because of the danger of war between the United States and Great Britain—a danger that would realize itself if the civil conflict should appear to weaken the defensive power of the Union.<sup>37</sup> In December, 1862, he proposed the intervention of France on humanitarian grounds, and in late 1863 he expressed succinctly his political reasons for supporting the Confederacy's right to independence:

It is difficult therefore, to understand by what process of reasoning he [Meagher] can satisfy himself, that Ireland enjoys such a right—that Poland enjoys such a right—that Canada enjoys such a right—but that the States of America, which never for a moment, relinquished the title of sovereignty that belongs to them individually, ought to be debarred from the enjoyment of a similar right.<sup>38</sup>

John Martin, another prominent Young Irelander still active in Irish politics in the 1860's, and brother-in-law to John Mitchel, editor of the *Richmond Enquirer*,<sup>39</sup> worked along with O'Brien to assist Father John Bannon, the Confederate agent, in his propaganda campaign in Ire-

land.<sup>40</sup> In a letter printed on a broadside distributed by Father Bannon, Martin rejected the argument presented by Meagher and others to "distinguish the case of the Confederate States from that of other communities who seek their independence at the price of their blood." The South, Martin claimed, struggled "rather than submit to a foreign yoke. I call it yoke; will those gentlemen call it Union? To me it seems right to leave to every people the right to judge as to their own government, and their associates and allies." Martin also compared the position of the South to that of Ireland:

Mr. Meagher says the integrity of the Republic must be preserved, and war must be waged upon the South to keep 'one country, one flag, one destiny' in the regions between the lakes and the gulf and the Atlantic and the Pacific. The English say that the integrity of the empire must be preserved; and that the Union Jack must wave over the fleets and armies of these united islands.<sup>41</sup>

Similar views came from John Mitchel in Richmond:

As for the [pro-] Northern Irish, who seem to have got themselves persuaded that the enfranchisement of Ireland is somehow to result from the subjugation of the South, and that repeal of one union in Europe depends on the enforcement of another union in America, our friends here do not well understand the process of reasoning which leads to that conclusion, nor do I.<sup>42</sup>

In September, 1863, he wrote that the Confederates had "universally repudiated Anglo-Saxonism" and that the Confederate press persistently impressed upon its readers that separation from the Yankees was necessary "by reason of the difference of race. We consider ourselves here rather to belong to the 'Latin races' and claim kindred with the Celts."<sup>43</sup>

An Irish-American, in a letter to the *Nation*, summed up the argument of the leading nationalists who supported the Confederacy. In his attack on the *Irishman* and the *Dundalk Democrat*, two nationalist papers which supported the Union cause, he chided them for having "gone in against 'the rebels,' and for the 'Union,' as heartily as Castle-reagh did in Ireland long ago."<sup>44</sup>

The leading Union sympathizer among Irish nationalists was Daniel "The O'Donoghue," M.P. for Tipperary and apparently the only member of parliament to flirt with the Fenian movement prior to 1867. In a speech in the House of Commons on July 13, 1863, he argued that recognition of the independence of the Confederacy would be "the surest and safest means of striking a deadly blow at the greatness and

prosperity of America." Although, he added, "his sympathies leaned more to the North than to the South, it was simply because the object of the North had been the reconstruction of the Union." Still, if the Union should be restored through a southern victory, "he would equally rejoice, considering that one of the greatest calamities that could befall, not only America, but the world had been averted."<sup>45</sup> He later wrote that "Union at any price ever has been and is my motto," emphasizing that "it is the interest of England that America should be weak—it is the interest of Ireland that America should be strong." He maintained that Smith O'Brien's views were those of "the well-meaning but mistaken few who carry their theories on the right of self-government to a length which would justify every parish in setting up for itself" and asserted that the South had "no more right to set up for themselves than . . . the 'prentice boys of Derry would have to set up for themselves, if Ireland were an independent nation. . . ." Challenging Mitchel's view, O'Donoghue denied that the Confederates were a "distinct nationality" or that they had "one tangible grievance."<sup>46</sup>

Another Union supporter, P. J. Smyth, a Young Irelander and editor of the pro-Fenian *Irishman*, wrote to Smith O'Brien:

I felt that your invitation to the U.S. government to yield could never be acceded to, and was hardly fair. If the government had been the aggressor the case might have been different, but notoriously the South was the aggressor; therefore the party in the wrong; therefore the party that should be asked to yield. Further, the South can never put down the North, but the North can put down the South; and as the success of one would be the overthrow of a great and pure government, and the success of the other but the conservation of that which has existed only to benefit mankind, I feel that we should rather help the North than encourage the South. . . . [If the South is successful,] the mischief will not end with two Confederacies, nor in my opinion with four. I see clearly grounds for the establishment of six Confederacies out of the debris of the Union—and for that matter, why may not every state set up on its own account? All this means ruin for America—domestic wars interminable, foreign interference, protectorates, and ultimately subjugation. *With America dismembered there goes the last and only hope of Ireland. With the Union restored comes Irish freedom.* Let the Union come out of this conflict intact, and America may dictate, and I will do it, the independence of Ireland. . . . A solemn duty devolves then upon Ireland and Irishmen. The United States are fighting our battle.<sup>47</sup>

Later, Smyth was again viewing the Civil War in the light of Irish interests: "From which has Ireland the more to gain—from America divided, weak, torn into petty discordant states, distracted with interne-cine strife, and the prey of foreign ambitions? Am I utopian in believing that the reconstruction of the Union means Irish freedom? . . ."<sup>48</sup>

In New York the redoubtable Thomas Francis Meagher criticized the

nationalist Confederate sympathizers for ingratitude toward the United States that had been so generous to them. He claimed that one must "discriminate between the unjustified and treacherous revolt of the South and the revolutions which [occur] in Europe aiming to shake off not sworn alliances and sacred compacts but mastership and domination. . . ." <sup>48</sup>

Naturally, many Englishmen were delighted over this controversy among Irish nationalists. The *Times's* Dublin correspondent commented: "It is curious to find gentlemen who would probably be members of a provisional government in Ireland, if they would carry out their theories and establish an Irish republic, holding such conflicting opinions as to the right of nations and communities to govern themselves." <sup>49</sup>

#### IV

The vast majority of Irish constitutional nationalists came to sympathize with southern secession; but prior to the war, they deplored the disruption of the Union. Shortly after Lincoln's election, the *Nation* expressed its hope that the Union would survive the crisis "gravely as the precipitancy of the hot-blooded South seems to threaten an eventuality which would rejoice all the enemies of the great Confederation, founded by the genius, the bravery, and the patriotism of Washington." Yet early in 1861 it proclaimed: "There is not a doubt that the South has been driven to its present stand, and tempted to these extreme resolves, by the policy and conduct of the North." But, it continued, although "the Southern States, by the unfair and unconstitutional conduct of the North, have received what many would consider ample provocation and justification for withdrawing from the Union, . . . we cannot see that secession would remedy, while we think it rather likely to aggravate, what they complain of." <sup>51</sup>

Although before the outbreak of war the constitutional nationalists had preferred the preservation of the Union in theory, shortly after the first shots at Fort Sumter they deplored "a fight which can bring victory to neither" and, bitterly attacking the North, proclaimed the right of the southern states to choose their own rulers:

No tyranny or despotism of Old Europe ever drew the sword more savagely to put down "rebellion" and trample on the voice of the people, than this same central government of a republican confederation. . . . In the face of such a unanimous determination for secession—right or wrong, according to construction of constitu-

tional technicalities—this bloody war to force union on the Southern people at the point of the sword . . . is a blot on humanity. We cannot pause to weigh the niceties of the rival constructions of the silence of the deed of union with reference to the right of secession.

Though professing their southern sympathies really to be "painful neutrality" and despising slavery in the South, the moderate nationalists denounced the aim of the North, for it was not right that "in the name of equality one-half the States should dictate its form of government to the other."<sup>52</sup>

As might be expected, Irish nationalists, who had suffered from numerous acts of coercion passed by the British parliament, deplored the use of coercion to restore the Union. In fact, it was a reason for the shift of popular support in Ireland toward the southerners: "Had they been peaceably permitted to withdraw from the Union, under which they believed they could not live advantageously, opinion would have gone hard against them. But an unfair coercion has put them into the position of men resisting oppression." The moderate nationalists claimed that the sympathy of the Irish people for the Confederacy did "not arise so much from any inherent justice in their case in reference to the original quarrel, but rather from the fact that they are now in a sort of defensive position, and would readily end the war if they might only be let go free of their troublesome neighbours." At the end of the war, the *Nation* editorialized: "We would at any time have preferred the Union to two independent confederacies, if it were to be a union by free choice, not by compulsion. But we had rather see each state a separate and independent power, than hail a Union of coerced and manacled members."<sup>53</sup>

It was actually better for the states of America to be separated peacefully into two confederations, so the constitutional nationalists urged, rather than to be united through force. The war of the North to maintain the Union was not worth "the exasperation which the struggle must create amongst men who might be more friendly, and firmer allies under two separate governments, peaceably established, than in States 'united' by conquest and coercion." An "abstract desire for the integrity of the Union is quite consistent with a dislike to see that Union maintained by mere brute force. . . . All who are sincerely anxious for the prosperity of the once United States cannot now wish them better than a speedy separation upon amicable terms." In fact, northerners supporting the Union war effort were like the Orangemen in northern Ireland with their instinct of persecution, for "there exists in the North

a stronger desire to gratify the feeling of hatred than to restore the diminished greatness of their country." The moderate nationalists who supported the Confederacy would insist, therefore, that they were truer friends of America than were the nationalist Federal sympathizers.<sup>54</sup>

As the crucial months of the summer and autumn of 1862 approached, even the abstract desire on the part of the moderate nationalists for the preservation of the Union quickly disappeared, as they supported freedom for a persecuted nation and an end to the war in which Irishman killed Irishman. They first began to favor European mediation, especially by France, believing "that it is time to put an end to this hateful strife seems to be the opinion of every man outside the United States, with the exception of a few fanatics who in the hope of abolishing the system of slavery would be content to see the North and South cutting each others' throats for years." The nationalist newspapers friendly to the Confederacy adopted the O'Brien-Martin argument that "Irishmen who at home are anxious to separate from England cannot with very great consistency deny the same right to an aggregation of States so important and so powerful as the Southern States of America." Soon these nationalists began to call for recognition of the Confederacy and chided England for her failure to permit France to lead the way in intervening. But after the British cabinet decided to postpone any decision on intervention in October, 1862, the constitutional nationalists with tongue in cheek modified their position and praised this action as the "better part of valour which discreetly avoids fighting with a powerful enemy as long as he can be conveniently conciliated." England wished to avoid providing the North with "a quest for vengeance," and England's policy of non-intervention was the result of a "wholesome fear of the strength of the North. . . ." The Irish moderate nationalists, then, were actually more sympathetic to the South than was the British parliament. They wanted the war terminated as quickly as possible before both parties were completely exhausted and charged Great Britain with maintaining neutrality in order to lengthen the war and to weaken and humiliate both the North and the South.<sup>55</sup>

Throughout the war the constitutional nationalists retained their Confederate sympathies. They welcomed the peace address of the Copperhead leader, Congressman C. L. Vallandigham, criticized Meagher's vindictive attitude toward the South, and even urged their countrymen to join the English and Scots in performing "an act of Christian mercy" by signing a petition to the people of the northern states, circulated by

Confederate agents, urging the North to abandon the war.<sup>56</sup> Commenting upon the hospitable reception for the Russian fleet in New York City, while the czar's armies were brutally suppressing the revolution in Poland, the *Cork Examiner* drew a comparison between the United States and Russia:

It is a rather curious position for the free citizens of a republic to find themselves in, having for their only sympathizers the sanguinary tyrant of the Poles. He and they are both engaged in suppressing an insurrection. Does not the North shrink from the association? If it [does] not feel ashamed of the companionship of the wretches whose career in Poland has for the last twelve months been one continued crime, then a sad proof is indeed given how party hatred has blinded the people to the principles which have made their nation great.<sup>57</sup>

"The war, then, is a war of conquest—a war of vengeance—a war of extermination," the *Examiner* proclaimed; "and in a war of this nature, we Irishmen are asked to have sympathy, although we know it is mainly waged with Irish soldiers, and that in each and every collision Irishmen fall at either side, struck perhaps by an Irish bullet or pierced by an Irish blade."<sup>58</sup>

At the end of the war the *Nation*, representing the constitutional nationalists, drew a parallel between the Confederacy and Ireland for the benefit of the Fenians and the revolutionaries who advocated the use of physical force to win Irish independence. Despairingly, the *Nation* claimed that "no country in the world has more solemn cause than Ireland" to contemplate the fate of the South: "'Ourselves Alone' was preached in song and story of Irish liberty . . . Well: the Southern States were cast upon 'Themselves Alone.'" The Confederacy had been in a stronger position than Ireland to win independence through revolution but had still failed:

If the South, possessing all the advantages it did possess when declaring its independence—entering on the fight with an unanimity Ireland has never displayed in a conflict with England—with armies ready to hand, and all the resources and functions of existent government engaged in furthering the war of independence—with valour such as Ireland may equal but never surpass—with endurance, fortitude, and perseverance throughout crucial suffering such as Ireland might hardly hope to endure so inflexibly—has, up to this time, after four years of such terrific struggle, not even held its ground, what would be our chance!

The *Nation* concluded that one would have to be "criminally ignorant or infamously wicked" to tell the Irish people that fighting is the only



way to gain self-government: "We cannot fight, and we cannot submit." What was really needed was a blending of "moral force" and "physical force" within the constitution.<sup>59</sup>

Among the constitutional nationalists there was no support for the American Union. Sympathy for the Union was to be found among the extreme nationalists with their friendship for the young competitor to British power; but even they were divided on the question. Many extreme nationalists apparently favored the preservation of the Union as it existed before the war. Undoubtedly, some, like The O'Donoghue, would not have cared if the South conquered the North, so long as the Union then be re-established. Most, however, adopted the attitude of the War Democrats of the North, like the Irish-Americans of New York, and favored the northern prosecution of the war to preserve the Union but a more lenient attitude toward southern institutions than that shown by the Republican party. These Irish War Democrats were not completely immune to Copperheadism, and would frequently drift into the ranks of what in the American context would be Peace Democrats.<sup>60</sup>

The Fenians officially adopted the attitude that the war was a "quarrel with which [an Irishman] has no concern on earth." Their official paper even attacked O'Connell for the crime of offending many Irish-Americans by supporting the abolition of slavery in the United States. Though the Fenians were scrupulously neutral—obviously because they had fellow members in both the Union and Confederate armies, they occasionally displayed sympathy for the Peace Democrats: the *Irish People* referred to the "steady resolve [of the Union] to prosecute the war to its utmost extremity" and reflected on how "painful" the war was to Irishmen. The *Irish People* also bitterly condemned the *United Irishman and Galway-American*, a staunch Union supporter, edited by a friend of Meagher's, for encouraging Irish enlistment in the Union armies. At the end of the war, the *Irish People* answered the earlier parallel between Confederate and Irish independence drawn by the *Nation*:

The success of the Federal States is used as an argument by certain newspaper agitators to prove that an attempt on the part of Ireland to reconquer her independence would be hopeless. When the Confederates, say those pseudo-nationalists, were not able to resist the power of the North what chance would Ireland have? All we shall say to this is that it took two millions of men and four years hard fighting to put down rebellion in America, and that the Federal army at this moment is 500,000 strong. A force greater than what England could send

into the field might be taken from Grant's army almost without being missed. And America had no distant colonies to hold and protect.<sup>61</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain the attitude of the Fenian leaders toward southern independence. The available evidence indicates that James Stephens, the Fenian leader, had little love for Americans. He wrote from New York that the American people "are very different from our own and very far indeed from a consciousness of inferiority. And yet taken for all in all, they are far inferior."<sup>62</sup> Nor did he admire the democratic institutions of the United States but, it would appear, looked more toward the France of the Napoleons for inspiration.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, the "very incarnation" of the spirit of Fenianism,<sup>64</sup> openly sided with the Union cause, though to what extent he supported its war effort is not evident.<sup>65</sup> Undoubtedly, like many of his fellow peasants of Munster and Connaught, Rossa had certain familial reasons for supporting the Union in principle,<sup>66</sup> though other Irishmen who had close relatives fighting for the Union were driven by that fact to a desire for peace at all costs.

The *Irishman* probably best reflects the attitude of the revolutionary nationalists on the Civil War. It adopted, as did most of the extreme nationalists, a purely pragmatic view of the war for southern independence. At the beginning of the war it remarked:

We cannot join in England's sorrow at this 'fratricidal war.' It seems to us a natural result of natural growth. . . . And then—sweet heaven!—is not England's difficulty Ireland's opportunity? If that American war cuts off the cotton supply, and plunges four millions of the English into temporary destitution, paralysing the action of the English government, why should we weep, if out of the hurly-burly we are enabled to win the independence of our country.

After the southern success at Bull Run, it commented: "We may safely conclude that there is no chance whatever of any future union of the Southern States and the North." But in the autumn of 1862, the *Irishman* completely reversed its position: "We charge the South with this tremendous crime, that they knew from the beginning they never could succeed, and that their only hope lay in English interference. . . ." It justified its change of opinion:

When the dispute between the North and South first broke out, our sympathies, we confess, were very much with the Southerners. Our impression was that they had been badly treated and were unnecessarily provoked. But as time went on, the conviction (built of fact piled upon fact) rose upon our mind—that a traitorous conspiracy was ruining the greatest free nation of modern times; and

that conviction was unshakably strengthened when we saw how eagerly England, our enemy and the enemy of the American Union, took up the cause of those Southern malcontents.

The *Irishman* bitterly attacked the *Nation* when the latter noted the inconsistency of its rival. Of the Confederates, the *Irishman* insisted: "As England's allies, they are our foes: we cannot consort with them."<sup>67</sup>

Throughout the rest of the war the *Irishman* supported the Union cause, urging after the Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg: "South submit: North, be magnanimous!"<sup>68</sup> Its editor, P. J. Smyth, participated in the nationalists' debates, attacking the Martin and O'Brien arguments.<sup>69</sup> In a letter to Smith O'Brien, however, Smyth revealed the doubts of the revolutionary nationalists who were War Democrats but could on occasion support the aims of the Peace Democrats. Smyth wrote:

I do not believe with Mr. Seward that any mischief can result from the discussion on the American war. Neither, I am sorry to say, can I agree with you that your argument is conclusive in favour of the South. . . . On both sides you overlook the point—how's peace to be made? You say by Northern submission, thereby proclaiming yourself a partizan, and proposing also what is clearly impracticable. O'Donoghue says, by putting down the rebellion. That may be impracticable, but it is nearer the mark, I think, than the mode you suggest. For my opinion, and I have written to this effect to Meagher, the North should have let the South go after the capture of Vicksburgh—that is, acknowledged the independence of the South within the limits which the Southern forces there actually held. The South could not justly claim more. Would you advise the South to accept that? But we know that she would refuse it, and refusing it how is it possible for anyone, especially an opponent of slavery, to defend the Southern cause? . . .<sup>70</sup>

There was a small group of revolutionary nationalists who supported the Union cause without reservation. Their views were represented by the *United Irishman and Galway-American*, officially the organ of the National Brotherhood of St. Patrick, but also a Union propaganda organ in Ireland similar to the *London-American*. The *United Irishman and Galway-American*—whose editor was James Roche, who had lived in New York for a few years and with Michael Doheny had edited the *New York Phoenix*<sup>71</sup>—claimed that a permanent split in the Union would render the United States a nation "no longer formidable" in thwarting the designs of its European enemies.<sup>72</sup> The *United Irishman* was too pro-American and pro-Union for the Fenian leaders; it even disputed the *Irish People's* opposition to Union recruiting of Irishmen. James Roche, in an editorial, accused the Fenian paper of attempting to

foster "hostility towards the United States and create a feeling of sympathy for the Southern rebels. . . ." <sup>73</sup>

## V

There were four meetings held in Ireland to express sympathy for either the Union or abolitionist cause. Two took place in Belfast during the first half of 1863, principally attended by Presbyterian clerics.<sup>74</sup> The American consul in Belfast commented on the first of the two: "Our success was nothing to boast of." <sup>75</sup> The most prominent person present at these two meetings, Dr. James McCosh—a professor at Queen's College, Belfast, and later president of Princeton for twenty years—in his speech at the first meeting undoubtedly revealed the sentiments of those present. They were concerned primarily with the abolition of slavery and not at all with the restoration of the Union:

I deny that the people of America expect us to feel the same interest that they do in the sustenance of the American Union. That is a question for the Americans themselves. I confess I sometimes wish that the North was free from the South altogether. I sometimes wish that they were free from the incumbrance to which they are joined; for I believe if they were free and had nothing whatever to do with slavery, there is a great and glorious career before them; and, if the issue of the war be that the South does declare their independence, then the North will, perhaps, declare that they will purchase all the slaves in all the slave countries that adhere to them . . . —if that be the issue of the war, then I say it is worth all the bloodshed that has occurred, and all the hardships that have been endured.<sup>76</sup>

Two other meetings favorable to the Yankees were held in Dublin. The National Brotherhood of St. Patrick met on May 25, 1863, in St. Patrick's Hall "for the purpose of adopting an address to the President of the Great American Republic, on behalf of the Irish nationalists, expressive of their abhorrence of the portion of the press which misrepresents the Federal cause, and assuring the Federal government of their warmest sympathy and the most earnest hopes of the Irish people for the maintenance of the Union." <sup>77</sup> According to the police report on the assemblage—even the friendly newspapers gave scant notice to it—the address to the President was proposed and seconded by O'Neill Russell and James Roche, the proprietor and editor respectively of the *United Irishman and Galway-American*. About two hundred persons were present, "nearly all of whom were of the humbler class" and a number of whom were boys about twelve to fourteen years old.<sup>78</sup>

On October 3, 1864, a lecture and meeting were held at the Mechanic's Institute in Dublin to adopt an "Address of Workingmen of the Capital of the Fatherland to Their Kindred of Their Own Order in the Loyal States of the Republic." Father Thaddeus O'Malley, a priest who had lived in the United States for a number of years and was often at odds with the Irish hierarchy, delivered the lecture and drafted the address. The purpose of the latter was to urge Irish-Americans to support the Union (Republican) party and re-elect Lincoln.<sup>79</sup> According to the *Dublin Morning News* and the *Nation*, the occasion failed to demonstrate any substantial support for the North; and no public meeting was held after the lecture, as was originally planned, to approve the address. The *Morning News* reported:

The attendance was lamentably poor in point of numbers, although one of the United States consuls, and nearly all the prominent abolitionists, as well as the most prominent upholders of the Northern cause in our city, were present or invited. This lecture was the first step of the kind taken to test the public feeling of Dublin on such an issue by a public meeting, and was to have been specially a demonstration of the trades as against the South and in favour of the North.<sup>80</sup>

This last seems to have been the only pro-Union meeting in Ireland similar to those organized by John Bright for English workingmen.<sup>81</sup>

No public meetings were organized in Ireland to support the Confederacy. Periodically, such organizations as the Trinity College Historical Society demonstrated their support.<sup>82</sup> The Irish Confederate sympathizers did organize petitions. In July, 1864, the Marquis of Clanricarde headed a delegation to Lord Palmerston from the Society for Obtaining the Cessation of Hostilities to urge the Prime Minister to propose British mediation between the North and South. The delegation used as evidence of public support "petitions to parliament from the clergy and laity in eighteen English and thirteen Irish counties."<sup>83</sup> The principal petition in its response from the Irish was a last-ditch effort by southern sympathizers throughout Great Britain in September, 1864, as Sherman was marching through Georgia. It was an address entitled "The People of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, to the People of the United States," and the wording was such that no Irish nationalist ought to have signed it:

You are of Saxon blood, and we hoped that you would make the new world renowned for true greatness. . . . If you will run the parallel between the South now and the Colonies in 1776, and compare the course pursued by the North now, and the mother country then, we think you will discover some striking

resemblances; and among them, that with you now, as with the Crown then, rests the privilege of giving peace to the American continent.<sup>84</sup>

The *Times* noted that of the 300,000 people in the United Kingdom who signed the pro-Confederate peace address over a three-week period during the autumn of 1864, 130,000, or nearly one-half, were Irishmen.<sup>85</sup> A Dublin correspondent of the Confederate *Index* found it "most gratifying . . . that Catholics and Protestants, the pulpit and the press, are now uniting their efforts in the cause of peace." He reported that among the papers commenting favorably on the petition were the *Irish Times*, *Cork Examiner*, *Dublin Evening Mail*, *Morning News* (A. M. Sullivan's paper), *Dublin Evening Post*, *Belfast News-Letter*, *Waterford Mail*, *Wicklow News*, *Drogheda Conservative*, and *Limerick Chronicle*. The petition had been read in the various churches in Queenstown on the preceding Sunday, and "the congregations were affectionately and solemnly invited to sign it."<sup>86</sup> In Dublin sheets for signatures were placed in the porticos of churches, public streets, the Rotunda, the Chamber of Commerce, the principal hotels, newspaper offices, shops, the offices of young men's societies, and Trinity College. The *Irish Times* reported: "As a proof of the spirit in which the address has been received in Ireland, on last Sunday [September 25, 1864] 25,000 persons signed it, and on Monday 12,000," while in Dublin from ten to fifteen thousand persons were adding their names daily.<sup>87</sup> Lieutenant James L. Capston, a Confederate agent in Ireland, had reported in the spring of 1864 to Judah Benjamin that if time would permit, he could get at least 500,000 signatures in Ireland on a peace petition.<sup>88</sup> Even Union sympathizers, while attacking or belittling the address, attested to the substantial number of signatories. The *Irishman* stated that "a good many persons who did not take the trouble of looking into it were induced to attach their names," for they were "ignorant of the poisoned source from which it emanated," namely British conspirators who desired to destroy the Federal government. Also, the principal agent in Ireland for the petition, reported the *Irishman*, was "a clergyman of Trinity College, the nursery of the Orange system in Ireland."<sup>89</sup> Even the American consul in Dublin reported that the petition would "no doubt have many thousand names attached to it" but maintained that in Ireland it did not excite "any accord or unanimity among the masses, and . . . its success [was] chiefly confined to school children and the aged, who [were] led to sign it, at the different Roman Catholic churches, under misrepresentations."<sup>90</sup>

Elements within the Catholic clergy, with its powerful sway over Irish public opinion, played their part in the peace movement. According to the *Times*, the Irish signatories of the peace address were "obtained through the influence of the Roman Catholic priesthood. . . ." The *Scotsman* also noted that "a large number of the Catholic clergy of Ireland" signed the address.<sup>81</sup> The American consul at Dublin and Galway, William West, wrote to Secretary of State Seward about the "caustic abuse and sarcasm of us, a feeling which I would privately inform you, much and extensively prevails among the Catholic priesthood of Ireland. . . ." The clergy were "chagrined at their people flying to our enlightened country, the freedom of which loosens the bonds of mental slavery by which their faith enthrals them in this land of ignorance and superstition."<sup>82</sup> A Confederate agent in Ireland, Father John Bannon, formerly a chaplain in the Confederate army, reported that "through the active sympathy and co-operation of the parish priests a great revolution has been accomplished in the sentiments of the Irish people on the American question. . . ."<sup>83</sup>

The Confederacy had the support of the most important leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland, Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin, who in 1867 became Ireland's first cardinal. Father Bannon related that at a gathering of parish priests and bishops from various parts of Ireland in February, 1864, Cullen "declared himself in favor of our cause and approved of my appeal, and the manner adopted for placing it before the people." With the archbishop's approval, two of Bannon's prosouthern broadsheets were posted on the gates and doors of Catholic churches in Dublin in March, 1864.<sup>84</sup>

There were many reasons for Confederate sympathy within the Irish Catholic hierarchy and clergy. Their horror of secular liberalism must have been a factor. In May, 1864, Father Bannon wrote that "the clergy . . . all now sympathize with the South as with the friend of civil and religious liberty, and pray for her success as for the preservation of the only conservative political element in America. . . ."<sup>85</sup> Clergymen could associate the abolitionists both with a special American brand of anti-Catholicism and with the continental liberalism that was threatening the temporal power of the papacy. Archbishop Cullen feared the anticlerical reformers whom he had seen in Italy and thought he could see in the northern states.<sup>86</sup> The Catholic clergy's tacit support for the Confederacy was confirmed by the circumstance that the only prominent Irish-American to support the Lincoln administration and the Union party in 1864 was Thomas Francis Meagher, who had been denounced by members of the American Catholic hierarchy as a "Red

Republican." Meagher in turn had attacked the excessive influence of the clergy on his fellow countrymen, denouncing "the brainless ridiculous donkeys who bray and kick up the dust when poked with a crozier."<sup>97</sup>

Americans of Irish birth or lineage confronted the issue of the war at a different perspective from that of the Irish separatists of whatever stripe. However friendly—even loyal—to the nationalist movement in Ireland, Irish-Americans were committed primarily to their American citizenship—a fact incomprehensible and irritating to their Irish brethren. Undoubtedly, the attacks of the Native-Americans on the subversive influence of Catholic Irish immigrants prior to the Civil War made the Irish community in America particularly anxious to prove its patriotism during the war. Its position on the whole appears to have been fairly close to that of the *New York Irish-American*: "To the extremists on both sides, our [Irish-American] countrymen have always been opposed; and in fighting the battle of the Constitution—whether with the ballot or the sword—against abolitionism on one side and disunionism on the other, they are only adhering consistently to . . . the faithful discharge of their duties as American citizens." The role of the "Irish adopted citizen" and the "apparent anomaly" of his position—support for Federal prosecution of the war but opposition to Lincoln and the abolitionists—were misunderstood in Ireland.<sup>98</sup>

Northern Irish-Americans were acutely disturbed by the Confederate sympathies of the nationalists in Ireland. Those separatists in the old country who criticized Irish participation in the war, observed the *Boston Pilot*, did not condemn the Irish troops who with no national obligation to fulfil had fought for the pope or for France; much less could Ireland condemn the Irish-Americans, for "This is their country. Let our Irish contemporaries have nothing to do with matters they do not comprehend."<sup>99</sup> One soldier wrote from the camp of the Irish Brigade at New Creek, Virginia, that the editor of the *Cork Examiner*, J. F. Maguire, M.P., seemed "desperately biassed in favour of the South"; why, the correspondent asked, did the nationalist press of Ireland chime in with derisive English editorials?<sup>100</sup> Leading Young Irelanders who had become American citizens protested against the support for the Confederacy among Irish nationalists. Speaking in Cork on December 11, 1861, Colonel Michael Doheny remarked that the United States was "very little understood" in Ireland.<sup>101</sup> Thomas Meagher praised "those few intelligent, grateful, and upright men" who upheld the Union war effort; "the sentiments and disposition of the



Irish public—as far as speeches and newspapers can be taken to interpret them truthfully . . . were not such as the loyal citizens of this Republic had reason to expect." He warned the Irish nationalists that their Confederate sympathies were not unnoticed in the United States and might have dire consequences:

It was with a feeling of sore and somewhat scornful disappointment that the partizanship of the Irish public with the aristocrats of Carolina and Virginia was regarded here. This unnatural partizanship has done more harm to Ireland than, in the present circumstances it could possibly do to the United States. . . .

The identification of the Irish people at home with the Orangemen and Tories of England in their avowed sympathy and active connivance with the rebels . . . will not be forgotten by the jealous exclusionists of this country when the war is over. Nay, it may be difficult hereafter to rouse some of the staunch old friends of the Irish people, . . . when they remember how, even in the very season when the Loyal States were pouring their grain and gold into Ireland to relieve the starving poor [during the crop failures from 1860 to 1863], the public opinion of Ireland . . . went forth to condemn the action of the national government, and approve the infidelity and usurpation of its enemies.<sup>102</sup>

To be sure, acknowledged Meagher, "the generous heart of Ireland is ever prompt to sympathize with the efforts of a people in arms to strike down an oppressive mastership and establish their independence," and the Irish nationalists' "sympathy with the Disloyal States of the American Union is the error of generous natures, inflamed with the love of liberty and an intense hatred of oppression." But Meagher was thankful that the thousands of Irishmen in the Union armies would "rescue the Irish name from the disgrace of being involved in the infamous scheme to rend asunder" the United States.<sup>103</sup>

Should the great preponderance with which the Irish immigrants settled in the northern states during the war as before it indicate a preference in Ireland itself for the culture and values of the North? Yes, answered the *Irishman*: "Neither Mr. O'Brien nor Mr. Martin represents the sentiments of the immense majority of the Irish nation. The sentiments and sympathies of the Irish people are traced, all too vividly, in the heavy-freighted ships which daily leave our ports, not for the Southern, but for the Northern States."<sup>104</sup> In point of fact, however, most of the steamship lines had New York or Boston as their destination, and there was little opportunity—even less during the war—of sailing directly to the South. Of course, another possibility suggests itself—that the Irish people would support the North during the war because the majority of their relatives in the United States lived there.<sup>105</sup> But this circumstance provided the Irish peasants with a desire

for peace at any price and even an antagonism toward the North for the way it "used" their relatives to fight the war. At any rate, the evidence is overwhelming that majority sentiment in Ireland was against the northern prosecution of the war. Father Bannon—a prejudiced commentator—would probably be close to the truth in identifying Irish opinion with the words of a "labouring peasant" in 1864 who said: "We, who were all praying for the North at the opening of the war, would now willingly go to fight for the South if we could get there."<sup>106</sup> In his election-day speech for the by-election in County Clare in August, 1863, Sir Colman O'Loughlen presumably thought that he was expressing popular opinion in the west of Ireland—the area with the heaviest percentage of emigration to the United States. At the beginning of the war, said O'Loughlen, he had supported the North because "Ireland owed a debt of gratitude to America that should never be forgotten. . . ." But though he "would be sorry to say anything to diminish the importance of the American Republic," he was bound to state "that after the gallantry shown by the Southern nation—for a nation they were at present—after the manner in which they had defended their rights, his sympathies were now entirely with the South."<sup>107</sup>

Perhaps the best summary, and certainly the most ironical, of Irish public opinion on southern independence is contained in a stanza from an anonymous Irish poem entitled "Song of the South":

*Cheers for the South—the virtuous South!*  
*And for the Irish press.*  
*Where creeds and parties all unite*  
*To bid her cause success!*  
*Experience tells them the serf's chain*  
*Hurts not, nor yet depraves.*  
*Cheers for the South, her Irish press,*  
*Her freedom and her slaves!*<sup>108</sup>

1. T. C. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., CLXIII, 762-63; Jordan and Pratt, *Europe and the Civil War*, pp. 99, 101.

2. Jordan and Pratt, *Europe and the Civil War*, p. 108; Hansard, *Debates*, 3d Ser., CLXVIII, 538-49; W. D. Jones, "The British Conservatives and the American Civil War," *American Historical Review*, LVIII (April, 1953), 533.

3. *Index*, January 14, 1864; *Annual Register*, 1863, p. 138, 1864, p. 126; *Cork Examiner*, March 14, 1864. Sir Hugh McCalmont Cairns, later Earl Cairns,

an arch-Conservative, became lord-chancellor under Disraeli and from 1867 served as chancellor of the University of Dublin (*Dictionary of National Biography*, VIII, 217-20).

4. Jordan and Pratt, *Europe and the Civil War*, pp. 108-9; G. E. C., *Peerage*, V, 406.

5. *Cork Examiner*, March 15, 1864. He was supported by the *Catholic Telegraph*, August 1, 1863, in his by-election campaign in County Clare.

6. Kochan, *Acton on History* pp. 48-49. Sir John Emerich Dalberg-Acton, Bart., a Catholic Liberal, was M.P. for Carlow City from 1859 to 1865 (J. J. Auchmuty, "Acton's Election as an Irish Member of Parliament," *English Historical Review*, LXI [September, 1946], 395-405). Acton greatly admired and corresponded with Robert E. Lee (J. N. Figgis and R. V. Laurence [ed.], *Selections from the Correspondence of the first Lord Acton* [London, 1917], I, 302).

7. Adams, *Britain and the Civil War*, II, 250.

8. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, p. 464; G. E. C., *Peerage*, III, 237-38.

9. *Cork Examiner*, December 15, 1863, March 14, 1864; *Index*, January 14, 1864. Richard Southwell Bourke (Lord Naas) in 1867 became Earl of Mayo. He served under the Conservatives as chief secretary for Ireland during the Fenian uprising of 1867 and in 1868 was appointed governor-general of India (G. E. C., *Peerage*, VIII, 610). Robert Bourke was later created Baron Connemara and appointed governor of Madras (*Dictionary of National Biography*, 1901-11, I, 199-200).

10. H. Keenan to W. H. Seward, February 22, 1862, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Dublin, Vol. III.

11. Letter quoted in *Irishman*, October 8, 1864.

12. *Dictionary of National Biography*, VI, 16-33; G. E. C., *Peerage*, IX, 365-66; X, 292, 295-98.

13. *Dublin University Magazine*, LVII (May and June, 1861), 634, 750-52.

14. *Banner of Ulster*, August 27, November 26, 1861, May 24, October 21, 1862; *Dublin Evening Post*, October 9, 1862; *Dublin University Magazine*, LX (September, 1862), 383.

15. *Catholic Telegraph*, March 23, 1861; *Galway Vindicator*, April 27, 1861; *Freeman's Journal*, April 2, 1861.

16. *Galway Vindicator*, August 3 and 7, 1861; *Catholic Telegraph*, August 10, September 14 and 21, 1861; *Freeman's Journal*, December 24, 1861.

17. September 29, October 9, 1862; *Catholic Telegraph*, November 22, 1862.

18. *Belfast News-Letter*, January 1, February 26, March 19, 1861; *Irish Times*, March 18, 1861.

19. April 26, May 7, 1861, January 1, 1862.

20. *Irish Times*, August 5, 1861, October 9 and 10, 1862, March 7, 1864.

21. For Radical support of the Union see the *Northern Whig*, *passim*.

22. Cairnes to Professor William Nesbitt, February 23, 1862, National Library of Ireland, MS 8941-6.

23. Cairnes, *Slave Power*, pp. 299-350. The *Times* misinterpreted Cairnes's distinction between the ability of the North to conquer the South and the advisability of military subjugation. In commenting on a lecture of Cairnes before the Dublin Young Men's Christian Association on October 30, 1862, the Dublin correspondent of the paper reported that Cairnes "made repeated attacks on *The Times*, which he accused of misleading the public on the American question, and

of prophesying falsely about the issue; but he was obliged to admit the truth of the principal prediction of *The Times*, . . . that the Union can never be restored" (*Times*, November 1, 1862).

24. Hill to Cairnes, April 8, May 18, 1863, National Library of Ireland, MS 8952; Curtis to Cairnes, April 20, 1863, *ibid.*, MS 8948.

25. Cairnes to William Nesbitt, October 4, 1862, National Library of Ireland, MS 8941-6.

26. Cairnes to Nesbitt, October 9, 1862, *ibid.*

27. Cairnes to Nesbitt, October 4, 1862, *ibid.*

28. *Northern Whig*, April 3, 1863: *The Spectator* and Thomas Hughes both advocated a conditional disunion or a "Mississippi compromise." Professor Goldwin Smith of Oxford also did not consider restoration of the Union essential.

29. *London-American*, quoted in *Cork Examiner*, June 11, 1862.

30. *Boston Pilot*, 1853, quoted in Daunt, *Ireland and Her Agitators*, p. 163.

31. Seward to O'Brien, December 28, 1861, National Library of Ireland, MS 3254—also published in many newspapers. See also W. B. West to W. H. Seward, August 15, 1863, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Galway, Vol. I: Seward severely reprimanded the Galway consul for his overly friendly attitude in his official capacity toward an Irish nationalist organization.

32. January 27, 1862.

33. T. C. Grattan, *England and the Disrupted States of America* (London, 1862), pp. 38-39.

34. James Bryce, *The Study of American History* (Cambridge, Eng., 1921), p. 26.

35. Justin McCarthy, *A History of Our Own Times, from the Accession of Queen Victoria* (London, 1880), III, 295.

36. O'Brien to Meagher, October 21, 1861, quoted in *Cork Examiner*, October 23, 1861.

37. O'Brien to Seward, December 2, 1861, quoted in *Nation*, December 7, 1861.

38. O'Brien to J. P. Leonard, December 16, 1862, quoted in *Catholic Telegraph*, January 3, 1863; letter of W. S. O'Brien, October 28, 1863, printed on a broadside of Father John Bannon, Library of Congress, Pickett Papers, Box N, No. 57.

39. P. A. Sillard (comp.), *The Life and Letters of John Martin* (Dublin, 1901), pp. 176-77.

40. Letter of John Martin quoted in *Nation*, November 8, 1862; Bannon to Confederate Secretary of State, November 17, 1863, *loc. cit.*

41. Letter of John Martin, November 11, 1863, printed on a broadside of Father Bannon, *loc. cit.*

42. *Cork Examiner*, February 9, 1863.

43. *Ibid.*, January 4, 1864. Correspondingly, John Martin compared the Yankees or "New English" with the "Old English" (Martin to O'Neill Daunt, Aug. 9, 1865, National Library of Ireland, MS 8047-1).

44. *Nation*, November 1, 1862.

45. T. C. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3d Ser., CLXXII, 672.

46. A reply to Smith O'Brien, *Cork Examiner*, November 16, 1863.

47. Smyth to Smith O'Brien, n.d. but appears from context to be January, 1862, National Library of Ireland, MS 3307.
48. Smyth to O'Brien, n.d., *ibid.*, MS 3308.
49. Meagher to James Roche, September 6, 1863, quoted in MS of address by Roche, "To All Irishmen in America," enclosed with dispatch of W. B. West to W. H. Seward, October 15, 1864, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Dublin, Vol. IV; letter of Meagher in *Cork Examiner*, October 20, 1863.
50. *Times*, December 7, 1863.
51. *Nation*, December 1, 1860, January 5, 1861.
52. *Waterford News*, May 3, 1861; *Nation*, June 8 and 15, August 17, 1861; *Cork Examiner*, August 26, 1861.
53. *Cork Examiner*, September 4, 1861, February 11, 1862; *Nation*, April 22, 1865.
54. *Nation*, October 26, 1861; *Cork Examiner*, January 24, April 26, 1862, September 10, 1863.
55. *Cork Examiner*, May 8, September 10, 1862, January 10 and 15, 1863; *Waterford News*, September 26, November 21, 1862; *Nation*, November 1, 1862.
56. *Cork Examiner*, August 4, 1863, September 10, 1864; *Nation*, October 17, 1863.
57. *Cork Examiner*, October 14, 1863: Polish independence was unanimously supported by Irish nationalists.
58. *Ibid.*, October 22, 1863.
59. *Nation*, April 8, May 20, 1865.
60. The term "War Democrat" can be confusing. I use it to denote those who favored prosecution of the war but opposed the Lincoln administration on various issues and supported Democratic candidates in the elections of 1862 and 1864. According to J. G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (2d ed.; New York, 1953), p. 599, in most northern states the War Democrats coalesced with the Republicans under the name "Union Party." Andrew Johnson, who ran as vice-presidential candidate with Lincoln on the Union party ticket in 1864, in this view is classified a War Democrat. But Governor Horatio Seymour of New York and General George McClellan, who were moderate Democrats and were opposed to both the Republicans and the extreme Copperheads or Peace Democrats, in my opinion are typical War Democrats. Both Seymour and McClellan were supported by the New York Irish.
61. *Irish People*, January 23, December 3, 1864, January 7, March 5, April 22, 1865.
62. James Stephens to his wife, June 24, 1864, National Library of Ireland, MS 10,491-1.
63. See [James Stephens], "A Silent Politician," *On the Future of Ireland, and on Its Capacity as an Independent State* (Dublin, 1862), p. 1: In his proposed constitution for Ireland, he called for "a president [or king], elected for life, and governing by edicts signed by responsible ministers," with the representative body having very little power. Stephens spent his exile years in France after the uprising of 1867.
64. Devoy, *Recollections*, p. 319.
65. Letter to editor, *Cork Examiner*, April 25, 1863.

66. Rossa to Secretary of State J. G. Blaine (rough draft), January 17, 1891, National Library of Ireland, MS 8648-2.

67. *Irishman*, May 4, August 10, 1861, October 25, November 1 and 8, 1862.

68. *Ibid.*, July 25, 1863.

69. Smyth's reply to John Martin, *Nation*, September 17, 1864.

70. Smyth to W. S. O'Brien, November 21, 1863, National Library of Ireland, MS 3306.

71. T. C. Luby, "Synopsis of Early Fenian Events in Ireland and America," p. 98, National Library of Ireland, MSS 331-33.

72. *United Irishman and Galway-American*, November 7, 1863.

73. *Ibid.*, March 12, 1864.

74. *Northern Whig*, February 18, April 22, 1863.

75. John Young to W. H. Seward, February 20, 1863, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Belfast, Vol. IV.

76. *Northern Whig*, February 18, 1863.

77. *Cork Examiner*, May 28, 1863; see also *Irishman*, May 30, 1863.

78. Report of Daniel Ryan, superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, May 26, 1863, State Paper Office, Registered Papers, 1863, MS 4925.

79. *Irishman*, October 8, 1864.

80. *Dublin Morning News*, October 4, 1864; see also *Nation*, October 8, 1864.

81. The abolitionist Boston *Liberator*, November 4, 1864, printed the address. E. D. Adams, citing this issue of the *Liberator*, commented: "Even in Ireland petitions were being circulated for signature among the workingmen, appealing to Irishmen in America to stand by the administration of Lincoln and to enlist in the Northern armies on the ground of emancipation" (*Britain and the Civil War*, II, 240). This statement is an exaggeration in that Father O'Malley's address was the only one of its kind, and petitions were not circulated among Irish workingmen. This statement is also inaccurate because emancipation of the slaves was generally anathema to Irish laborers, and not even O'Malley's address urged support for the North "on the ground of emancipation." The address stated: "Nor is it for the sake of the poor Negro that we would exhort you . . ." to vote for Lincoln. It emphasized, instead, the desire of proslavery capitalists to enslave all laborers. E. D. Adams' remark, and his insistence that slavery was "the insuperable barrier, in the fall of 1864, to public support of the South [in the United Kingdom]" (*ibid.*), are representative of an older historiography that overemphasized the effect of the emancipation issue upon public opinion abroad.

82. The "Hist," the oldest university debating society in the United Kingdom, in its three debates on Confederate independence from 1862 to 1865, approved motions favoring the dissolution of the American Union, while in another debate during the war approved the motion, "That England acted wisely in attempting to prevent her American colonies from asserting their independence in 1776" (*Addresses*, College Historical Society [Dublin, 1862-72], *passim*).

83. Jordan and Pratt, *Europe and the Civil War*, pp. 173-74; *Times*, July 16, 1864.

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85. *Times*, October 12, 1864.
86. *Index*, September 1, 1864.
87. *Irish Times*, August 24, September 28, 1864.
88. Capston to Benjamin, Queenstown, April 14, 1864, Library of Congress, Pickett Papers, Box N, No. 56.
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94. *Ibid.*, February 17, 1864; *Times*, March 8, 1864.
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96. *Tablet*, November 8, 1862; Kochan, *Acton on History*, pp. 48 f.; Auchmuty, "Acton's Election as an Irish Member of Parliament," pp. 394-405.
97. Wittke, *The Irish in America*, pp. 85-86; Meagher to Smith O'Brien, August 8, 1856, quoted in R. G. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher: an Irish Revolutionary in America* (Boulder, Colo., 1949), p. 35.
98. *Irish-American*, November 29, 1862, December 12, 1863.
99. *Boston Pilot*, quoted in *Cork Examiner*, June 28, 1862.
100. "Letter to a Kerryman," March 1, 1863, printed in *Cork Examiner*, April 16, 1863.
101. *Ibid.*, December 12, 1861.
102. Meagher to P. J. Smyth, New York, September 5, 1863, *ibid.*, October 20, 1863.
103. *Ibid.*
104. *Irishman*, November 7, 1863.
105. E.g., R. J. Purcell, "Ireland and the American Civil War," *Catholic World*, CXV (April, 1922), 75.
106. Bannon to J. P. Benjamin, March 9, 1864, Library of Congress, Pickett Papers, Box N, No. 57.
107. *Clare Journal*, August 3, 1863, quoted in *Catholic Telegraph*, August 8, 1863.
108. Cutting from *Tuam Herald*, n.d., accompanying dispatch of W. B. West, August 21, 1863, National Archives, Consular Dispatches—Dublin, Vol. IV.





## EPILOGUE

In 1875 a "patriot priest" who had supported the Union during the Civil War publicly opposed the election of John Mitchel as M.P. for Tipperary because he had endorsed the "debasing system of slavery."<sup>1</sup> Generally, however, opinions expressed by Irishmen during the war were quickly forgotten afterward. Just as in England, after the defeat of the South, government leaders were intent on forgetting their late friendship for the Confederacy, so in Ireland nationalist leaders were quick to gloss over their southern sympathies. Their task was made easier by the outstanding fact that a great number of Irishmen had fought for the Union. Northern Americans were appreciative of this also. The Irish role in the Union armies, especially the Irish Brigade's, was romanticized. The "disgrace" of Ireland's sympathy with the South was covered over, as Meagher had hoped it would be, by the heroism of her many sons who had fought for the Union. Thus in a poem written forty years after the Civil War, commemorating Irish heroism in the Spanish-American war, the author could proclaim:

*In the ranks there was Irish blood galore,  
As it ever is sure to be  
When the Union flag is flung to the fore,  
And the fight is to make men free.<sup>2</sup>*

Sentimentalism remembered the Irish people as the champions of an abolitionist American Union, as the British laboring class had become—less incorrectly, perhaps—in the minds of liberals who assumed that democracy must sympathize with emancipation.

But if the identification of the democratic and nationalist causes in the British Isles with the northern banners abroad was largely retrospective, in that form it was nonetheless influential. Professor E. D. Adams wrote that ". . . there existed for Great Britain a great issue in the outcome of the Civil War—the issue of the adoption of democratic institutions. It affected at every turn British public attitude, creating an intensity and

bitterness of tone, on both sides, unexampled in the expressions of a neutral people. . . ." Adams concluded: "The reform bill of 1867 changed Great Britain from a government by aristocracy to one by democracy. A new nation came into being. The friends of the North had triumphed."<sup>3</sup> A probably more accurate view denies the existence of any substantial amount of Union support in England during the war but states that the final "balance of bayonets" possibly had an effect on the advancement of democracy in England.<sup>4</sup> The same was true of Ireland. There was even less support for the pronorthern Radicals there, despite the incisive comments of Professor Cairnes. Democracy was not generally considered to be the issue at stake in the war. Yet those aristocrats who openly supported the South not from the humanitarian or self-determinist beliefs of the Gladstonian Liberals but with a hatred of democracy and a desire for the destruction of the Republic were acutely embarrassed by the outcome. Events on the battlefield probably gave impetus to reform in Ireland and won more support after the war for measures advocated by the Radicals. If the result of the war did, indeed, influence the passage of the reform bill of 1867, logically, then, the northern triumph may have contributed to the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869 and strengthened the movement for land reform in Ireland. John Morley said that the victory of the North was "the force that made English Liberalism powerful enough to enfranchise the workmen, depose official Christianity in Ireland, and deal a first blow at the land-lords."<sup>5</sup>

There were, of course, positions elaborated during the war days themselves that could apply, consistently and with no lapse in memory, to the issues of later years. The Radical position toward the American Union, for example, had its curious parallel in domestic affairs. A Union sympathizer and former moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in a Belfast lecture of 1863 forecast the pro-Union Radical view of home rule:

The true way, however, to realize what the Americans mean by Union is to consider what that word means at home, represented, symbolised, cemented, gloriously illustrated by the crown and sceptre of our own peerless Queen. We often smile at what seems to us the extravagant enthusiasm of an American for "The Stars and Stripes," but that banner is to him what the royal standard is to us, the symbol of national unity—at home, the guarantee of liberty, order, peace, protection, and equal laws; abroad it represents the moral and material power which foreign potentates are compelled to respect.<sup>6</sup>

F. H. Hill, pro-Union editor of the Belfast *Northern Whig* during the war, and later, editor of the London *Daily News*, was dismissed by the

proprietors of the *Daily News* in 1886 because he declined to accept Gladstone's home rule policy.<sup>7</sup> The two leading politicians in the United Kingdom who had supported the Union during the war refused to endorse Gladstone on home rule: John Bright in 1886 failed to follow Gladstone, and William E. Forster, who had served under Gladstone as chief secretary for Ireland from 1880 to 1882, opposed the home rule proposals of his leader.<sup>8</sup>

By the same token, home rule for Ireland followed logically from Gladstone's and Lord Acton's political philosophy of self-determination, which had led them to support the South in disregard of the slavery issue. Analyzing the election of 1886, Gladstone wrote:

. . . There are, within the United Kingdom, no less than four nationalities. Of these four nationalities, three have spoken for Irish autonomy in a tone yet more decided than the tone in which the fourth [England] has forbidden it. . . . This is not, then, a partnership of three kingdoms, or of four nationalities, upon equal terms. The vast preponderance in strength of one among them enables her to overbear the other three, and to reverse their combined judgment.<sup>9</sup>

Here, as clear as anything in Calhoun's *Disquisition*, is a statement of regional conflict and the right of the weaker locality.

## II

Irish opinion contemporaneous with the war itself was comprised of both clear and contradictory views of the strife. Public opinion is fluid and cannot be analyzed with scientific accuracy, and Irish opinion at that time particularly so, especially since much of it was torn between a sympathy with the southern aspiration, so like to that of the Irish patriot, and a long-standing friendship for a country once rebel to Britain, now a rival to her power and host to the Fenian movement. Nevertheless, some patterns are discernible.

Among the unionists, the Protestant Whig-Liberals fully supported the cautious approach of Palmerston on the recognition of Confederate independence. Though like many members of the Liberal party they subordinated slavery to the issue of freedom for nationalities—a cardinal principle of Gladstonian Liberal theory—they were primarily concerned with the impact of the war on Britain's interests, and did not want to risk war with the North unless absolutely necessary—as in the defense of Canada or in the protection of Britain's maritime rights. Even in these cases, the Whig-Liberals held, peaceful accommodation without sacrifice of prestige would be the preferable course. The Protes-

tant Liberals, at least until Gettysburg, believed that Confederate independence was virtually established; but they thought it more prudent to postpone recognition until events on the battlefield had established southern independence beyond doubt.

The opinions of the Irish Tories were similar to those of the Protestant Whigs. Though professing to hate slavery, the Conservatives were less pretentious than the Whigs about supporting its abolition. The Conservatives were even more interested in maintaining the prestige of "John Bull" and thus more belligerent during the Trent crisis. Eager for the break-up of the American republic, they were annoyed by the delaying tactics of Palmerston in postponing recognition of the Confederacy, and continually pressured the government for action. On Civil War issues, the Irish Conservatives were essentially a very loyal opposition, occasionally opposing the Whig-Liberal coalition on tactics but not issues, and smugly supporting the almost bipartisan government of Palmerston.

Most of the Gladstonian Liberals in Ireland were Catholic unionists, and their opinions were a cross between those of the Protestant Liberals and those of the predominantly Catholic nationalists. Their support for the South was based not upon the diplomatic considerations of their Protestant counterparts but upon the self-determinist principles of Gladstone himself—with whom they shared an abhorrence of slavery. At the same time they seemed careful to keep the doctrine within the temperate bounds that they desired for it at home; for they did not, like the constitutional nationalists, stress the nationalistic character of the southern rebellion. They were more anxious than the Protestant Liberals for recognition, as a humanitarian means to the staunching of the bloodshed.

The Radicals, led by John Elliott Cairnes, consisted of the more advanced and idealistic Protestant Liberals and included many Ulster Presbyterians, but only a distinct minority of them. Their sympathies were with the North. As moralists, believing that the major political issues were resolvable on moral grounds, they looked beyond the bland philosophy of self-determination to the greater issues of emancipation and democracy—the latter to be advanced in the United Kingdom through the prestige of a northern triumph. As rationalists—their views automatically suspect in Catholic circles—they were not open to the appeal, either at home or abroad, of a romantic nationalism if its cause had no other validity. Yet however committed to a rational social

moralism, the Ulster Radicals had like the Fenians their own romantic vision—the British Union. Numbers of them must have found the same analogy between theirs and the American aspiration as did the Belfast lecturer of 1863. Finally, we may surmise that the idea of imperial Union, for America as for Britain, must have drawn strength from the character of Radicalism itself—looking, however tentatively, toward an energetic popular government, sensing the possibilities of social power and unafraid of its wielding. In their own way the Radicals resolved a dilemma that existed for many of their political contemporaries and has remained for the more timid liberal: his inability to come to satisfactory terms with the harder facts of power and control.

The contrast between Catholic Liberal and moderate, or constitutional nationalist was, as between Protestant Liberal and Radical, that of pragmatism against idealism—with the difference that the two Catholic factions agreed on the immediate proposition that the South must be left alone. The Catholic Liberals generally worried in a Gladstonian manner over the unreason and wrong of northern coercion; the constitutional nationalists were enthusiastic for the rights and glory of southern nationhood. On most Civil War issues the two groups had much more in common than not, and between them comprised the great majority of the Catholic clergy and of the Irish people.

The distinction between constitutional and revolutionary nationalist opinion on the Civil War was often blurred. The extreme nationalists shared many opinions of the moderates. They both opposed the immediate emancipation policy of the American abolitionists. In contrast to the constitutional nationalists, however, many extremists or Fenians were inclined to desire the restoration of the Union as a counterbalance to British power. Yet many revolutionary nationalists also wanted a quick armistice and sympathized with the Copperhead movement calling for peace at any price. In addition, some fully supported the Confederacy. The extreme nationalists were far from united and vacillated on important issues in order not to offend any segment of Irish-American opinion. The war was frustrating to them because it sapped strength from the American Fenian organization and distracted Irish-Americans and even many nationalists in Ireland from the pending contest between the Anglo-Saxon and the Irish-Celt.

The abstract desire of many revolutionary nationalists for the preservation of the Union in the face of their opposition to key policies of the North had little effect on Irish public opinion except to increase support for the more coherent attitude of the moderate nationalists who urged

opposition to "manacled" unions on both sides of the Atlantic. The editorials of a small provincial newspaper, the *Connaught Patriot*, which sympathized with the aims of the Fenians, revealed the incoherent and contradictory opinions of the extreme nationalists. The *Patriot* believed that the Emancipation Proclamation was "only pouring oil on the flame" and after the northern defeat at Fredericksburg urged European intervention ensuring Confederate independence. But in November, 1863, it advised Irish nationalists to avoid discussing the war and thus prevent disputes among themselves. It claimed that many of the "warmest nationalists" sided with Mitchel and Martin, who wholeheartedly supported the Confederacy, but that the "great majority" of the nationalists shared O'Donoghue's sentiments. Even if this statement is true, it should be pointed out that while The O'Donoghue hoped for the restoration of the Union as a possible ally to the Irish cause, he did not care if this were accomplished by the South's conquering the North! As the war continued through 1864, the *Patriot* further elaborated its ambivalence: "Though our natural sympathies are with the South, because of their chivalry and their admitted respect for Irishmen, still our wish—the result of principle—has been in favor of the North; and if for no other cause than that England seeks the disruption of the Union—the cause is legitimate." Near the end of the war the paper concluded: "The Union, the whole Union, and nothing but the Union can give hope to us of ever witnessing an independent and free Ireland. . . . We are, therefore, convinced that even a selfish, if no higher, motive ought to make us wish success to the Federal cause."<sup>10</sup> But more persuasive to the Irish were the arguments urging support for the South: the thousands of Irishmen dying in the Union armies and the Confederate struggle for independence.

The difference between the attitudes of East Ulster (Antrim, Down, and Belfast) and of the rest of Ireland was especially pronounced on certain issues. Its old separatist days now long gone, East Ulster was turning to the loyalist sentiments that would mark its later career. It supported the British government during the Trent crisis and other disputes in Anglo-American relations. Yet East Ulster, predominantly Protestant and Presbyterian, had many admirers of the American abolitionists and shared their fear of popery; the majority of the small body of Radical Union supporters in Ireland were Ulster Presbyterians. For the most part, however, the region like the rest of Ireland favored the recognition of the Confederacy—though for such distinctive reasons as concern for trade and practical considerations of diplomacy.

The influence of Irish-American views on nationalist opinion in Ireland was evident on such issues as slavery and Anglo-American relations but not southern secession. One fallacy has been noted: the assertion that since the majority of Irish-Americans lived in the northern states and many thousands of Irishmen fought for the Union—probably over four times as many as for the Confederacy—their relatives and friends in Ireland must have sympathized with the Union war effort. In fact, this circumstance worked in reverse and made the Irish people anxious for peace. The Irish in America, moreover, did not address themselves to the same set of issues as did their cousins in the old country. Despite the draft riots, Irish-Americans thought of themselves primarily as patriotic Americans, devoted to the preservation of the Union. Two poems by Irish-born Americans commemorating the Irish role in the war emphasize this fact. Charles G. Halpine, the famous Private Miles O'Reilly, wrote of Irish immigrants:

*Welcomed they were with generous hand;  
And to that welcome nobly true,  
When war's dread tocsin filled the land,  
With sinewy arm and swinging brand,  
These exiles to the rescue flew.<sup>11</sup>*

John Savage expressed it thus: "They found *cead mille failthe* here—they'll give it to the foe."<sup>12</sup> For such men the analogy between the Irish and the Confederate separatist movements, or the presence of Irishmen in the southern ranks, was irrelevant.

### III

The Irish reaction to events in America reveals the conflict in program and commitment that can stem from an apparently unitary moral source. The O'Connellite vision of the early 1840's—abolitionism, national autonomy, the larger reform spirit of an enlightened century—had been so simple, so right. But by the time of the American Civil War, the old moral unity could not hold. Doctrinaire abolitionists had to support the imperial American Union; nationalists had to overlook the question of human bondage; and Catholic Liberals, maintaining some touch with all the complexity of concerns, could offer only an abhorrence of coercion, a desire for peace, a sigh at slavery. Among all

these, perhaps the tiny band of Radical unionists had the most positive grasp. Looking beyond the mild autonomist principle of the Liberals, they affirmed the uses and extensions of power in abolition as in social reform. Meanwhile, Irish-Americans—dealing in the peculiarly American context—put the issues to further confusion. Almost proletarian democrats in their own political cause, they espoused a democracy of racist hue; contributors to the Fenian independence movement, they rejoiced in 1865 at the defeat of American separatism.

Irish nationalism would not sustain the defection from its usual friendship with the American government; and the Irish-Americans, sharing in the most terrible agonies of the American people, were in time absorbed into the Civil War legend. The prosouthern sympathies of Irish nationalists, and the racist New York draft riots, were all but forgotten as the Irish in turn absorbed the myths later generations would make of the war. A more realistic assessment should aid in the understanding not only of the immediate events themselves but of the often subterranean contradictions that worked within the nineteenth-century liberal and nationalist minds.

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2. J. I. C. Clarke, "Rough Rider O'Neill," in *The Golden Treasury of Irish Songs and Lyrics*, ed. Charles Welsh (2 vols.; New York, 1907), I, 146-47.

3. Adams, *Britain and the Civil War*, II, 303.

4. Sheldon Van Auken, "English Sympathy for the Southern Confederacy: The Glittering Illusion" (unpublished B.Litt. dissertation, Oxford University, 1957), p. 115.

5. Quoted in Asa Briggs, *Victorian People: A Reassessment of Persons and Themes, 1851-67* (New York, 1963), p. 224.

6. *Northern Whig*, April 22, 1863.

7. *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1901-11, II, 263.

8. R. Barry O'Brien, *John Bright* (London, 1910), p. 220; *Dictionary of National Biography*, Suppl., I, 288-89; T. Wemyss Reid, *Life of the Right Honourable William Edward Forster* (2 vols.; London, 1888), II, 543.

9. W. E. Gladstone, *The Irish Question* (London, 1886), pp. 33-34.

10. *Connaught Patriot*, October 18, 1862, January 24, November 28, 1863, May 14, October 1, 1864.

11. Halpine, "On Raising a Monument to the Irish Legion," in *The Poetry and Song of Ireland*, ed. J. B. O'Reilly (New York, 1889), pp. 875-76.

12. Savage, "The Muster of the North," *ibid.*, pp. 802-5; the spelling of the Irish expression for "100,000 welcomes" is Savage's.



## A NOTE ON SOURCES

The primary sources for this book are many, varied, and scattered. The principal sources are contemporary Irish newspapers and periodicals, most of which are available at the National Library of Ireland, although some of the rarer provincial papers can be found only at the British Museum. Although published in London during the war, the *Tablet* and the *Dublin Review* were reflective of Irish—and especially Catholic—opinion. The *Times* of London has been useful in its commentary upon Irish affairs.

American papers have also revealed a good deal about Irish public opinion and related matters. The New York *Irish-American*, at the Library of Congress, was helpful in the assessment of opinion in Ireland; the abolitionist Boston *Liberator* and the *Index*, a Confederate propaganda organ in London, are also at the Congressional Library. There were, of course, many editorials and reports from American and English newspapers bearing upon Irish opinion that were reprinted in the Irish press.

Probably the most important manuscript sources are the U.S. consular dispatches from Belfast, Dublin, Cork, and Galway at the National Archives in Washington and the reports from Confederate agents in Ireland in the Pickett Papers (Confederate State Department Records) at the Library of Congress.

Other valuable manuscript sources include the letters of prominent Irishmen, containing comments on the Civil War, that are scattered through numerous collections of private papers at the National Library of Ireland. The police reports and the letters from magistrates, militia officers, and private citizens in both the Sir Thomas Larcom Papers at the National Library of Ireland and the Registered Papers (1861–65) at the State Paper Office, Dublin Castle, are valuable, especially for the Irish reaction to Union recruiting of Irishmen. The State Paper Office also contains the government correspondence between Dublin Castle and the Irish Office, Home Office, and Foreign Office in London on the question of Irish participation in the war. The Friends House in Dublin has some useful information on the Irish Quakers during the war, and a

few fringe references are to be found in the Fenian Papers at the Catholic University of America.

The most interesting collection of papers searched are those of John Elliott Cairnes at the National Library of Ireland. Between 450 and 500 letters exist for the Civil War period, about one-half from correspondents and the rest from Cairnes. Many deal with the abolitionist movement in the United Kingdom during the Civil War and, more especially, with the publication of *The Slave Power*. About one hundred letters from Cairnes to Professor William Nesbitt contain much valuable information on Cairnes's view of the war. The letters of F. H. Hill, editor of the *Northern Whig*, in the Cairnes collection proved helpful. There are also interesting letters from leading intellectuals in the United Kingdom and America, such as Harriet Martineau, G. W. Curtis, H. B. Adams, Thomas Hughes, Epes Sargent, Goldwin Smith, Walter Bagehot, Josiah Quincy, H. W. Beecher, C. F. Adams, and John Morley, and extracts of letters from J. S. Mill.

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3. Thomas Clarke Luby Papers. MSS 331-333. MS of "Synopsis of Early Fenian Events in Ireland and America."
4. William Smith O'Brien Papers. MSS 426-462.
5. James Stephens Papers. MSS 10,491-10,492.
6. Other collections containing a few useful items:
  - a. MSS 3225-3226. Hickey Collection. Typescript copies of letters of John Mitchel and T. F. Meagher and MS biography of "John Mitchel, Jr." by Michael Cavanagh, 1899.
  - b. MS 3885. Myles Walter Keogh letters.
  - c. MS 8047, Folder 1. Letters from John Martin to O'Neill Daunt, 1861-66.
  - d. MS 8347. Photostats of about sixty emigrant letters, 1850-1900, collected by Arnold Schrier for his study on Irish emigration.
  - e. MS 8648. O'Donovan Rossa Papers.
  - f. MS 8669. W. H. Pim and Jonathan Pim Papers.
  - g. MS 9728. MS of "Memoir of T. F. Meagher with Diary, Correspondence, and Speeches," ed. Frederick Kearney, New York, 1869.
  - h. MS-Pos. 3849. P. F. Murray, "Calendar of the Overseas Missionary Correspondence of All Hallows College, Dublin, 1842-77." This is a dissertation approved for an

M.A. degree at University College, Dublin, in 1956. It contains summaries and some interesting extracts of letters from American bishops to the superior of All Hallows during the Civil War.

*B. State Paper Office, Dublin Castle*

Registered Papers. There are about twelve thousand entries per year. I investigated the years 1861-65. The individual items are haphazardly entered in the registers under Home Office, Foreign Office, police reports, constabulary reports, and the like, and there is no guarantee that the recorded document can be found. Many items concerning one topic are gathered up and placed under one number. Two examples are the papers relating to the "Kearsage" incident, placed under #12,284 (1863) and those concerning the recruiting activities of Finney, grouped under #16,765 (1864). See the text for the principal items among the papers that are relevant. Many others scattered throughout the Registered Papers have provided background information.

*C. Friends House, Dublin*

1. Minutes of the Irish Friends' Yearly Meetings, 1861-66.
2. Jonathan Pim Letters. There are about fifty letters on the Civil War, including letters from Jonathan Pim to other Quakers, letters from Joshua Todhunter and W. H. Pim in the United States, and several letters from W. H. Gregory.

*D. Irish Folklore Commission, Dublin*

Maurice Wolfe Letters.

*E. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*

1. Pickett Papers (Confederate State Department Papers). Letters from Confederate agents in Ireland.
  - a. Box H, nos. 23-25. Letters of Bishop P. N. Lynch.

- b. Box N, no. 55. Reports of Robert Dowling.
- c. Box N, no. 56. Reports of Lt. J. L. Capston.
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F. *National Archives, Washington, D.C.*

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  - a. Belfast, Vols. III-IV.
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G. *Catholic University of America Archives, Washington, D.C.*

Fenian Papers. 4 boxes. These provide only oblique references for my topic. The papers were deposited by William D'Arcy, who used them for his study of the Fenians in the United States. There are about fifteen letters from James Stephens and letters from John Mitchel, Charles Kickham, John O'Mahony, and O'Donovan Rossa. The collection contains much information on the Fenian movement in Ireland that Father D'Arcy did not use.

H. *Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast*

Nothing directly relevant to my study can be found here except a few letters from emigrants and soldiers in the United States during the Civil War (see D.556-621, D.732, D.893, T.1475, and T.1585).

## II. *Newspapers and Periodicals*

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*Dublin University Magazine*  
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*Index* (London)  
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*Irishman*  
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*Liberator* (Boston)  
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*Tipperary Advocate*  
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*Anti-Slavery Advocate* (London)  
*Connaught Patriot*

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friendship for a country that had itself once rebelled against Great Britain and by the realization that the South looked for support to the Empire from which it was hoped Ireland might someday be free; and supporters of the North could not disregard the New York draft riots of 1863 or the reprehensible activities of Union recruiters who operated both in Ireland and at the dockside in the major eastern ports of the northern United States.

Irish opinion contemporaneous with the war itself, then, was an often confusing amalgam of both coherent and contradictory views of the American strife. In his revisionist study of the texture and influence of opinion, Mr. Hernon has aimed not at a statistical measure of these attitudes but rather at a consideration of moral commitment and moral ambiguity, as Irishmen worked up for themselves powerful connections and persuasive analogies between domestic and foreign issues.

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