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# IRELAND'S CASE AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

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*Seán ÓLuain*

I R E L A N D ' S  
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PREFACE

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Constitution which Mr. de Valera at the  
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Irish Paper

## PREFACE

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inasmuch as Mr. de Valera had many others  
in his possession at the time of his arrest.

The last sentence, which is unfinished,  
would, I believe, have made it clear that  
Ireland, with or without aid, would continue  
steadfast in the course mapped out for her.

ROBERT BRENNAN,

*Editor.*

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## IRELAND'S CASE AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

A century and a half ago England strove by brute force to crush the nascent American nation because it dared to assert its rights. By brute force to-day England threatens to crush the people of Ireland if they do not accept the status of helots, suffer themselves to be used at her good pleasure, and, meekly bowing their heads, permit themselves to be quietly exterminated.

A century and a half ago the champions of American liberty appealed to Ireland against England, and asked for a sympathetic judgment. What the verdict was history records.

To-day it is our turn. To-day the people of Ireland appeal to the people of America. For the objects we seek no more fitting expression can be found than the identical

terms in which your forefathers greeted  
ours :—

“ We are desirous of possessing the  
good opinion of the virtuous and humane.  
We are peculiarly desirous of furnishing  
you with the true state of our motives  
and objects, the better to enable you to  
judge of our conduct with accuracy, and  
determine the merits of the controversy  
with impartiality and precision.”

So spoke your people to ours. We  
to-day in bondage believe in the virtue  
and humanity of the people of free America,  
and knowing that our cause is no less just than  
yours was, confidently expect an equally  
unequivocal judgment. We expect, too, a  
support worthy of a strong and noble nation  
—a nation linked to ours by many ties—a  
nation that has pledged itself in this war to  
lavish its blood and treasure for no selfish  
object of its own, but for the enthronement  
of right and justice throughout the world,  
and for the privilege of men everywhere to  
choose their own way of life and obedience.  
A law concribing the manhood of Ireland

has recently been passed in the British House of Commons. Introduced by a Government that has ceased to enjoy the confidence of the people, but which the exigencies of war make it inexpedient to remove ; passed by a Parliament that has long outrun its course, and has long ceased to be representative of public opinion ; passed by such a Parliament this law might well be questioned by the people of Britain. Enacted for Ireland by an alien assembly in which Irish representatives are utterly powerless to protect Irish interests—enacted despite the passionate protests of these representatives, and despite the almost unanimous protest of the entire Irish nation —by the people of Ireland this law is regarded as no law but an outrage.

This question is for Irishmen no mere question of British domestic politics. It is on an altogether higher plane. It is a question between a nation that has never relinquished its independent rights and a neighbouring nation that has constantly sought to usurp them. It is for us a

question whether, in this decisive and vital case, we are to submit to the usurpation of Britain<sup>2</sup> and to abandon our claim to a distinct national life. It is for us a battle for self-determination and for the fundamental principles of civil liberty. It is for us a question of whether our whole economic, social, and political life as a nation shall lie at the uncontrolled disposition of an alien nation, militarily strong.

Judged by every criterion of nationhood, Ireland is a nation<sup>3</sup>—one of the oldest in Christendom—with geographical boundaries clearly delimited and defined, and with a tradition, history, language, culture, and a characteristic national consciousness of its own.

When, welcomed in every field of effort by the then nascent peoples of Europe, the Irish were scattered in the service of God and human civilization from Brest to Belgrade, and from Ghent to Gibraltar—the Irish were recognized as one in name and nationhood. They were so recognized by the Normans and by successive generations of British ministers.

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When, three centuries ago, France and Italy, and England began their search for a national principle of education, the Irish system of education had long been national in its basis and methods.

We have always maintained a vital national unity. We are, and have always been, united with more than that unity which was never challenged in the case of the new American Commonwealth of the United States, despite the presence among its own people, and in every State, of active and coherent bodies of "Tories" and "Loyalists," estimated by modern historians as not less than a third of the whole population of the thirteen original States.

We have maintained that unity and that national claim to individual existence as fully as modern France or Spain, modern Canada or Australia. We have kept up that unity and that claim even in the darkest days to the very best of our power, and in face of unparalleled dangers. No more can be historically asked of even the proudest and mightiest of modern states. The nation-

hood of Ireland is at once a fact set before the other nations of the world to-day and a historical reality<sup>4</sup> rooted deep in both the past record of our people and in the land which has always been their motherland.

Yes, Ireland is a nation, and neither by conquest, treaty, or prescription has the English Parliament ever acquired a title to legislate for her. The pretensions of that Parliament ever to dominate even the English Settler Parliament in Ireland were definitely renounced in 1783,<sup>5</sup> when the sovereignty of that Irish legislature was pronounced to be "unquestioned and unquestionable for ever."

Pitt's "Union" was a direct violation of that Act of Renunciation. It was secured by colossal bribery<sup>6</sup> in an assembly selected on such a restricted franchise as to be quite unrepresentative and forced on a "reluctant and protesting nation." That "Union" has never been recognized<sup>7</sup> by the mass of the Irish people, but, on the contrary, at all times has been persistently repudiated by them. Still it is on this "nullity"<sup>8</sup> that

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England bases her claim to conscript Irishmen. Since the Union the government of Ireland has been a government for foreigners by foreigners and their servants—a government resting solely on naked force,<sup>9</sup> characterized by “every horror and every shame<sup>10</sup> that could disgrace the relations between a strong country and a weak one.” Four armed uprisings, close on a hundred Coercion Acts,<sup>11</sup> repeated suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act and of trial by jury, suppression of free speech, gibbetings, shootings, bayonetings, perennial agitations and discontent leave no doubt as to the character of this Government—no doubt that it has been a “Government without the consent of the governed.” Starved, plundered, depopulated<sup>12</sup>—its energies absorbed in unavailing efforts to be free<sup>13</sup>—the sufferings of Ireland under this regime are paralleled by no other country in Europe—neither by Finland under the Czar, nor by Poland under Czar, Kaiser, or Emperor.

Since the Act of Union there have been four general famines artificially created, and

twenty-seven partial famines.<sup>14</sup> Within the past seventy years above two millions have suffered death by hunger and plague, and three and a half millions have been evicted<sup>15</sup> from the homes of their ancestors, and more than four millions have been driven to the emigrant ship.

Seventy years ago Ireland's population stood at eight millions, and in the normal measure of increase should be to-day sixteen millions. It is only four,<sup>16</sup> and of this four we are to deliver up the manhood between the ages of eighteen and fifty-one in such measure as the English War Cabinet and the English Privy Council may determine. The blood of this last remnant of our manhood must perforce be poured out to strengthen the power that has used our motherland so cruelly,<sup>17</sup> the power whose grip upon her has meant starvation and lingering death.

Ireland is a country—one of the most fertile on earth<sup>18</sup>—rich in mineral resources, with splendid waterways and magnificent harbours<sup>19</sup> opening on to the main trade routes of the world; inhabited by a people

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naturally clever, industrious and prolific,<sup>20</sup> but its agriculture, its commerce, and its industry have been deliberately ruined<sup>21</sup>—destroyed by the cunning statecraft of a jealous neighbour to whom greater military strength has given the mastery. And it is to uphold this mastery and to perpetuate our own slavery<sup>22</sup> that we are now peremptorily ordered to shed the last drop of our blood!

The British Empire, we are told, is threatened, and we should rally to its support. England has not attempted to force conscription on South Africa or any of her dominions, and the Empire means something for these peoples. For Irishmen England's Empire stands for autocratic power, for military despotism—in fine, for everything that America states she went into the present war to destroy and to end for ever.

Englishmen, Welshmen, Scotchmen and others, who do not understand—being ignorant of how Ireland has been used—call for “equality of sacrifice.” The English Government have never failed to exact from Ireland far more than equality in sacrifice,<sup>23</sup>

but it never has been willing to concede an equality of advantages or of rights. For England the "Union" has meant increased wealth, power, importance; for the enforced partner it has meant exploitation and beggary.<sup>24</sup> Are we to fight that this partnership should continue—are we to fight that we ourselves may be slaves?<sup>25</sup>

The principles enunciated by You, Sir, on America's entering the war, have been, it is true, subscribed to by British Ministers.<sup>26</sup> In high-sounding phrases they admit that from the consent of the governed alone do governments derive their just powers. In high-sounding phrases they admit the principle of self-determination, and protest that it is for the establishment of these principles they themselves are at war. Why do they refuse to apply them?

Ireland is the acid test of England's sincerity. Are Irishmen not justified in concluding that England's professions are hypocritical when she fails in that test? England steadily refuses to apply the "practical remedies" where she needs only the

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will to make them effective. To apply them to Ireland she needs conquer no enemy forces. Does her refusal to do so not justify Irishmen in regarding her anxiety for the welfare of the subjects of enemy states as mere "cynical imperialism"? Are they not right in refusing to risk what misrule has left of their nation in establishing liberty everywhere except in their own long-suffering land?

Experiencing himself that most pitiless of all tyrannies—rule by another nation—there is nothing that so deeply moves an Irishman as the story of oppression.<sup>27</sup> No cry is so potent over him as the cry of Liberty. For generations upon generations it has been the dream of his people. In every age and in every clime, wherever the weak have needed a defender, wherever the flag of Liberty has been unfurled, the blood of Irishmen has flowed in torrents.

Playing on this sympathy at the outbreak of the war England attracted to her armies some of the flower of our manhood. They forgot the woes of their own country; they

forgot that she had suffered at one time or another, at the hand of England, every act of brutality alleged against Germany;<sup>28</sup> they forgot that the very armies they were joining were those that forcibly held her in subjection. They heeded not the warnings of their fellow-countrymen who pointed not only to England's treachery in the past, but to the convincing evidence to hand, that her ministers were as perfidious and as conscienceless as ever, and for three years almost before America felt herself called upon to join in the war, "Little Belgium" had a champion in many a generous Irish youth. Their bones to-day lie buried beneath the soil of Flanders, or beneath the waves of Suvla Bay, or bleaching on the slopes of Gallipoli, or on the sands of Egypt or Arabia, in Mesopotamia, or wherever the battle line extends from Dunkirk to the Persian Gulf. Mons, Ypres . . . will be monuments to their unselfish heroism—but the land they loved dearest on earth, the land to which they owed their first duty and their first devotion, the land they fondly hoped their

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sacrifices might assist to freedom<sup>29</sup> still lies unredeemed at the feet of the age-long enemy<sup>30</sup>—and that she would thus lie were every youth and every man within her borders to immolate themselves in this war is the fixed conviction of all Irishmen who permit themselves to see things as they are.<sup>31</sup>

America entered the war only when her rights as a neutral were interfered with, yet America in her strength had a guarantee that in victory she would not be cheated of that for which she had entered the contest. Ireland having no such strength, has no such guarantees, and experience has taught her that justice,<sup>32</sup> much less gratitude, is not to be obtained where English governments are concerned. Is she not right then in refusing to give up the sons she can so ill-afford? Is she not doubly right when it is her own ancient enemy that demands them, and trebly right when to comply meant to abrogate her nationhood? What Ireland is to give, Ireland alone must determine.

A Parliament freely elected by, and directly answerable to the people of Ireland

has alone the right to conscript Irishmen. To no other assembly will the exercise of this inalienable national right be entrusted by Ireland.

England the champion of small nations, is preparing, it is true, to coerce us with her Irish Expeditionary Force already totalling one quarter of a million men, her howitzers and field guns, her armoured trains and her tanks, her airships and aeroplanes, her poison gas, and all the technique of modern warfare. It is not the assistance of Irishmen England really wants, but their destruction as a people. However ill prepared to defend themselves, Irishmen shall have no difficulty in choosing how they shall die. Their efforts to defend their rights may not lead them to another Yorktown, but the name of their nation shall never die, its soul shall never be subservient—we, too, shall never “compound our ideals.”

To the friends of Liberty everywhere we appeal in what for us will be a struggle for life or death as a people, and particularly

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to You, Sir, whose heartfelt desire and hope it was to find a way to assist the people of Russia to attain their utmost hope of "liberty and ordered peace."

"Liberty and ordered peace" is what we are striving for, and confidently do we look to You and to America—whose own freedom Irishmen did so much to establish—and to whose prosperity they have contributed so much, to intervene in our behalf, and to prevent what, if persisted in, will be recorded in history as one of the greatest crimes ever committed by a strong nation upon a weak. . . .

Houses of Parliament



## REFERENCE NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Whenever the people of England think one way in the proportion of two to one, they can outvote in Parliament the united force of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, although they should think in the other way in the proportion of five to one. And if England thinks one way in the proportion of three to one, she can outvote Scotland, Ireland, and Wales together, although they were each and all to return the whole of their members to vote against her.

—*Gladstone.*

<sup>2</sup> I say that we have no right whatever to insist upon a union between Ireland and Great Britain upon our terms only. . . . I am willing to admit that everybody in England allows, with regard to every foreign country, that any nation, believing it to be its interest, has a right both to ask for and to strive for national independence.

—*Mr. John Bright.*

<sup>3</sup> I have always maintained, and I maintain as strongly to-day that . . . IRELAND IS A NATION. Not two nations but one nation. . . . I start then in dealing with Home Rule for Ireland, with the proposition that Ireland is a nation, and that the condition of the success of any scheme that

statesmen can devise is the recognition, the full and generous recognition of Irish nationality.

—*Mr. Asquith when Prime Minister, Dublin, July 19, 1912.*

<sup>4</sup>It is a question of nationality as truly as in Hungary or in Poland. . . . It appears to me to be perfectly evident, from the existing state of public opinion in Ireland, that no Government will ever command the real affection and loyalty of the people which is not in some degree national, administered in a great measure by Irishmen and through Irish institutions.

—*Lecky. "Leaders of Public Opinion," Introduction.*

<sup>5</sup>Ireland's revenues, her trade, her manufactures had thriven beyond the hope or the example of any other country of her extent within those few years (before the Union), advancing with a rapidity astonishing even to herself.

—*Lord Plunkett in 1799.*

Resolved—That since the renunciation of the power of Great Britain in 1782 to legislate for Ireland, the commerce and prosperity of this kingdom have eminently increased.

—*Resolution of the Bankers of Dublin. December 18, 1798.*

That the commerce of Ireland has increased, and her manufactures improved beyond example since the independence of this kingdom was restored by the exertion of our countrymen in 1782. That we look with abhorrence on any attempt to deprive the people of Ireland of their Parliament, and thereby of their constitutional

right and immediate power to legislate for themselves.

—*Guild of Merchants. Resolution, January 14, 1799.*

There is not a nation on the face of the habitable globe which has advanced in cultivation, in manufactures, with the same rapidity in the same period as Ireland—from 1772 to 1798.

—*Lord Clare in 1798.*

<sup>6</sup> It is a simple and unexaggerated statement of the fact that, in the entire history of representative government there is no instance of corruption having been applied on so large a scale, and with such audacious effrontery.

—*Lecky on the Union.*

The Ministry founded its authority on moral depravity, and formed a league and covenant with an oligarchy, to transfer for hire, virtually and substantially, the power of legislation to the Cabinet of another kingdom.

—*Grattan.*

The measure of Pitt centralized, but it did not unite, or rather, by uniting the legislatures it divided the nations. In a country where the sentiment of nationality was as intense as in any part of Europe, it destroyed the national legislature contrary to the manifest wish of the people, and by means so corrupt, treacherous, and shameful that they are never likely to be forgotten. The Union of 1800 was not only a great crime, but was also like most crimes—a great blunder!

—*Lecky. "Leaders of Public Opinion."*

We used the whole civil government of Ireland as an engine of wholesale corruption, and we extended that corruption to what ought to have been a sacred thing—namely, the Church which we maintained and supported in the land. We did everything in our power to irritate and to exasperate the Irish people by the whole of that policy. . . . I will only say that we obtained that Union against the sense of every class of the community, by wholesale bribery and unblushing intimidation.

—*W. E. Gladstone, House of Commons, April 16, 1886.*

There is no blacker or fouler transaction in the history of man than the making of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. . . . The carrying of it was nothing in the world but an artful combination of fraud and force, applied in the basest manner to the attainment of an end which all Ireland detested. . . . A more base proceeding, a more vile proceeding, is not recorded, in my judgment, in any page of history.

—*W. E. Gladstone at Liverpool, June 28, 1886.*

<sup>7</sup>If the Irish are incapable of being taught the superiority of English notions about the way in which they ought to be managed and obstinately persist in preferring their own; if this supposition . . . is true, are we the power which, according to the general fitness of things, and the rules of morality, ought to govern Ireland? If so, what are we dreaming of when we give our sympathy to the Poles, the Italians, the Hungarians, the Servians, the Greeks, and I know not how

many other oppressed nationalities? To hold Ireland permanently by the old bad means is simply impossible.

—*J. S. Mill in his essay on "England and Ireland."*

Never for one single hour since the Union has Ireland been a constitutionally governed country. Never for one hour has the sovereign of England been the constitutional sovereign of Ireland. Ireland in effect has, since 1800, been governed as a crown colony with certain empty forms and pretences of constitutionalism. Never for one single hour has the English Government of Ireland obtained the assent or approval or confidence of the people of Ireland. Never for one single hour have the elected representatives of the majority of the Irish people had the control or even a potent voice in the government of their country. Never for one single hour has the English government of Ireland rested upon anything but naked force and unabashed corruption. Never for one hour has the British Constitution been in force in this country, whose own Constitution was destroyed. In one hundred years eighty-seven coercion acts had been passed in spite of the protests of the Irish members; there had been martial law, suspension of the Habeas Corpus, the suspension of trial by jury, and suppression of Free Trade. No single reform, large or small, has ever been obtained by purely constitutional methods.

—*Mr. J. E. Redmond, 1902.*

<sup>a</sup>The union with Ireland has no moral force. It has the force of law, no doubt, but it rests on

no moral basis. That is the line I would always take were I an Irishman. That is the line which, as an Englishman, I now take.

—*W. E. Gladstone. Barry O'Brien's "Life of Parnell," chap. 27, January 28, 1897.*

<sup>9</sup> I do not believe that the great majority of Englishmen have the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule a sister country. It is a system which is founded on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralized and bureaucratic as that with which Russia governs Poland, or as that which was common in Venice under Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step, he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, municipal, or educational work without being confronted, interfered with, controlled by an English official appointed by a foreign government, and without the shadow or shade of representable authority.

—*Joseph Chamberlain at West Islington, June, 17, 1885.*

Is a system which can only be supported by brute force, and is kept up by constant bloodshedding, to be perpetuated for ever?

—*Mr. Sadler, M.P., an English Tory. "Ireland and its Evils," 1829.*

<sup>10</sup> All the world is crying shame upon us, but we are equally callous to the ignominy, and to the results of our misgovernment.

—*Joseph Kay. "Social Condition of the People."*

In Ireland . . . no man can travel without feeling that some enormous crime had been committed by the government under which that people live.

—*John Bright, House of Commons, July 6, 1854.*

Gustave de Beaumont, the celebrated French publicist, who was in Ireland in 1835 and 1837, says:—"Irish misery forms a type by itself, of which there exists nowhere else either model or imitation."

<sup>11</sup>J. Boyd Kinnear, a Scotch M.P., in a leaflet published in June 1884, "for the consideration of Englishmen and Scotchmen who wish to be just," said:—"From 1800 to 1870 there were forty Coercion Bills passed for Ireland. Between 1819 and 1830 five Royal Commissions and Select Committees took evidence (and the evidence would break your hearts); and between 1829 and 1869 there were twenty-seven Bills and Resolutions offered by Irish members on the Land Question, and every one was rejected."

<sup>12</sup>Benjamin Franklin, in a letter written after a tour in Ireland in 1772, said:—"I assure you that in the possession and enjoyment of the various comforts of life, compared to these people, every Indian is a gentleman."

There never was a country in which poverty existed to such a degree as it exists in Ireland; that he occupied a high position in that country as Chief Secretary thirty years before, and that

he must say that ever since then there had hardly been a single year in which the Government had not had the most serious reason to fear a famine.

—*The Duke of Wellington, Parliament, 1838.*

In the south and west of Ireland men are suffering and starving by millions.

—*Thackeray, "Irish Sketch Book," 1843.*

He doubted whether in the whole world a nation could be found subjected to the physical privations of the peasantry in some parts of Ireland.

—*Kohl, "Travels in Ireland," 1844.*

<sup>13</sup> The Irish were not to be blamed if they looked to Spain, to France, to any friend on earth or in heaven, to deliver them from a power which discharged no single duty that rulers owe to subjects.

—*Froude, "History of England," vol. x.*

<sup>14</sup> The facts of Irish destitution are ridiculously simple. They are almost too commonplace to be told. The people have not enough to eat. They are suffering a real, though an artificial famine. Nature does her duty; the land is fruitful enough, nor can it be fairly said that man is wanting. The Irishman is disposed to work, in fact man and nature together do produce abundantly. The island is full and overflowing with human food. But something ever intervenes between the hungry mouth and the ample banquet.

—*"The Times," June 26, 1845.*

No pen has recorded the number of the forlorn

and starving who perished by the wayside or in the ditches, or of the mournful groups, sometimes of whole families who laid down and died, one after another, upon the floor of their miserable cabins, and so remained, uncoffined and unburied, till chance unveiled the appalling scene. No such amount of suffering and misery has been chronicled in Irish history since the days of Edward Bruce, and yet, through all, the forbearance of the Irish peasantry, and the calm submission with which they have borne the deadliest ills that can fall on man, can scarcely be paralleled in the annals of any people.

—*Census Commission. Government Census of Ireland for the year 1851. Report on Tables of Deaths.*

The people of England have most culpably and foolishly connived at a national iniquity. England stupidly winked at this tyranny. If we are asked why we have now to support half the population of Ireland, the answer lies in the question itself; it is that we have deliberately allowed them to be crushed into a nation of beggars.

—“*The Times*,” February 27, 1847.

General Gordon, the hero of Khartoum, writing from Roche's Hotel, Glengariff, County Cork, November 1880, in *The Times* said: “I must say, from all accounts and from my own observations, that the state of our fellow-countrymen in the parts I have named is worse than that of any people in the world, let alone Europe. I believe that these people are made as we are—that they are patient beyond belief, loyal, but at the same

time broken-spirited and desperate, living on the verge of starvation in places where we would not keep our cattle."

Let us think of the half-million who within two years past have perished miserably in the workhouses, on the highways, and in their hovels, more—far more—than ever fell by the sword in any war this country ever waged; let us think of the crop of nameless horrors which is even now growing up in Ireland, and whose disastrous fruit may be gathered in years and generations to come.

—*Mr. Bright, House of Commons, August 25, 1848.*

Ireland has been truly described as one adjourned debate. . . . Ireland is now entering on the fourth year of famine; sixty per cent. of her population are receiving relief. . . . Bad legislation, careless legislation, have been the cause of all the disasters we are now deploring.

—*Mr. Horsman, House of Commons, July 25, 1849.*

<sup>15</sup> The suffering and misery attendant upon these wholesale evictions is indescribable. The number of houseless paupers in this union is beyond my calculation. . . . The lands have been already literally swept for rent. I frequently travel fifteen miles without seeing five stacks of grain of any kind; all threshed and sold. . . . Notwithstanding that fearful, and (I believe) unparalleled numbers have been unhoused in this union within the year (probably 15,000) it seems hardly credible that 1,200 more have had their dwellings levelled within a fortnight. . . .

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May 7, 1849. These ruthless acts of barbarity are submitted to with an unresisting patience hardly credible.

—*Blue Book, No. 1089. Reports and returns relating to Evictions in the Kilrush Union. Report of Captain Kennedy.*

In many parts of Ireland the British army is never seen except in rendering assistance in evicting starving families from their wretched hovels.

—*Lord Aberdeen, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1885.*

Referring to the official report on the evictions, Sir Robert Peel said:—"I do not think that the records of any country, civilized or barbarous, present materials for such a picture.

—"Hansard," June 8, 1849.

16 CENSUS RETURNS 1841	
Population of England	14,995,138
"    Ireland	8,175,124
1911	
Population of England	34,045,270
"    Ireland	4,390,000

The rate of increase in the Irish population in 1841 was nine per cent. per decade.

Where you had in O'Connell's time . . . a population of 8,000,000, you have now . . . a population of less than 5,000,000. . . . The famine was followed by the great emigration and the wholesale eviction—a chapter of which we have not yet come to the last page.

—*John Morley, M.P., "Times" Report, June 4, 1886.*

<sup>17</sup>The eminent author, Mr. Hely Hutchinson, who was a Principal Secretary of State and Provost of Trinity College, in Ireland (1779), thus summarizes the disastrous effects of eighty years restrictive legislation in that country, viz., between 1699 and 1779: "Can the history of any fruitful country on the globe, enjoying peace for four-score years, and not visited by plague or pestilence, produce so many recorded instances of the poverty and wretchedness, and of the reiterated want and misery of the lower orders of the people? There is no such example in ancient or modern story."

—"Commercial Restraints," pp. 78-9.

We have made Ireland—I speak it deliberately—we have made it the most degraded and the most miserable country in the world.

—Joseph Kay. "Social Conditions of the People," vol. 1.

What is the reason that a people with so bountiful a soil, with such enormous resources as the Irish, lag so far behind the English in the race? . . . It cannot be demagogues, Romanism, or the Celtic race. . . . I am afraid that the one thing which has been peculiar to Ireland has been the Government of England.

—Lord Robert Cecil, afterwards Marquis of Salisbury.  
*House of Commons, February 24, 1865.*

The present condition of Ireland is a reproach and a standing disgrace to the whole British Empire, wherever it is to be found. It has made England and the Empire, I might say, the laughing-stock of the nations; even the Russians

themselves, on a notable occasion, were able to cast the stone at their British allies.

—*Most Rev. Dr. Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne. Melbourne, Monday, November 5, 1917.*

No matter what they proposed, the Irish members could not obtain a hearing in the English Parliament. Yet the land question involved the life and death of 6,000,000 of Irish human beings. Of these 6,000,000 about one-half have perished or been driven into exile by evictions since 1845.

—*J. Boyd Kinnear, M.P., June, 1884.*

More misery is crowded into a single province of Ireland than can be found in all the rest of Europe put together. . . . The well-being of millions is disregarded, famine and misery stalk through the land, and all good government in Ireland is rendered impossible, and government of any kind impracticable, except through the medium of a military force.

—*"The Times," October 25, 1839.*

Edmund Burke, speaking of the Penal Laws :  
"It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."

—*Burke's Speeches.*

With such a climate, such a soil, and such a people, the inferiority of Ireland to the rest of

Europe is directly chargeable to the long wickedness of the English Government.

—*Sydney Smith*. “*Works*,” *Longman’s edition*, p. 345.

There is no doubt of the fertility of the land; that fertility has been the theme of admiration with writers and travellers of all nations. There is no doubt either, I must say, of the strength and industry of the inhabitants.

—*Lord John Russell* “*History of the Irish Famine*.”  
*Reverend J. O’Rourke*, p. 322.

<sup>18</sup> If I could be in all other things the same, but by birth an Irishman, there is not a town in this island I would not visit for the purpose of discussing the great Irish question, and of rousing my countrymen to some great and united action. I do not believe in the necessity of widespread and perpetual misery. . . . With your soil, your climate, and your active and spirited race, I know not what you might not do.

—*John Bright*, *Dublin*, November 2, 1886.

Arthur Young, who travelled through Ireland in 1776-8, says of Limerick and Tipperary :—“It is the richest soil I ever saw.”

For this island, it is endowed with so many dowries of nature, considering the fruitfulness of the soil, the ports, the rivers, the fishings, the quarries, the woods, and other materials, and especially the race and generation of men—valiant, hard and active, as it is not easy, no, not upon the Continent, to find such confluence of commodities, if the hand of men did join with the hand of nature.—*Lord Bacon*. “*Bacon’s Works*,” vol. III, p. 321.

Singularly gifted by Providence with the resources indispensable to manufacturing enterprise.

—*Sir Robert Kane. "Industrial Resources of Ireland."*

<sup>19</sup> The conveniency of ports and harbours, which nature has bestowed so liberally on this country, is of no more use to us than a beautiful prospect to a man shut up in a dungeon. Ireland is the only kingdom I ever heard of, either in ancient or modern story, which was denied the liberty of exporting their native commodities and manufactures wherever they pleased. . . . Ireland is the poorest of all civilized countries, with every advantage to make it one of the richest.

—*Dean Swift. "Works." Scott's edition, 1727.*

In an English MS. in Trinity College Library, Dublin, dated 1615, Mr. Prendergast found the following: "There lives not a people more hardy, active and painful . . . neither is there any will endure the miseries of warre, as famine, watching, heat, cold, wet, travel, and the like, so naturally and with such facility and courage that they do."

—*Prendergast. "Cromwellian Settlement."*

<sup>20</sup> You cannot find one instance of perfidy, deceit; or treachery among them; nay, they are ready to expose themselves to all manner of dangers for the safety of those who sucked their mother's milk. You may beat them to a mummy; you may put them on the rack; you may burn them on a gridiron; you may expose them to the most exquisite torture that the cruellest tyrant can

invent; yet you will never remove them from that innate fidelity which is grafted in them; you will never induce them to betray their duty.

—*Ware. Book II, p. 73.*

The Irish people are not naturally lazy; they are, on the contrary, of an active nature, capable of the greatest exertions, and of as good a disposition as any nation in the same state of improvement; but that men who have very little to do, should appear to do little, is not strange.

—*Lord Sheffield. Observations on the Manufactures, Trade, and Present State of Ireland, 1785.*

An honourable member from Ireland, referring to the character of the Irish people, says: "There is no Christian nation with which we are acquainted amongst whose people crime of the ordinary character (as we reckon it) is so rare as amongst the Irish." He might have said also, that there is no people, whatever they may be at home, more industrious than the Irish in every country but their own. He might have said more, that they are a people of a cheerful and joyous temperament, that they are singularly grateful for kindness, and that of all people of our race, they are filled with the strongest sentiment of veneration. And yet, with such materials, and with such a people—after centuries of government—after sixty-five years of government by this House—you have them embittered against your rule, and anxious to throw off the authority of the Crown and Queen of this realm. This is merely an access of the

complaint Ireland has been suffering under during the lifetime of the oldest man in this House—that of chronic insurrection.

—John Bright. In his "Speeches," vol. 1, p. 351.

When Chief Secretary for Ireland Mr. John Morley, M.P., said: "The Irish people . . . are called idle, restless, discontented. . . . The Irish people have done the greatest part of the hard work of the world. . . . The Irish peasants and generations of Irish peasants have reclaimed the land, the harsh, thankless land of the bog and the mountain side; have reclaimed that land knowing that the fruit of their labour would be confiscated in the shape of rent."

—Bradford, June 19, 1886. "The Times," June 21, 1886.

An active, energetic, and thrifty people . . . such as are never likely to settle down into a kind of bovine state of contentment. . . . The people are alive, prolific, healthy, ambitious and adaptable. . . . The extension of land ownership among the people who, to my own knowledge, work with the same diligence on their own farms as the French proprietor does on his, is abundant proof that the Irish worker in Ireland, given proper incentive, is as industrious as the Irish worker in the United States.

—Lord Northcliffe. Speech, Irish Club, London, St. Patrick's Day, 1917.

In modern times, concerning which alone we can speak with confidence, infanticide, desertion, wife murder, and other crimes, indicating a low

state of domestic morality, have been much rarer among the Irish poor than among the corresponding classes in England.

—*W. E. H. Lecky*. "Eighteenth Century,"  
*vol. II, pp. 315-82.*

<sup>21</sup> Writing to Sir Edward Newenham in 1779, Benjamin Franklin says: "I admire the spirit with which I see the Irish are at length determined to claim some share of that freedom of commerce, which is the right of all mankind, but which they have been so long deprived of by the abominable selfishness of their fellow-subjects."

—*Benjamin Franklin*. "Life of Benjamin Franklin,"  
*vol. III, 1883.*

The trade of Ireland with Spain must be destroyed and secured to England.

—*Sir Humphrey Gilbert*, 16th century.

Regard must be had to those points wherein the trade of Ireland comes to interfere with that of England, in which case the Irish trade ought to be declined, so as to give way to the trade of England.

—*Sir William Temple*, 17th century.

The main industry of Ireland had been deliberately destroyed because it had so prospered that English manufacturers had begun to regard it as a competitor with their own. . . .

—*Lecky*, "Eighteenth Century," *vol. II,*  
*pp. 211, 212, 256.*

In a letter to Charles I, in 1634, Lord Strafford said: "All wisdom advises to keep this kingdom as much subordinate and dependant upon England as is possible, and holding them from the manufacture of wool . . . then enforcing them to fetch their clothing from thence . . . how can they depart from us without nakedness and beggary"?

—*Lord Strafford, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1634.*

An address from the Lords and Commons to King William, June 9, 1698, *re* woollen trade: "The growing manufacture of cloth in Ireland, both by the cheapness of all sorts of necessaries of life and the goodness of material for making all manner of cloth, having made the king's loyal subjects in Ireland very apprehensive that the further growth of it would greatly prejudice the said manufacture here, and lessen the value of lands; they besought his most sacred majesty to be pleased to declare to all his subjects of Ireland, that 'the growth and increase of the woollen manufacture there hath long been and will ever be looked upon with great jealousy by all his subjects of the kingdom of England.'"

The Commons of England in Parliament, 1698: "They cannot without trouble observe that Ireland should of late apply itself to the woollen manufacture to the great prejudice of the trade of England. . . . Parliament will be necessitated to interfere to prevent the mischief that threatens."

The King replied briefly that the wish of

Parliament should be carried out, and Ireland was invited to apply the knife to her own throat.

—Froude. "*English in Ireland*," vol. 1, p. 297.

No country ever exercised a more complete control over the destinies of another than did England over those of Ireland for three-quarters of a century after the Revolution. No serious resistance of any kind was attempted. The nation was as passive as clay in the hands of the potter, and it is a circumstance of peculiar aggravation that a large part of the legislation I have recounted was a distinct violation of a solemn treaty. The commercial legislation which ruined Irish industry, the confiscation of Irish land, which demoralized and impoverished the nation, were all directly due to the English Government and the English Parliament. During the greater part of the eighteenth century the Irish Parliament had "little power except that of protesting against laws crushing Irish commerce, but what little it could do it appears to have done."

—Lecky. "*Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland*," p. 187.

The English deliberately determined to keep Ireland poor and miserable, as the readiest means to prevent it being troublesome.

—Froude. "*English in Ireland*," vol. 1, pp. 439, 441-46.

If the high persons at the head of the great British Empire had deliberately considered by what means they could condemn Ireland to remain

the scandal of their rule, they could have chosen no measure better suited to their end than those which they pursued unrelentingly through three-quarters of a century.

—*Froude*. "English in Ireland," vol. II, p. 213.

It is the conduct of the State, past or present, that prevents the free action of the commercial principle in Ireland.

—*Lord Beaconsfield*. *Speech in the Commons—Railways—Ireland*, February 5, 1847.

Lord Dufferin, Governor-General of India, wrote in a pamphlet he published in 1867: "From Queen Elizabeth's reign until the Union the various commercial confraternities of Great Britain never for a moment relaxed their relentless grip on the trades of Ireland. One by one each of our nascent industries was either strangled in its birth or handed over, gagged and bound, to the jealous custody of the rival interests in England, until at last every fountain of wealth was hermetically sealed, and even the traditions of commercial enterprise have perished through desuetude. . . . What has been the consequence of such a system, pursued with relentless pertinacity for two hundred and fifty years? This—that, debarred from every other trade and industry, the entire nation flung itself back upon the land."

For more than a century Ireland was the worst governed country in Europe. England did her best to annihilate Irish commerce and to ruin Irish

agriculture. . . . The poverty, deepened by the rapid growth of the native population, turned the country into a hell.

—J. R. Green. *“Short History of the English People.”* Sec. iv, p. 788.

It would seem as though every country among the Allies is to get a substantial war bonus in the shape of improved legislation, better economic conditions and other benefits except Ireland. . . . At this present moment when so many industrial districts in England and Scotland, and to a lesser extent Belfast, are “enjoying the war”—to quote a current phrase, Irish salaries and wages are the lowest paid in any English-speaking country with which I have been able to make comparison. Many Irish workers are at the present time receiving less in a week than some English workers are at the present time making in a day. I don't know to whose neglect it was due, certainly to someone, that of the forty millions of pounds being spent weekly on the war but little goes to Ireland. . . . Ireland possesses in her mighty rivers white coal, of which millions of horse power are being lost to Ireland every year. I have sought eagerly for some recent expert report on the water power of Ireland. I have not been able to obtain it, though I had no difficulty in obtaining reports of the water power of Spain and Portugal.

—Lord Northcliffe. *Speech, Irish Club, London, St. Patrick's Day, 1917.*

PARLIAMENTARY RETURNS—SHIPPING, 1913.

	Vessels	Tonnage
Great Britain	19,852	11,679,390
Ireland	932	426,298

<sup>22</sup> This has been the case in Ireland for two hundred years. The great preserver there had been the gallows. . . . The demands of the people were not conceded. Nothing has been done in Ireland except under the influence of terror. Except under the pressure of some great emergency no man can point to anything great or good having been done by the Imperial Parliament for the Irish nation.

—*Mr. Bright at Rochdale, December 23, 1867.*

<sup>23</sup> My Lords, it is mainly to the Irish Catholics that we owe all our proud predominance in our military career, and that I personally am indebted for the laurels with which you have been pleased to decorate my brow. . . . Without Catholic blood and Catholic valour, no victory could have been obtained.

—*Duke of Wellington.*

<sup>24</sup> If it must be called a union, it is the union of the shark with his prey; the spoiler swallows up his victim, and they become one and inseparable. Thus has Great Britain swallowed up the Parliament, the Constitution, the independence of Ireland.

—*Lord Byron. April 21, 1812.*

Is Ireland united to the Crown of Great Britain for no other purpose than that we should counteract the bounty of Providence in her favour, and in proportion as that bounty has been liberal that we are to regard it as evil which is to be met with in every sort of corrective?

—*Edmund Burke. "Irish Affairs," p. 101.*

<sup>25</sup> When Ireland asked for all these things upon her knees, her petitions were rejected with Per-civalism and contempt; when she demanded them with the voice of 60,000 armed men they were granted with every mark of consternation and dismay.

—*Sydney Smith. "Works," Longman's edition, p. 599.*

<sup>26</sup> What President Wilson is longing for we are fighting for.

—*Mr. Bonar Law, Bristol, January 24, 1917.*

America's aims and ideals are those of the Allies.

*Mr. Bonar Law, House of Commons, April 19, 1917.*

The Premier, on January 5, 1918, made a statement on war aims and peace conditions after consulting Mr. Asquith, Viscount Grey, the Labour leaders and representatives of the Dominions. Summing up his own statement Mr. Lloyd George said: "We are fighting for a just and lasting peace, and we believe that before permanent peace can be hoped for three conditions must be fulfilled—(1) The sanctity of

treaties must be re-established. (2) A territorial settlement must be secured based *on the right of self-determination or the consent of the governed*; and (3) we must seek by the creation of some international organization to limit the burden of armaments and diminish the probability of war."

Mr. Asquith, at the Guildhall, November 9, 1915, while he was still Prime Minister: "We shall not pause or falter until we have secured for the smaller states of Europe their charter of independence."

In the course of a message to America from the British War Cabinet, read by Mr. Lloyd George to a group of American correspondents, the following passage occurs: "The glowing phrases of the President's noble deliverance illumine the horizon and make clearer than ever the goal we are striving to reach. There are three phrases which will stand out for ever in the glory of this crusade. The first is that the world must be safe for democracy; the next is that the menace to peace and freedom lies in the existence of autocratic government backed by organized force which is controlled wholly by their will and not by the will of their people, and the crowning phrase is that in which he declares that a steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by the partnership of democratic nations. These words represent the faith which inspires and sustains our people in the tremendous sacrifices they have made and still are making. They also

believe that the unity and peace of mankind can only rest upon democracy, upon the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government, upon the rights and liberties of nations both great and small, and upon the universal dominion of public right."

—"The Times," April 17, 1917.

<sup>27</sup> Sir John Davies, Attorney-General for Ireland in the reign of James I, and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, 1613, declared: "There is no nation of people under the sun that doth love equal and indifferent justice better than the Irish . . . although it be against themselves."

There is no nation in the Christian world that are greater lovers of justice than they.

—Lord Chief Justice Coke. "History of Ireland," p. 35.

If there be a people on the face of the earth whose hearts are accessible to justice, it is the Irish people.

—Mr. Bright at Limerick in 1868.

<sup>28</sup> The favourite object of the Irish governors and the English Parliament was the utter extermination of all Catholic inhabitants of Ireland.

Leland. Book v, chap. 4.

A work of Mr. Godkin, an Irish correspondent of *The Times*, and an accomplished, honourable man, contains a quotation from a letter written by a Lord Deputy about the year 1607, which

runs as follows: "Hunger would be a better, because a speedier, weapon to employ against them than the sword. . . . I burned all along the Lough (Neagh) within four miles of Dunganannon, and killed one hundred people, sparing none, of what quality, age or sex soever, besides many burned to death. We killed man, woman and child, horse, beast, and whatsoever we could find."

The author of the "Faerie Queen" wrote: "Notwithstanding that the same was a most rich and plentiful country, full of corne and cattel, yet, ere one years and a half, they were brought to such wretchedness as that any stony heart would rue the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glynns they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them; they looked like anatomies of death; they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves; they did eate the dead carrions, happy where they could find them. . . . In shorte space, there was none almost left, and a most populous and plentiful cuntry suddainlie left voyde of man and beast."

—Edmund Spenser. "State of Ireland," 1860,  
pp. 525-6.

<sup>20</sup> I should like to see and we all want to see an Irish brigade or, better still, an Irish army corps. Do not let them be afraid that by joining the colours they will lose their identity and become absorbed in some invertebrate mass, or what is perhaps equally repugnant, to be artificially

distributed into units which have neither natural cohesion or character. . . . There is no question of compulsion or bribery. What we want, what we ask, what we believe you are ready and agree to give is the FREE WILL OFFERING OF A FREE PEOPLE.

—*Mr. Asquith. Mansion House, Dublin, September 25, 1914.*

<sup>30</sup> Centuries of ruthless and often brutal injustice . . . centuries of insolence and of insult, have driven hatred of British rule into the very marrow of the Irish race, the long record of oppression, proscription, and expatriation, the greatest blot on the British fame for equity and commonsense in the realm of government. Ireland undoubtedly is the one taunt that stings. . . . There remains the one invincible fact to-day that she is no more reconciled to British rule than she was in the days of Cromwell.

*Lloyd George. House of Commons, March 7, 1917.*

<sup>31</sup> They will not give anything to Ireland out of justice or righteousness. They will concede you your liberties and your rights when they must and no sooner.

*C. S. Parnell. London, St. Patrick's Day Banquet, 1885.*

Nothing effectual has been or shall be granted to Ireland.

—*Lord North, Premier of England (in a private letter to English manufacturers and merchants, 18th century).*

Except on two emergencies Parliament has done nothing for the people of Ireland; and, more than that, their complaints have been met—complaints of their sufferings have been met—often by denial, often by insult, often by contempt.

—*Mr. Bright. House of Commons, February 17, 1866.*

We have to make the sad confession of our impotence to discharge a primary debt of justice to that country.

—*W. E. Gladstone, 1868.*

<sup>32</sup>Hussey Burgh, Lord Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer, in the course of a speech in the Irish House of Commons in October, 1779, said: "The usurped authority of a foreign Parliament has kept up the most wicked laws that a jealous, monopolizing, ungrateful spirit could devise, to restrain the bounty of Providence and enslave a nation whose inhabitants are recorded to be brave, loyal, generous people; by the English code of laws, to answer the most sordid views, they have been treated with a savage cruelty; the words penalty, punishment, and Ireland are synonymous."

The chain was allowed to remain till it was broken by the revolt of the American colonies, and Ireland was to learn the deadly lesson that her real wrongs would receive attention only when England was compelled to remember them through fear.

—*Froude. "English in Ireland," vol. 2, p. 104.*

The mild and the long-suffering may suffer for ever in this world. . . . As long as the patient will suffer the cruel will kick. . . . If the Irish go on withholding, and forbearing, and hesitating whether this is the time for discussion or that is the time, they will be laughed at for another century as fools, and kicked for another century as slaves.

—Sydney Smith. "*Works.*" Longman's edition, p. 555.

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will suffer the cure will last. If the Irish  
go on withholding and forgetting and hesitating  
whether this is the time for discussion or that is  
the time they will be laughed at for another  
century as fools and kicked for another century

W. B. E. O'Connell, Dublin, p. 555.

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