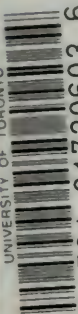


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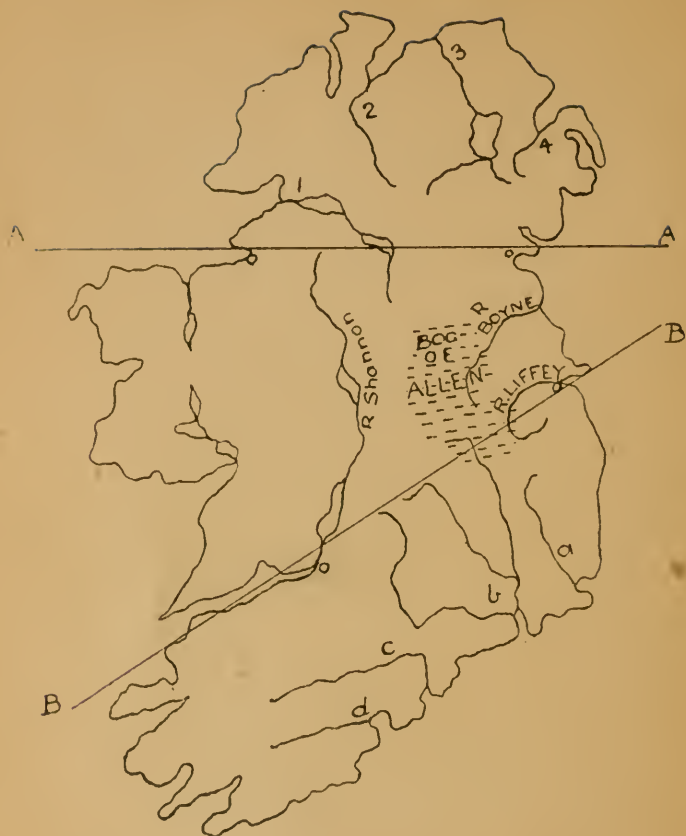
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TO MY COMRADES.



A, A.—BOUNDARY OF NORTHERN MOUNTAIN AREA.

B, B.—BOUNDARY OF SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN AREA.

1, 2, 3, 4.—NORTHERN RIVER ENTRIES.

a, b, c, d.—SOUTHERN RIVER ENTRIES.

RIVER VALLEYS HEAVILY WOODED.



Q. 1851

# THE IRISH WARS

A MILITARY HISTORY OF IRELAND  
FROM THE NORSE INVASIONS  
TO 1798

BY

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## MAPS.

### I. GENERAL MAP OF MILITARY FEATURES—Frontispiece

	PAGE
II. THE NORSE INVASIONS ... ..	25
III. FIRST NORMAN INVASIONS .. ..	39
IV. DE LACY'S CASTLES IN MEATH ... ..	43
V. EXPANSION OF NORMAN POWER ... ..	45
VI. CAMPAIGNS OF EDWARD BRUCE ... ..	56
VII. CAMPAIGNS OF ART MACMURROUGH KAVANAGH	64
VIII. EARLY TUDOR WARS ... ..	75
IX. CAMPAIGNS OF HUGH O'NEILL'S WAR ...	88
X. THE CONFEDERATE WAR ... ..	109
XI. JACOBITE WAR ... ..	122
XII. INSURRECTION OF 1798 ... ..	132

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03

# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
THE MILITARY TOPOGRAPHY OF IRELAND ...	9

## CHAPTER II.

THE NORSE INVASIONS AND THE MONARCHY OF BRIAN ...	21
---	----

## CHAPTER III.

IRELAND UNDER NORMAN DOMINION ...	36
-----------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER IV.

THE BRUCE INVASION ...	53
------------------------	----

## CHAPTER V.

ART MACMURROUGH KAVANAGH ...	64
------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER VI.

THE TUDOR POLICY OF RE-CONQUEST ...	72
-------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER VII.

HUGH O'NEILL'S WAR ...	85
------------------------	----

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONFEDERATE WAR ...	101
-------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER IX.

THE JACOBITE WAR ...	121
----------------------	-----

## CHAPTER X.

THE INSURRECTION OF 1798 ...	130
------------------------------	-----

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The idea of this small volume is to present an outline of Irish Military History divested of all political, social, or economic complications. Naturally, it does not pretend to be an exhaustive survey, but it is hoped that it may not have been written in vain—as far as concerns the directing of Irish opinion towards a much-neglected aspect of the country's history.

# THE IRISH WARS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### The Military Topography of Ireland.

THE most reliable way to study the history of warfare in any country is to begin with the topography or natural geography of the country. The physical make-up of a region very largely determines the character of any military operations carried on within it. This fact is quite as true at the present time as it was two thousand years ago. Topographical features in any country that we examine as a possible theatre of war must come under either of two heads: they may be *avenues* along which an army can move towards a given objective, or they may be *obstacles* calculated to hamper its march. We must develop each of these a little more fully.

The avenues through a theatre of war are of several kinds—roads, railways, navigable rivers, canals. But even in the very earliest times they had to be such as would allow of the passage of large bodies of men kept united. There had to be enough space to hold the numbers available, and the surface underfoot had to have at least some kind of solidity. These routes might be, and in early times were, very unsatisfactory; but at least they were better than none at all, and as time went on they were improved and developed. Practically in every country the earliest routes used followed the valleys of rivers. Nearly always the land bordering rivers had a large enough amount of level surface, and frequently the rivers themselves could be used as routes. So much for the avenues in the first instance; the further development of them was largely conditioned by the lie of the obstacles with reference to them.

Obstacles in the military sense are any such natural features as might prevent or impede the movement of a large body of troops. For example, a mountain range, a river, bog, or lake—these are all military obstacles. So also are any fortifications such as a fort or castle or line of earthworks. Evidently obstacles have the effect of diverting or making more difficult the natural routes in any district. So that it is not hard to understand how any point where an avenue and an obstacle come into contact becomes at once of military importance. Thus a pass where a road pierces a chain of mountains, a bridge or ford where it crosses a river, or a causeway where it crosses a bog are all strategic points of more or less importance as the case may be.

Now that the elementary principle underlying the influence of geography on strategy has been outlined it may be helpful to consider an actual example. Everybody knows that Limerick was a Danish stronghold, that the Normans built a great castle there, that the city has stood several sieges, and that to-day it is a railway and road junction and an important port. But what was it long ago that made it successively become all these other things? It was (a) a point at the head of a great tidal estuary, (b) a point at the lowest crossing of a great river, (c) a point where the angle of a fertile plain touched that estuary and river. All this meant that Limerick was the terminal of a sea route, a passage over an obstacle, and a centre for storing cattle and corn. So Limerick did not *happen* to have a military importance—it owed that importance directly to its geographical situation. Other places are important for similar reasons, but at the moment there is no need to examine any of them in detail; the one example will be sufficient. We must now proceed to make a general survey of the country as a whole.

### Size and Situation of Ireland.

Ireland is not a very large country—the longest land line that can be drawn in it measures about 300 miles. This longest line is the long diagonal of a rough lozenge and extends from Fair Head in the North-East to Mizen Head in the South-West. Along the short diagonal from North-West to South-East the distance is about 200 miles. Now the size of a country has a certain significance. For

one thing it has a certain influence upon the amount of population. But—still more important—the defensive capacity of a large country is greater than that of a small one. For instance, Belgium is so small as to be easily over-run, while the Boer Republics, though of quite feeble numerical power, were enabled by their extensive territory to make a protracted resistance to the English. Of course, the factor of size may be, and often is, offset by other considerations, but none the less it has its importance.

In the case of Ireland the fact of the country's being an island was one of those considerations calculated to offset the matter of its size. The country could not be suddenly marched across and overwhelmed by an invader in greatly superior force. Its insular character, as we shall see later, gave choice of several lines of attack, but most of these lines were only secondary.

In respect of situation Ireland is the most westerly country in Europe, and her nearest neighbour was the larger island of Great Britain—in early times and through the Middle Ages two separate kingdoms, Scotland and England. Great Britain extended all along the eastern shore of Ireland from which it was separated by a strait of varying width. Such were the general external conditions of Ireland from the point of view of possible warfare with an external army. And as regards the internal conditions, the following quotation, though of a later time, will give a pretty accurate idea: "Ireland is one of the worst countries to make war in or to conquer, for there are such impenetrable and extensive forests, lakes, and bogs, there is no knowing how to pass them. It is so thinly inhabited that whenever the Irish please they desert the towns and take refuge in these forests, and live in huts made of boughs."

Manifestly then Ireland had considerable defensive possibilities in early times. As to Irish expeditions of aggression into foreign lands, they do not come within our scope—except that they indicate a martial vigour as a leading feature in the national character. The introduction of Christianity diverted this energy: only the Roman Empire was "raidable," and that empire was Christian. The spoils went to other races who had chanced to remain Pagan.

### General Structure of Ireland.

Having now some idea of the size and situation of Ireland, it is necessary to enumerate the main divisions of the surface of the country. Of these there are three—a mountainous region in the North, another such in the South, and a Central Plain. This structure of Ireland is most important to bear in mind for this reason: The mountains in the North of Ireland are a geological continuation of those of Scotland, northern and southern; the mountains in the south of Ireland are a like continuation of the Welsh Mountains. Thus the eastern side of the Irish Central Plain lay directly opposite what is known as the Chester Gap. In other words, the most exposed and most inviting region in Ireland lay opposite England's only outlet to the north-west. There is no need to emphasise the importance of this fact.

The northern mountain region covers about one-fourth the area of the country, and roughly lies north of a line drawn from Sligo to Dundalk. It thus very nearly coincides with the present province of Ulster. The southern mountain region covers about half of the remaining area and lies, roughly, south of a line drawn from Limerick to Dublin. It is worth while drawing attention to the fact that every one of these four points—Sligo, Dundalk, Limerick, and Dublin—has played an important part in Irish Military History. This is only what would be expected from their geographical positions.

### The Central Plain.

We have alluded to the fact that this region is directly open to the sea on the east—between Dundalk and Dublin. On the west the plain is not open to the sea for all its extent; but at Sligo, at Westport, and at Galway it throws out arms which reach the sea by gaps in the Ox and Connemara mountains. At Limerick the case is different: it is that the sea *comes up* to the plain rather than that the plain reaches out to the sea. But evidently there were no lack of approaches to the Central Plain either from the west, or especially from the east.

To-day much of the commerce of the western sea entries has been diverted to the east. But for many centuries the more natural geographical conditions



governed this question of transport. Then Galway was the port of Connacht. The natural difficulties of communication internally were too great for any other arrangement.

The dividing line of the Central Plain was the River Shannon which crossed it in a north and south direction. Of the two regions into which the Shannon divides the plain the western, comprising most of Connacht and Clare, was upon the whole far less fertile than the eastern. The eastern portion thus became naturally enough Royal Meath—the Mensal Land of the Ard-Ri. This area was rich and productive and thus able to support fittingly the royal state: it was also central, and from it supervision over the whole could be most readily exercised. The River-Boyne afforded a centrally-placed sea entry, and five roads, though of a very primitive kind, radiated from Tara—to the North, South, South-West, West, and North-West. From the point of view of military control of Ireland modern developments have not diminished but increased the relative importance of this half of the Central Plain. How important possession of it has been will become abundantly clear in the course of the narrative: it is not too much to say that the cause of the native Irish as against their successive invaders waxed or waned in direct proportion to their degree of control of the ancient province of Meath. That is to say, of course, in the purely military sense.

This is as suitable a place as any to explain how Royal Meath lost its significance for the Ard-Ris, and what was the result. In the middle of the sixth century the Ard-Ri Diarmuid violated the sanctuary of St. Ruadan, who retaliated by proceeding to Tara, excommunicating the King, and solemnly cursing the royal rath and palace. Thereafter Tara was abandoned; and even residence in Meath was given up after a time. Later Ard-Ris resided usually in their tribal domain, and their supreme authority went into complete abeyance. The desertion of Tara was an unmixed national calamity; for all practical purposes it prevented for ever the establishment of a strong central monarchy, and brought immeasurable evils on the land.

The Central Plain as a whole was naturally far more passable for armies than the two mountainous extremities

of the country. Yet even within the central region itself there were many physical features of the nature of military obstacles. We have already mentioned one—the River Shannon. This great river was an obstacle of the greatest importance. It traversed the entire extent of the plain, included many large lakes in its course, and was fed by many tributary streams, some of considerable size. Moreover its banks were for great distances marshy and boggy. In short, the Shannon has always been a formidable military obstacle: it has always been regarded as the real military frontier of Ireland on the west—or at least of all Ireland that mattered. As for the Liffey, like the Boyne, it provided an entry of importance on the east.

Intimately connected with the Shannon is another remarkable feature lying about thirty miles to the east of it—the chain of waters known as the Westmeath Lakes, which are drained by tributaries of the Shannon. These lakes are six in number—Sheelin, Kinale, Derravaragh, Iron, drained by the Inny into Lough Ree; Owel and Ennel, drained by the Brosna further south. The entire chain measures over thirty miles long and extends due south from the border mountains of Ulster. The area round these lakes is boggy and was formerly well wooded, so that we shall not be surprised to find that the main routes to the west of Ireland lay to the south of the chain—striking the Shannon at Athlone.

A similar chain of lakes extends from Killala Bay to Galway Bay—Loughs Conn, Mask, and Corrib. Castlebar, midway in the chain, thus became an important strategic point as the native Irish in Connacht were gradually forced westward by the Normans.

The bogs of the Central Plain were another important consideration in all military operations. Most of the boggy area lay west of the Shannon, but the most important area of this kind by far was the Bog of Allen. This bog embraced the districts around the upper reaches of the Boyne, the Hill of Allen, and the upper reaches of the Barrow. In great measure it constituted the natural frontier of the Pale, and for many centuries it was a safeguard to the native Irish territories of Leix and Offaly. Of course this was not one continuous marsh, but was split up by patches and ridges of dry land called "eskers." The roads even at the present day follow

these eskers, which are in effect natural raised causeways over the boggy area.

The general expanse of the Central Plain has only two real breaks of a mountainous character—as distinct from projections of the northern and southern mountain areas and the mountains along the Atlantic coast. The two breaks are (1) the Slieve Aughty, Slieve Bearnagh, and Cratloe Hills in Galway and Clare (2) and the Slieve Bloom, Keeper, and Devil's Bit ranges in Queen's County and Tipperary. The protracted independence of Thomond in the one case, and Ely, Offaly, and Leix in the other, were largely due to the protection afforded by these ranges.

In former times the following areas of the Central Plain were covered by very extensive woods: (1) The banks of the Shannon, (2) the land around the chains of lakes, (3) the stretch from Galway Bay to Lough Derg, (4) part of Louth, (5) much of the present counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny, Carlow and Queen's.

### **The Northern Mountain Region.**

In considering the two mountainous extremities of Ireland the most important thing to note is how the Central Plain could be reached through them. The regions actually were not central, not very productive as a whole, and in a great degree impassable or at least difficult to traverse. Practically all the feasible routes were river valleys, and practically all these rivers entered the sea by good harbours. Moreover, in all these river valleys the land was much more fertile than the surrounding areas. Naturally, then, these valleys have been the channels of invasion, conquest, or plantation. There are four such in the north and four more in the south.

The four northern entries are the Erne, the Foyle, the Bann and the Lagan. Between them these account for practically all the area north of the Sligo-Dundalk line. Incidentally it is appropriate to name the Erne first, because the earliest of the legendary colonies is said to have entered the country by this route. And certainly its valley has been the scene of plenty non-legendary warfare. This is not surprising, for the valley greatly surpasses in richness the neighbouring counties of

Donegal and Leitrim, and the Erne itself is a famous salmon stream.

The sea-entry of the Erne is Donegal Bay which runs in some 30 miles from the open sea, and the lowest stretch of the river itself is about eight miles long and somewhat broken by rapids. The next stretch is Lower Lough Erne—an 18-mile expansion, with further on the 10-mile expansion of Upper Lough Erne. Between the two lakes is a distance of 10 miles, and Enniskillen is situated midway, in a position of great military importance. The upper courses of the river lie among a mazy pattern of smaller lakes in the hill country of Cavan. From the west to the Erne valley there are two lateral routes; along the coast from Sligo to Ballyshannon—a most historic route, and along Lough Gill and Macnean to Enniskillen.

The Fovle entry is Lough Foyle, a 10-mile inlet. The name Foyle is only given to the river between Derry and the double town of Lifford-Strabane, a distance of 16 miles. In the 20 miles from Strabane to Omagh it is called Mourne and Strule. Omagh is a centre of numerous routes, and the Foyle has many tributary valleys in this mountainous region. Lateral routes from the Erne valley are from Ballyshannon along the coast region to Donegal and thence by the Barnesmore Gap along the Finn valley to Lifford, and another from Enniskillen by Fintona to Omagh.

The Bann measures 37 miles from the sea to Lough Neagh. It is a considerable stream but broken by a fall at Coleraine. Lough Neagh, measuring 15 miles by 10, was always naturally a very serious military feature. So many rivers drain into this great basin that the area was always a communication-centre of the first importance. To the west the valley of the Moyola and Ballinderry rivers extend so as to practically link up with those of the Foyle tributaries, Owenkillew and Camowen. To the south-west the lake receives the Blackwater which, by the Clogher valley, leads to within a day's march of Enniskillen, so complete is the network of river-valleys. The Upper Bann itself flows into the south-east angle of the lake, flowing 40 miles from the Mourne Mountains at the head of Carlingford Lough.

The last of the Ulster rivers is the Lagan, of which

Belfast Lough, well sheltered and a dozen miles long, is the sea entry. Up to Magheralin, a distance of 15 miles, the valley tends towards Lough Neagh, which is only four miles distant. Above that point to its source in Slieve Croob the river parallels the course of the Upper Bann. Strangford Lough and Carlingford Lough are two other inlets of the sea which admit of alternative means of access to the valleys of the Bann and Lagan. Lough Swilly in the north of Donegal links similarly with the Foyle valley—from Buncrana half way up that long inlet to Derry, and from Letterkenny at its head to Lifford.

Apart from the river routes enumerated, the bulk of northern Ireland, we must repeat, is mountainous, or at any rate sufficiently so to hamper appreciably the movements of armies. In addition there existed here as well as in the Central Plain extensive wooded areas, and these areas were pretty evenly distributed all over the province. As regards routes between Ulster as a whole and the Central Plain there were only two. We have already mentioned the western coast road going north from Sligo. The other was on the other flank from Dundalk to Armagh. Successive campaigns will familiarise us with both of these.

### The Southern Mountain Region.

We have stated that four approaches in the nature of river-valleys existed in the southern part of Ireland as in the northern. These were the Slaney, the Barrow-Suir basin, the Blackwater and the Lee. In addition there were a number of long, narrow, sheltered inlets on the south-westcoast of Kerry and Cork which afforded excellent anchorages. But these were too far away from the vital centre of resources, and the land in the immediate neighbourhood was mountain, forest, or bog. The head of any one of these inlets is a good fifty miles of most difficult country from Charleville, the extreme angle of the Central Plain in this direction.

Wexford Harbour is a sheltered inlet extending inland for some half a dozen miles. Then at Ferrycarrig it receives the Slaney. Here the banks rise high and steep and the channel narrows most abruptly—a miniature



" Iron Gates " in fact. Here very naturally the Norman invader built his castle to control the river itself and the road which bridged it. From Ferrycarrig the valley runs somewhat west of north to Bunclody or Newtown Barry where it pierces the Leinster Chain—one of the two passes through that range. Above Bunclody it skirts the Wicklow mountains on the west, rising on Lugnaculila at the head of the Glen of Imaal.

Along the other side of the Leinster Chain flows the Barrow, the next river we must consider. This river and the Suir both flow into Waterford Harbour, a six-mile inlet forming a fine natural harbour. As far as New Ross—20 miles from the sea—the Barrow is tidal, and just above Ross it receives the Nore, an 80-mile tributary flowing from the north-west. Actually, in mediæval times the Nore was the more important stream of the two, being less exposed to attack by the mountaineers from the east. Thus Kilkenny, the largest inland town in Ireland, grew up on the Nore. To return to the Barrow: for the 30 miles from Ross to Bagenalstown its course follows the narrow, wooded valley between the Leinster Chain and the mountainous ridges of Kilkenny, of which Brandon is by far the chief summit. At Bagenalstown the Central Plain is definitely reached. At the present day the Barrow is navigable for barges as far as Athy.

The next two rivers, the Suir flowing into Waterford Harbour and the Blackwater flowing into Youghal Harbour, can be suitably considered together—for this reason. All the mountain ranges in the south-west of Ireland run east and west with the rivers for most of their courses flowing in valleys between them. Thus the Suir backed by the Comeraghs and Galtees, and the Blackwater similarly backed by the Nagles and Boggeragh mountains, together constitute a double wet ditch and rampart covering the harbours in the south of Ireland—Waterford, Dungarvan, Youghal, Cork, Kinsale. It was thus comparatively easy for an overseas invader to maintain himself in these districts. And it is to be remembered that the rivers themselves are navigable for considerable distances, the Suir up to Carrick and the Blackwater to Cappoquin. In view of the west-east trend of these rivers the routes into the Central Plain would

have to follow passes through the mountain ranges and crossings of the rivers—hence the military value of places like Mallow, Fermoy, Lismore, Cahir, Clonmel, Carrick.

North of the Suir and east of the Galtees are the mountains of which the highest is Slievenamon. Between these and the Galtees the Suir basin trends due north into the plain, the source being in the Devil's Bit range.

The fourth of the southern entries was more limited in its influence, being in a measure overshadowed by the two preceding. Still Cork Harbour is a magnificent land-locked bay and its valley offered a suitable avenue into west Munster. Northward the chief outlet of the Lee valley was to Mallow, and eastward a natural expanse of country spreads as far as Youghal. One further point with reference to Cork Harbour must be indicated: we have said it was overshadowed in importance as an entry by some of the others. But it should be observed that this was only as an entry; once possession was definitely established the superior character of this inlet as a harbour resulted in its outstripping the others and attaining its present relative position.

To round off the survey of the Southern Mountain Region it is only necessary to indicate those areas formerly most thickly covered by forests. The Wicklow Mountains, the Galtee region and great part of Kerry were the mountain districts that were most densely wooded. Thick woods also lay long the valleys of the Slaney, Barrow, and Blackwater.

### **Social Features Influencing Warfare.**

Military operations of any definite kind were only possible after the clan system had developed to some extent by federation into larger units occupying a definite territory and with a definite community of interest: for example, about the time of establishment of the five provinces and their larger sub-divisions. All the males of military age fought when the chief went to war. Spoils, or the more definite and important sort of spoils—Tribute—was the normal recompense of victory; the life of the people being mainly pastoral and partly agricultural, with occasional trade exchanges. Such handicrafts as existed were mainly exercised by slaves taken in battle or purchased abroad.

A feature tending to make operations vague and inconclusive was the absence of towns. A territory had no "capital" in the modern sense. The chief had a residence—almost invariably a hereditary one—around which houses and buildings grew up. But these places were not centres of industry or resources or wealth in any sense. They could be abandoned without loss, and restored without trouble. In the earliest times, indeed, operations followed the natural routes of the country in successive expeditions and campaigns; but otherwise no very precise character distinguished the warfare of the times.



## CHAPTER II.

**The Norse Invasions and the Monarchy of Brian.**

THE earliest warfare in Ireland that admits of being treated of systematically as one whole is the period of the Scandinavian invasions of the ninth and tenth centuries. This period can be so treated for two main reasons—the first being that it presents a definite issue of native versus invader. This fact automatically imposes some degree of coherence. The two centuries present the broad features of a military attempt at invasion and conquest by the Norsemen, and a counter-effort at resistance by the Irish. In the long run and after a greatly-varying struggle the military victory lay with the Irish.

A second cause why the warfare of this period follows more definite lines was the growth of towns following the introduction of Christianity. These first Irish towns were practically university towns which grew up around the great monastic centres of learning. From all over western Europe students came to these great scholastic centres in vast numbers, until the largest establishments must have reached a population of ten thousand, while the number of centres with a few thousand souls must have been very great indeed. And, of course, while these scholastic towns were primarily centres of learning, they were also necessarily centres of agriculturally productive areas, of trade, and of manufactures. Thus to an invader they presented a definite objective of material value—a feature lacking in the earlier domestic feuds.

**The Norsemen.**

We may use the generic term "Norsemen" to describe all the invaders from the Scandinavian countries. In point of fact, the earlier inroads upon Ireland were principally the work of Norwegians and the later ones of Danes, but the military character and methods of both were

the same, and one general description will apply indifferently to both. The Norsemen were almost inevitably impelled to a career of plunder and conquest. As population in the northern countries increased the natural resources of those countries were no longer sufficient for their needs. The milder climates and richer countries further south seemed to offer a fit sphere of expansion. Naturally, too, it was the younger, bolder, and more enterprising who set out on a career of conquest—and hence there was a high standard of fighting quality among the Norsemen wherever they went. Another cause of this career of conquest was the fact that the Norsemen were Pagan. At this period the bond of a common religion had to some extent abated the frequency of wars between the Christian nations—hence the stoppage of Irish raids on the Continent after the coming of St. Patrick. But the Norseman was of a different religion to the inhabitants of the invaded lands; and of a religion, moreover, that was to his mind more suitable for a warrior. Hence he was driven to a career of conquest by stress of his social and economic conditions, and the one possible deterrent in that age—Christianity—was inoperative in his case.

The Norsemen were essentially sea-farers, as are their descendants to this day. The sea at home was a source of food, for they were all fishermen; and it was also their only highway to foreign countries—and, indeed, the main way of communication between parts of their own territories. But for quite half the year their invasions were prevented by the severity of the winter in the northern seas. The winter began about October in the Baltic, and it did not again become navigable before May by reason of the ice; but for a considerable part of the intervening time the north wind favoured their sailings to Ireland, and in favourable circumstances the voyage did not occupy more than a few days. Hence the frequency of the inroads in any given year, and the power to send for and receive reinforcements without any remarkable delay.

The Norsemen, however, were in great measure independent of wind, because their vessels were galleys. Sails were, indeed, only used on the open sea; near land the oars were the method of propulsion. The ships were nearly flat-bottomed and had a very shallow draught,

being thus capable of going far up rivers and estuaries. The bulwarks were of wicker-work, so that all weight was below and they were excellent sea-boats besides being light and easily launched and beached. The largest ships contained about 100 men apiece. Drawn up above high-water mark the galleys formed a rough camp and base—the most mobile base possible, in fact.

In point of tactics and equipment the Norsemen did not differ materially from the Irish in most respects, but they were partial to the battle-axe as a weapon. In one respect, however, they possessed a very decided advantage over their opponents; this was the fact that large numbers of them wore iron armour. It is not unreasonable to put down many of their initial successes to this superiority of equipment. The ordinary armament of the Irish comprised light javelin for throwing, a longer and stouter spear for thrusting, and swords. For defensive purposes they carried a shield of wickerwork covered with hide. The battle was usually a *melée*, the leaders on either side singling one another out. Very commonly they were men of greater stature and physical strength, more skill-at-arms, and higher courage than the rest. Scope for generalship was not very great, minor stratagems and surprises being the usual form taken by superior leadership. But as other aspects of war developed so did generalship, too.

The two centuries of Norse invasions of Ireland can be divided into four pretty clearly-defined periods: (a) The first spasmodic inroads, which largely served as so many reconnaissances in force; (b) the conquest by Thorkils or Turgesius, which seems to have been as thorough as any conquest of that time; (c) the recovery of the Irish after the death of Turgesius; (d) the subsequent recovery of the foreigners, which, however, was not a purely military matter. The rise of Brian Boru and his establishment of a centralised monarchy resting on military power is an episode suitable to be treated rather apart from the more precise consideration of the Norse invasions proper.

### (a) The Earlier Invasions.

This preliminary phase began in the closing years of the eighth century and lasted about forty years. These

first inroads furnished at once an incentive to further efforts and an accumulated mass of information on which those further and more formidable efforts were based. It was ascertained that Ireland was by nature far richer than their home countries, that it had in addition important, definite prizes, and that there was no really strong, centralised government capable of successfully combating such power as they could employ. It should be observed how circumstances greatly favoured the early inroads. In order to facilitate travel to and from, many of the scholastic towns we have described were built on inlets of the sea, and the rest at suitable points in the river valleys. In such situations they were naturally exposed to the sea, and thus were the scenes of the first attacks of the Norsemen. In fact, they were practically the first places to be attacked. And by reason of the peaceful character of their scholastic inhabitants they were the places least capable of resistance. After the first few pillaging exploits in these centres it would become clear that they were very desirable objects of plunder, because the value of sacred plate and ornaments, etc., found in the churches and monasteries was very great. It is not very surprising then that the first raids of the Norsemen were almost entirely directed to securing the plunder of the monastic or scholastic towns and settlements.

Practically every one of the chief Irish monastic establishments was attacked and pillaged more than once during these earlier Norse inroads. The first raid of all was in 795 when St. Columkille's church on the Island of Lambay was plundered, and this was followed three years later by the pillage of Innispatrick, off Skerries, a little further north. These were, however, carried out only by small parties in groups of three or four ships, and it was another decade before the plundering raids began in earnest on a big scale.

In 807 the island of Inishmurray, off the coast of Sligo, was ravaged, and a detachment penetrated inland into Roscommon and devastated a great portion of that district. In 811 an attempt was made in Kerry but was defeated. In 818 landings were made at Howth and Wexford; in 820 at Cork, and in 822 a general succession of raids was made on the whole of the southern coast. In 824 Bangor, one of the biggest scholastic settlements

in the country, was utterly destroyed, and Dundalk and Moville were also visited. In 826 Lusk was pillaged and a foray made into Ossory. Every year after this the raids continued, and in 830 Armagh, the residence of the Primate and ecclesiastical centre of the country, was raided three times. Clearly now it was only a question of time until the complete reduction of the country would be attempted.

As has been said, the native Irish at this period were hopelessly divided and had in great measure lost their





warlike prowess. Besides, they were not a sea-faring people and in consequence were blinded about impending attacks. The raiders landed, plundered, and got away to their ships before there was any chance of collecting a force to attack them. In these circumstances it is not surprising that the number of victories registered by the Irish in this period was small. Still victories over the invaders were gained—at Wexford and in Lecale and Limerick, but in the main the balance of success was heavily in favour of the Norsemen.

It will be noticed that the Norse invaders always used the natural sea-entries into the country and on the east coast four of their favourite entrances retain the Norse termination “fjord”—Strangford, Carlingford, Wexford, and Waterford. The number and spreading of these afforded such a mobile over-sea enemy a great choice of attack which later was utilised to the fullest. It is said that long before Turgesius carried out his systematic invasion—for seventeen years, in fact—he had taken a prominent part in the inroads. This systematic invasion we shall consider now.

### **(b) Conquest by Turgesius.**

It is impossible to fix to a year or two the precise date of the subjugation of Ireland by Turgesius—it was somewhere about the year 835, and his dominion lasted about ten years. At the time of his coming the rival princes of Aileach and Cashel were disputing the Ard-Ri-ship, and in consequence the country was, if possible, more defenceless than usual. Turgesius or Thorkills—as was probably his actual Norse name—made a comprehensive and well-conceived attack.

His main force consisted of 120 ships in two divisions—60 entering the Boyne and 60 the Liffey. Turgesius thus struck right at the heart of the country—into the two entries of the Central Plain, where there was no longer an Irish monarchy to defend the Mensal land. This striking the decisive blow in the most vital direction corroborates the stories that Turgesius had been engaged in many lesser expeditions before this, and had in consequence carefully matured his plan of conquest. Assuming that the 120 ships of Turgesius were of the largest type used by the Norsemen we get his strength at 12,000 men;

so that, in any event, we shall be reasonably safe in putting it at 10,000 or so. Especially is this the case when we remember that the great main invasion of the eastern gap was supported by minor diversions at Limerick, Waterford, Dundalk, and other points. Manifestly 10,000 choice warriors, of maximum strategic mobility and yielding implicit obedience to a capable leader, formed an instrument of conquest altogether too formidable to be successfully withstood by the demoralised Irish of that time. The system adopted by Turgesius was such as to obtain the greatest result with the means at his disposal. It can be explained very briefly.

The division of the fleet which entered the Liffey ascended as far as the slight elevation on which Dublin Castle now stands, *i.e.*, as far as there was good access by water. On that eminence they built a strong fort which became the nucleus of a permanent settlement. At the time it served as a secure base of operations against the hinterland. A subsidiary base which also became a permanent settlement was formed at Waterford—a centre affording more alternative routes of water-entry into Central Ireland than any other—by the Suir, the Barrow, and the Nore.

But perhaps what showed the real greatness of Turgesius more than anything else was his selection of a site for his capital. His headquarters or capital, whichever we prefer to call it, was established practically where Athlone now stands at the southern extremity of Lough Ree. Thither Turgesius came in the first instance to plunder Clonmacnoise, one of the greatest seats of learning and ecclesiastical civilisation in mediæval Ireland, but with the eye of a great strategist he saw that for a king of Ireland no other situation was at all equal to this. It was almost the geometric centre of the country, and besides had, from his point of view, unrivalled facilities for communication in all directions. Accordingly he made Clonmacnoise his centre of activity and maintained a fleet on Lough Ree to make his position secure. A similar inland station was established at Lyndwashill or Magheralin on the shores of Lough Neagh—another inland sea with numerous waterways branching out from it in all directions.

With the civil administration of Turgesius this record

has nothing to do. It suffices to say that it comprised free quarters for his warriors, regular payment of taxes, and supervision—of the ecclesiastical establishments—then it must be remembered, the only centres of education and thought, and which, of course, were hostile to his rule. In short, efficiency seems to have been the keynote of the government of Turgesius, and perhaps had luck favoured him he might have equalled the achievements of Rollo and Rurik.

But it must not be supposed that the Irish calmly submitted to all the Norse exactions and regulations. On the contrary every year of the rule of Turgesius was marked by fighting of a sort in different parts of the country. And though the Norsemen won most of the fights and maintained their general grip unshaken the fortune of war was not always on their side. The ablest opponent of Turgesius was Niall, the provincial King of Ulster. This prince maintained the struggle determinedly, attacking the invaders according as he had forces capable of doing so. Lough Neagh and its shores was naturally the scene of much of this fighting; and in 845 Niall defeated in the Finn valley a force that had just landed in Lough Swilly and marched across. It was in this year that Malachi, King of Meath, chanced to get Turgesius into his power and killed him by drowning him in Lough Owel. The circumstances of this event are obscured by legends, but the fact is beyond dispute.

### (c) Recovery of the Irish.

After their great leader's death the Norsemen abandoned their settlement on Lough Ree, moving up the Shannon for a considerable distance to about Carrick, and then fighting their way north-eastward to Sligo where a fleet had gathered to bear them away. For naturally the death of Turgesius was the signal for an uprising against the invaders, and their inland settlements were no longer secure. Indeed the edifice built up with so much thoroughness and skill collapsed with its builder. After him the Norsemen never had another leader with the same authority or the same capacity, and in the years following his death most of the contests favoured the Irish.



This Irish recovery embraces a period of over sixty years—up to the year 910 or so. It was a period of Irish aggression and Norse resistance, until eventually the invaders were practically confined to the three ports of Dublin, Waterford, and Limerick—and even Dublin passed from their hands in 897 for fifteen years. In passing it is to be remarked that the three towns the Norsemen retained were the three best entries into the Central Plain.

The causes of the Irish recovery were various—the principal being that Turgesius was gone. Another was that to some extent they had been beaten into proficiency and no longer contended under such disadvantages as at first. And again the invaders now quarrelled among themselves: for instance, about ten years after the death of Turgesius a great naval battle took place in Carlingford Lough between two of their fleets. Finally reinforcements on a big scale from overseas no longer came: Harold Fair-hair was at this time busy consolidating the Norse power at home where were absorbed the energy of the warriors who might otherwise have fought in Ireland.

#### (d) Subsequent Recovery of the Norsemen.

The first sign of returning strength among the Norsemen in Ireland was the advent to Waterford of important reinforcements for that settlement in 912, and Waterford received a still further addition of strength with Regnal in 915. Thus strengthened the Waterford Norsemen carried out repeated forays all over Munster and there were many fierce encounters in that province with varying success. In these struggles one noteworthy figure on the Irish side is Flaherty, the warlike Abbot of the monastery on Scatterry Island in the Shannon estuary off Kilrush—the most outstanding Irish example of the military prelates of the Middle Ages. It is remarkable that we hear of no increase in the Norse power at Limerick for some time after this. Presumably the warrior abbot, though he may possibly have held the keys of Heaven a trifle loosely, kept too firm a grip on this key of Ireland. And just a thousand years later another invader encountered a warrior prelate on the same Shannon estuary.

About the same time as the Waterford recovery we find a similar Norse recovery at Dublin, headed by Sitric. It would be more precise to call it a re-occupation of the site, because the Irish merely drove the Norsemen to their ships and razed the buildings. Neither now nor for long after could they bring themselves to settle in a town—least of all in a coast town. Hence when the Norsemen returned there was no opposition and Dublin sprang up again. This time they built an entrenched camp at Confoy, near Leixlip, commanding the passage of the Liffey on the edge of the Bog of Allen—a well-selected outpost in fact, for the purpose of covering Dublin. Niall Glundubh, the Ard-Ri, collected a strong force and attacked the camp at Confoy but was repulsed with great slaughter, with the result that for a long time the Dublin garrison was able to continue with impunity its pillaging excursions. In 917 Niall made a second attempt against Dublin. This time the Norsemen did not wait to be attacked in their fortifications but marched out and totally defeated the Irish up the river near Kilmainham, where the Ard-Ri was slain with great numbers of his chiefs and men. For several years after this Dublin was immune except so far as the successful attack on a foraging expedition from time to time.

It is to be remarked that although there was at this time a great *local* recovery of power in both Dublin and Waterford, yet in neither was there any sign of definite Norse predominance over the entire country; indeed, the idea of extending their rule does not seem to have been seriously entertained by the Norse princes of those cities. But about the year 920 Thomar appears in command of the settlement at Limerick—now renewing its enterprises that Abbot Flaherty was no more. Limerick—well up on the greatest natural artery of the country—was more fitted to dominate Ireland than either Dublin or Waterford, now that Tara had lost its old significance, and Thomar appears not to have been altogether blind to the advantages of the position. Once more the fleets of the Norsemen appear on the Shannon and Lough Ree, and once more the inland territories are ravaged. Even so there is no longer the same unity of purpose and control to be found in the case of Turgesius. Thomar, in Limerick was better placed than Sitric or Regnal, and

consequently "got more value for his money," so to speak. But no more than they did he pursue any comprehensive scheme of conquest: his enterprises—though more extended—were strictly local in character.

During this period one soldier of the first rank appears on the Irish side—Muirchertagh of the Leather Cloaks, the son of Niall Glundubh. This curious surname arose from his having clad a thousand picked warriors in leather mantles for a great hostage-levying circuit of Ireland in the winter of 939. This special equipment of men for a winter campaign was an altogether new departure and found the rest of the country quite unprepared, with the result that a big haul of hostages was collected from the Dublin Norsemen and the three southern provinces. Muirchertagh, whose whole military career stamps him as head and shoulders above his contemporaries, was the successor designate of the Ard-Ri Donough, who was wise enough to leave his general to do all the fighting.

The campaigns of Muirchertagh extended over some 20 years until his death in 943. His earlier operations were confined to Ulster where the invaders were active from Lough Erne to Newry. But the northern province was never permanently encroached on in his time; and in 936 he marched on Dublin. This year the Dubliners had sailed under Anlaff to England where they were defeated at Brunanburgh, so that the defence of the city was weakened. Muirchertagh stormed and sacked the town, expelled the garrison and levelled the place—subsequently making another hostage-taking round of the south. A second and even more important counter-stroke was made by him against the Norsemen in 940—one quite unique in the history of these wars.

At this period the Irish Norsemen no longer received a continual stream of reinforcements from their countries of origin. But they received temporary reinforcements from their settlements in the Hebrides and the west coast of Scotland. These settlements it was that Muirchertagh attacked and pillaged, thus striking a formidable blow at the Norse power in general. This is apparently the only example of an Irish overseas expedition at this epoch. Moreover it was practically Muirchertagh's last exploit. He fell in battle at Ardee in 943, an encounter to which he

had marched south on hearing that the Dublin Danes were heading for Armagh. His son Donal later became Ard-Ri and, profiting by his father's example, largely made good his power by his fleets on the Westmeath Lakes.

### **The Centralised Monarchy of Brian Boru.**

We have said that there was a recovery of the Norse—or Danish as it mainly was then—power during the tenth century. But it will have been clear from the narrative that it was no longer anything like the power wielded by Turgesius. The numbers of Danish settlers had been considerably increased, and the Danish seaport towns had greatly increased their importance; but there was at no time a question of their subduing the country. They might conceivably become an important factor in the country's life, but they could never expect to be the chief factor. Indeed, if the country had become centralised and developed without interruption these Danish seaports would have supplied an important requirement—steady international relations. The Irish were not a maritime people, but the Danes, who were becoming assimilated, would supply this defect.

They would also prove a source of cohesion and power if once subordinated to a central national monarchy. Their settlements ringed the coast round and they dwelt in walled towns. Consequently no subsequent invader would ever get as easy an entrance as the Norsemen had got when they came first. The walled seaports would serve as centres of resistance to engage the invader until the entire forces of the country could be moved against him. It is towards such a condition of affairs that Brian Boru's career tended.

Brian was not merely "a younger son," but the youngest of the twelve sons of Kennedy, son of Lorcan, son of Lactna, chiefs of the Clan Dalgais. The patrimony of these princes was the present county of Clare, and they often made good their claims on the Munster kingship. Thus did Mahon, the eldest brother of Brian, in 968, after defeating a mixed opposing force of Irish and Limerick Danes at Solohod. A few years later his then defeated rivals murdered him, and Brian, then 35 years old, succeeded to the chieftainship and claimed the

kingship. The ten intervening brothers had died in battle—except one who was a churchman.

Brian asserted his claims with great energy. Ivar, the ruler of Limerick, was the one of the assassins nearest his vengeance, and he fled to Scatterry Island. Collecting a fleet, Brian attacked the island and practically exterminated its defenders, the survivors taking refuge with Donovan, another of the assassins, in West Limerick. Him Brian also defeated and slew; and later in a fierce battle near Macroom he overthrew and killed Molloy, the last of the gang. Two years of successful campaigning had made Brian master of the southern half of Ireland, for Leinster was quite incapable of resisting his arms. This was about the year 985.

It was apparently about this time that he formed the design of becoming King of Ireland, and in this his familiarity with the Norse settlement of Limerick and the military methods of its rulers stood him in good stead. He assembled 300 vessels and sailed up the Shannon to Lough Allen—where the northern mountains begin—devastating the Central Plain on both sides of the river. But as yet he was unable to dethrone the Ard-Ri Malachi. In 998, however, he managed to make that monarch divide the country and formally recognise him as sole King of the southern half, which meant handing over the splendid appanage of the Dublin Danish monarchy. Now this last power had recently got an accretion of strength and concerted an alliance against Brian with the King of Leinster. But Malachi abode by his treaty and marched to the aid of Brian.

The southern monarch marched across the northern part of his territory and was joined by Malachi en route. The Danes marched south along the mountains to join forces with the Leinster King—a thoroughly faulty flank march with a mountain wilderness in their rear. It is not in front of such a general as Brian that this kind of thing is done with impunity. Catching them in “*flagrante delicto*” that monarch destroyed them utterly in the foothills near Dunlavin (Glenmama) where the cavalry they employed on this occasion was useless. Following up his victory he marched to Dublin and pillaged it, and then returned on his traces to ravage Leinster. Thereafter, until Clontarf, his hegemony was never questioned in the



south. A few years later he resumed the contest with Malachi, and in 1002 compelled him to abdicate.

### Military Basis of Brian's Power.

Brian's royal seat of Kincora, near Killaloe, was not unfavourably situated for the purpose of supervising the administration of the whole country. It was fairly central, especially as it stood on the Shannon, the great main artery of the country. And Brian—a victor over the Norsemen—naturally maintained strong fleets on the river; while at Athlone he possessed a centre from which he could over-awe Connacht and Meath. He improved roads, bridges, and communications generally, and all important points of passage on the rivers were secured by forts of earth or stone. Similar works defended the Suir, Shannon, Lough Foyle, and similar approaches to the country.

Another method of consolidating his power was his "circuits" or royal progresses. Usually he followed the Shannon to Athlone, thence overland to Sligo, along the coast to Donegal, across Tirowen, and thence southward along the east coast. Sometimes he marched from Athlone to Dundalk and Armagh—then, as always, the great ecclesiastical centre. On none of these circuits was there serious fighting; but two partial revolts—in Ulster and Ossory—were suppressed by his eldest son, Murrough, a captain of outstanding ability. In general the country prospered under Brian's rule and the Danish trading cities brought in rich tribute of wines, etc. Eventually the question of tributes caused another coalition of the Danes and Leinstermen in the year 1013.

This time the Norsemen made a most vigorous effort—assembling their kin from Shetlands, Orkneys, and Hebrides under Sigurd; the forces of Broder from the Isle of Man; auxiliaries from Cornwall, and 1,000 men from Norway in complete chain mail. It seems probable that both Sigurd and Broder had some designs on becoming King of Ireland on this occasion, like their countryman Sweyn in England a year or so before. Brian received contingents from all Ireland except the extreme north, and an auxiliary Scottish force under Donald, the Steward of Mar—anxious to deal a blow at the Orkneyan Earl Sigurd.

There was no complicated military operation in this decisive campaign. The Norsemen and their Leinster allies and all auxiliaries concentrated at Dublin. Brian's strategy, though quite simple, was well worthy of that great old soldier: the great rapidity of his march to Dublin, and his ravaging of all the outlying Danish possessions around the city, effectually prevented any inroad and forced a battle at once. The story of that battle is well known—it broke the Norse power for ever.

It also—though the fact is not so widely realised—destroyed all hope of a strong, centralised Irish kingdom. Brian, his son Murrough, and his grandson Turlough, all fell on the field and the monarchy fell with them. Moreover, Brian in the first instance had been a usurper, the first Ard-Ri of his race, and a host of minor princelings made haste to emulate his rise to the supreme power. But the worthless and futile careers of these only emphasise all the more what a giant was Brian. With his legislative and administrative acts we are not concerned; but he seems to have possessed every quality of a general in a high degree. Practically invariably successful in battle, he was no less so in turning the natural features of the country to military advantage.

We are fortunately spared the need of examining the degrading century and a half of "kings with opposition" that followed Clontarf. It is sufficient to say that the disunion and demoralisation then engendered left the country an easy prey for the Normans.

## CHAPTER III.

**Ireland Under Norman Dominion.**

THE military history of Ireland is a continuity. The invasions of the Norsemen were conditioned by the geographical features of the country—the scholastic towns along the main routes. The net result of the Norse invasions and settlements was the establishment at the chief entries of thriving seaport towns not over-friendly to the people of the hinterland. This meant upon the whole, with respect to the Normans—who came a hundred and fifty years later, that better means of entry than formerly existed, and these were duly taken advantage of. We shall see later on—in pursuance of the continuity—how the Norman castle-system served as the basis of an intrusive power whose grip, though often partly, was never wholly loosened.

The Normans of the 12th century were exceedingly formidable adversaries. They had the same desire for power and plunder as the Norsemen, backed by an astonishing tradition of conquest—from England to Jerusalem. In addition to this material sanction they had an equally strong moral sanction by virtue of their being at this time the strongest bulwarks of the Church. Thus in Christian countries abroad opinion generally would now favour the invaders rather than the Irish. But the great advantage possessed by the Normans was their superior military system which it is necessary to describe somewhat fully.

**The Norman Military System.**

The service of the Knight in the feudal system had the military merit of opening a career to talent—the better soldier a man was the more quickly he advanced in repute and power. The fact that higher military command was confined to men of gentle birth was inseparable from the



social conditions of the time. In respect to the technical military side the Normans had profited by their very varied experience of war against all sorts of opponents—English, Franks, Greeks, and Saracens, assimilating the best points of each and working all into a system suitable to their own conditions.

A Norman army had as its nucleus a relatively small number of heavy cavalry, knights, esquires and men-at-arms—man and horse both in full suit of chain-mail. The rider wore shirt, hood, sleeves, breeches, hose, and sabatons with helmet and shield: his offensive arms were a powerful lance, sword and dagger. The mount (destrier) was a heavy Flemish horse led spare on the march, the rider then using a hack. There might also be lighter horse—unarmoured or half-armoured, bearing similar offensive weapons. The vast bulk of the infantry were archers—some crossbowmen—and the practice of archery was compulsory on all males and rigorously carried out. In addition to his bow and sheaf of arrows the archer carried a short sword. In the Irish wars great use was made of a sort of mounted infantryman—the “Hobiler-archer” so-called from the “hobby” or sturdy pony which served him as a mount. A Norman battle, whether offensive or defensive, was opened by the archers who discharged showers of arrows on the foe; then when the latter was in confusion the mailed horsemen delivered a charge which usually settled the business.

In the broader aspect of the art of war as practised by the Normans the system of castles was the outstanding feature: a conquered territory was occupied and held by the building of these. We have seen how in a less developed age Brian Boru had pursued a policy very similar. But with the Normans the system reached perfection: a castle secured every point of strategic or tactical or economic importance. Every useful passage over an obstacle was closed and every town dominated by one of them. The size and strength of the castle was proportionate to the importance of the place—indeed, some of those in Ireland were merely exceptionally powerful earthworks. These castles belonged to the King and were held from him—they were *not* private possessions, though in course of time a large number fell into private ownership. Each castle served as a

defence to halt the march of an army, as a base where supplies could be collected and whence raids could start, and as a refuge when the foragers were compelled to retreat. In this way a territory was dominated by a system of powerful fortified posts with relatively small garrisons—200 men was a very strong garrison. Individually each castle was a very tough nut to crack, and to reduce the entire number was a task practically beyond a feudal army: they would be able to hold out longer than the besiegers could hold together. Sieges, however, frequently took place, and for this purpose the Normans employed the engines formerly used for this purpose by the Romans—battering-rams, movable towers, catapults, and ballistas.

Now, it will be quite clear from the foregoing that the Normans as far as warlike science and organisation went were a long way ahead of the Irish. The latter had in this respect practically stood still—they were at the same stage of military development as a century and a half before: from the Danes they had acquired a partiality for the battle-axe as a weapon and much expertness in its use, but that was all. But while in the Danes they had contended with an enemy of more or less the same degree of military development, in their new opponents they faced an enemy representing the best military methods of that day. Could the levy of clansmen be expected to stand the charge of the mailed knights where the latter could ride home? Could they close 200 yards on expert archers unless the archers were unsteadied for some reason? Could they be expected to carry a 70-foot wall by storm? They could not. Only skilful choice of ground, surprise, greatly superior numbers, or the like could be expected to give them victory over the Normans. When we consider these points we may perhaps judge King Roderic a little less severely. The odds against him were very heavy and such as only a great general could have coped with—no amount of “firm action” would have availed him unless backed by military skill.

### **The Normans Make Good Their Footing.**

There is no need to outline the career of Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster. He was capable and

energetic in peace and war, but beyond that it is hard to say much good of him. When banished he appealed to Henry II. of England—then in France—to reinstate him, promising to become his vassal. This was in 1167. Henry's own hands were full, but he gave Dermot a letter authorising him to enlist any of his subjects who were willing to assist him; and such in plenty Dermot found along the Welsh Marches. His most considerable adherent was Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, while the other leaders were typical Norman gentlemen adventurers of the time—with no patrimony but their swords and harness.

When Dermot was assured of Norman aid he returned to Ireland and took up his residence at Ferns as usual. In Leinster itself he was not an unpopular monarch, and was able to count on plenty of adherents. His first Norman allies to arrive were 30 knights, 60 men-at-arms, 300 archers under Robert FitzStephen: the next day came Maurice Prendergast with 10 more knights and 60



archers. All these landed at Bannow Bay in the south of Wexford where they were joined without delay by Dermot and 500 clansmen; and the entire force marched on Wexford. The townsmen repelled an assault, then opened negotiations, and finally attached themselves to Dermot, thus putting at his disposal a good harbour. Dermot now felt strong enough to venture beyond the mountains and raided into Ossory. The Ard-Ri, Roderic O'Connor, marched against him but negotiated instead of fighting: presumably he was impressed by the strong intrenchments thrown up under the directions of Fitz-Stephen. The King of Leinster was recognised formally, but ordered to dismiss his Norman auxiliaries. His answer was the arrival of Maurice FitzGerald with 10 men-at-arms, 30 light horse, and 100 archers. Thus reinforced Dermot marched to Dublin and received tribute from its Danish ruler, Asculf MacThorkils—though only outside the walls. This time a judicious alliance with the Prince of Thomond against the Ard-Ri had ensured the Leinster monarch a free hand.

Such was the first campaign of Dermot and his Normans—of whom the total strength had been 600 of all arms. The Normans had by it secured a strong and extensive natural bridge-head—the present county of Wexford—which contained ample resources, a good harbour, and a good route into the interior of the country. Their own base was Milford Haven just opposite to Wexford and a very short distance away, and they enjoyed the unchallenged control of the sea. In Ireland Dermot's territory was far removed from that of any other native prince of importance, and his new auxiliaries had already acquired very high prestige. In the circumstances it was natural to find him during the spring of 1170 urging on Strongbow—who had collected a considerable force in Wales—to come over in person and clinch the business. He prepared to do so.

In May, Raymond Fitzgerald, "Le Gros," his best soldier, landed in Waterford Harbour with 10 knights and 70 archers and fortified a strong post several miles below Waterford. The men of Waterford and the Deisi attacked him in great force, but the strong rampart and the bowmen in combination inflicted a bloody repulse on them—a circumstance to be pondered by those who

condemn King Roderic off-hand for not attacking FitzStephen's intrenchments at Ferns the year before. Raymond held his ground for three months until Strongbow came with 200 knights and 1,200 infantry. Waterford was then attacked and carried, the storming-breach being the result of the quick military eye of Raymond. No sooner had Waterford fallen than news came that Roderic was encamped at Clondalkin with a great force and that Asculf's Danes had formed an alliance with him. Strongbow and Dermot left a garrison in Waterford and marched to Ferns.

Now Roderic at Clondalkin completely blocked the route to Dublin by the Central Plain—skirting the western edge of the Wicklow Mountains; and he was certainly far superior in numbers although the invaders would possibly total 250 knights or so and about 1,500 archers plus several thousands of Leinster clansmen. But Roderic and Asculf had no precise information, and it was decided to turn the flank of the Irish by a surprise march through the Wicklow Mountains and along the coast. This proved a brilliant success. Roderic was left without an enemy and negotiations were opened under the walls. While they went on Raymond pushed into the city with some troops and secured possession of it after a confused conflict. Asculf fled oversea and Roderic decamped after a few skirmishes.

With Waterford and Dublin and all the intervening country in their hands the invaders' position was now very much stronger than it had been the previous year; but early in 1171 the death of Dermot MacMurrough complicated things very much. It had been arranged that Strongbow was to succeed him as King of Leinster and the native chiefs balked at this idea. Taking advantage of this the Archbishop of Dublin, St. Lawrence O'Toole, worked up a coalition of Irish chiefs while Asculf came with a fleet to surprise Dublin. For a time the Norman affairs looked serious enough and the Wexfordmen compelled the surrender of FitzStephen's castle of Ferry-carriæ. But the main operations were ill-concealed: Asculf's attack was beaten off with signal slaughter—and the last Danish King of Dublin was taken and put to death. In the battle fell the Orkneyan Jon the Furious, the last of the Berserker champions. Later Roderic's investment



of the city was broken by a brilliant sortie—again executed by Raymond le Gros. Roderic's forces dispersed, and the Normans had made good their footing.

### **Extension of the Norman Sway.**

Norman power spread over Ireland very gradually—not at all as fast as might reasonably have been expected from the experience of the first few years. One important reason for this was that for a period of 300 years after the first invasion Ireland was largely a side issue of the English kings, whose policy during those centuries was continental. Thus Ireland was largely left to be looked after by individual barons whose interests were not always united. Only three English kings at this time visited Ireland in person : Henry II., his son John, and then after two hundred years Richard II. The absence of a proper supreme direction afforded opportunity for civil strife among the invading lords themselves, and this also naturally delayed the march of conquest. But it is open to question whether the delay arising from this cause was enough to counterbalance the assistance afforded by strife among the native Irish chiefs.

Still, having said so much, it is none the less possible to set forth the broad outlines of the military expansion of the Normans in Ireland. Their method envisaged two fundamental principles, consolidation of their existing gains, and opportunist extension of their sphere of influence. Naturally the two reacted on each other, but it is simplest to take them in that order even though they went forward simultaneously. Accordingly we shall take first :

#### **(a) Consolidation of the First Possessions.**

Once they had made their footing secure in the old Kingdom of Leinster the Normans began working in a systematic manner to obtain regular control of the most important areas of the country. From the commencement Dublin was marked out as the capital, although Waterford continued to be largely used for receiving troops, supplies, etc. This was because the Bristol Channel was the normal English base before the conquest of Wales. Dublin was selected because it was far more central and

because it was situated in an angle of the great Central Plain which, as we have emphasised, was the vital area of Ireland. Into Dublin a steady stream of settlers trickled, and into other towns in a less degree. These were largely English, Welsh, and Flemish: after the start the pure-blooded Normans were proportionally fewer, though they supplied most of the military men.

The proper securing of Dublin and the Central Plain was entrusted by Henry II. to Hugh de Lacy, the most far-seeing and statesman-like of all the Norman barons who settled in Ireland. De Lacy showed his statesmanship by cultivating friendly relations with the Irish chiefs of Meath, and leaving them unmolested in the poor and difficult territory around the Westmeath Lakes. He displayed his military grasp of affairs in that he was probably the greatest castle-builder of his day; and he proceeded to stud the country to the north and west of Dublin with strong castles, thus making a practically impregnable defensive zone around the capital and definitely ensuring control of the territory. This territory comprised most of the present county of Meath with parts of Westmeath, King's County, Kildare and Dublin—1,200 square miles of the richest land in Ireland. A study of De Lacy's castle-building will at one glance give us a comprehensive grasp of this feature of Norman strategy. The Boyne was fixed upon as the most suitable military frontier, and was secured from the sea up by castles at Slane, Ardraccon near Navan, Trim and Kinnegad:





leftward the line was prolonged by the castle at Durrow half-a-dozen miles south of the Westmeath Lakes. Kells, eight miles from Ardracran, was a strong outwork pushed forward towards the hills of Cavan, and Skreen, five miles south-east of Navan, was centrally placed to reinforce Trim, Ardracran or Slane, besides being a connecting link with the second line. This second line was a semi-circle between the Liffey and the sea at half a dozen miles from the city—the castles being at Castleknock, Santry, and Clontarf. And Dublin itself was a strong walled town. None of these castles was over a dozen miles from the next one to it, and it is unnecessary to emphasise the strength of such a system in the conditions of Irish warfare at that day. Subsequently another line of castles was established further south along the Bog of Allen and the Barrow by Kilkea, Castledermot, Carlow and Leighlin, with Tullow to the east watching the pass by Newtownbarry or Bunclody and commanding the passage of the Slaney.

Trim Castle was De Lacy's masterpiece and the following description will convey an idea of what a mighty fortress it was: "The castle consists of a lofty keep, which rises to a height of over seventy feet, standing in the midst of a triangular enclosure of some three acres, the curtain wall surrounding the whole being defended at almost equal intervals by ten circular flanking towers. The great tower or donjon . . . is rectangular in form each side measuring sixty-four feet. At midway, each of the side walls is flanked by square towers about twenty by twenty-four feet in dimensions. Thus the whole structure produces a figure of twenty sides. At the angles of the parapet of the keep four turrets of about sixteen feet are placed . . . from every possible point of vantage missiles could be projected in case of necessity, by the garrison on their assailants. These provisions, in addition to the immense thickness of the walls, and the great strength of the gates and fortifications, made the castle practically impregnable. The outer fortifications of the castle, running along the right bank of the Boyne, were formerly washed by the waters of the river, while the deep moat that extended along the outer sides of the curtain walls could be flooded by means of the tributary stream." Truly De Lacy left little to chance, and his castle-strategy

made good the Norman grip on the Central Plain. Nor was the plain ever recovered fully by the Irish in the succeeding centuries despite civil wars and divided counsels among the settlers.

### (b) Extension of the Norman Power.

#### (1) In Munster.

The progress of Norman expansion is most easily grasped if we consider the several provinces in succession,



taking them in the order of times at which the first operations were undertaken against each. But it is to be remembered that actually the conquest was gradual and piecemeal, and going on simultaneously in the different parts of the country. We have seen that the Normans within a few years secured military control of practically what is now the province of Leinster—or large portions of the old provinces of Meath and Leinster. From the nature of the case Munster was the next district to be tackled: it was nearest in point of distance to the invaders' bases in Ireland and across channel, it was in great measure isolated from the rest of the country—entirely so once castles began to be erected along the Shannon, it had good avenues of approach with plenty of fertile territory adjoining them. Considering all these factors there is nothing surprising in finding the Normans gradually creeping westward along the south coast from their great base at Waterford. Castles were built at Dungarvan, Youghal, Lismore and Cork, thus providing many alternative jumping-off points.

The hero of all the earlier expeditions of the Normans in Munster was Raymond le Gros. Raymond was the idol of the soldiers and in consequence envied by the other Normans of the ruling class: for this reason there were changes in his status from time to time, threats of mutiny by the men, temporary absences of the favourite commander and what not. The military record is this:

In 1173 he made a great foray through Ossory to Lismore and devastated the country around, collecting vast quantities of spoil. To carry this away a fleet of vessels from Waterford had come up the Blackwater, and all the plunder except 4,000 head of cattle and sheep was put on board. The convoy was intercepted off Youghal by the Norsemen from Cork and at the same time MacCarthy, Prince of Desmond, marched to overthrow the land raiders. The Normans won the sea-fight and Raymond with his horsemen struck MacCarthy on the march, checked him and secured the escape of his herds. Soon after Raymond retired to Wales by reason of a dispute with Strongbow whom Donal O'Brien of Thomond defeated soon after: whereupon Raymond was recalled. He returned to Waterford with a reinforcement of 30 knights, 100 men-at-arms, and 300 archers, but had little

fighting that year. In 1175 he marched against O'Brien, took Limerick, and placed a garrison there. But no sooner was his back turned than O'Brien besieged the place and Raymond harked back again with 80 heavy and 200 light cavalry, 300 archers and Leinster auxiliaries. Raising the siege O'Brien took up a position near Cashel to bar his way and a stubborn fight ensued ending in O'Brien's defeat and the raising of the siege. From Limerick Raymond marched into Desmond to aid MacCarthy against his son and was rewarded with the grant of Lixnaw for his youngest son, Maurice. From Dublin to Lixnaw is a long way! The last exploit of Raymond was in 1182 when a rising of the Munster chiefs isolated FitzStephen in his castle of Cork. Coming by sea from Waterford the indefatigable general once more was successful and raised the siege.

The successive campaigns of Raymond le Gros had given the Normans great prestige in Munster, had strengthened and multiplied their points of occupation and had accentuated the isolation of the province from the rest of the country. In 1215 arising out of a civil war in Desmond the power of the invaders was greatly increased. Taking part on both sides and watching their opportunities they succeeded in erecting a round score of castles in Kerry and Cork. Gradually the Irish chiefs in Desmond were pushed back westward into the coastal mountains of West Cork and Kerry, with their power dwindling correspondingly. And eventually the Desmond Fitzgeralds spread their influence over the more important parts of the territory. The MacCarthys did not submit tamely, though; and in 1260 at Callan Glen, near Kenmare, Fineen MacCarthy inflicted on John FitzThomas of Desmond one of the worst defeats the Normans suffered in Ireland. But the fact remains that during the thirteenth century Desmond was next to Leinster the most under Norman power of any part of Ireland.

Thomond on the other hand possessed certain geographical advantages, and that territory was further fortunate in a succession of warlike and energetic princes who furnished the native cause with a series of worthy champions. We have already noted Donal Mor O'Brien, Raymond le Gros's worthy adversary, who for years was a bulwark to both Connacht and Munster. He and his

successors long maintained their possessions in Clare intact despite all the castles erected along their borders on the banks of the Shannon.

## (2) In Ulster.

King Henry II. made a grant of Ulster to John De Courcy who set out to take possession of it in the beginning of the year 1177. The task was colossal, and it is not surprising that De Courcy achieved only a limited degree of success. Ulster consisted of a number of well-defined areas: Tirconnel from the Erne to the Foyle, Tirowen from that to Lough Neagh, Ulidia or Antrim and Down, Oriel or Louth with parts of Armagh and Monaghan, Breffny, which corresponded to Leitrim, Cavan and Fermanagh. This latter area was largely mountain and lake, and the Normans never attacked it. And of course they never attempted the western route by Ballyshannon until they dominated Connacht. There remained available only the eastern road through the Mourne mountains, and this was the one followed by De Courcy. As the kings of Ulster habitually resided at Aileach, a strong seat between the headwaters of Loughs Swilly and Foyle, there could be no question of expecting a speedy victory over them, and in point of fact De Courcy's enterprise was of a much more modest description.

His force consisted of 20 knights and 300 others—largely hobiler-archers, we may presume, seeing that the march from Dublin to Downpatrick was accomplished in four days. Downpatrick was an open ecclesiastical town of the old type and the invaders rode in and surprised it in the small hours of February 2nd. MacDonlevy, the Prince of Ulidia, collected a large force and made an unsuccessful attempt to recover it. And a second attempt by the same chief some months later had no better result. Possession of Downpatrick conferred on De Courcy a considerable degree of prestige—all the more so as he was a great benefactor of the Church.

But on the whole his military achievements in Ulster were not very noteworthy. The northern province was fortunate in its princes, who, westward of the Bann, possessed an extensive and difficult territory the conquest



of which was quite beyond his resources. What he did accomplish was the establishment on the flank of the province of a permanent base of operations. This consisted of the Norman settlements embracing the baronies of Ards and Lecale, the two peninsulas forming the sea-board of County Down. Each had a land front of only five miles or so—easily secured by a moat and rampart with a few strong towers. The narrow strait between Strangford and Portaferry was no real obstacle to inter-communication. In addition to Dublin and Chester, reinforcements were available from the Isle of Man, of which the monarch Godred was De Courcy's father-in-law. At various points around the coast, especially at Coleraine, Carrickfergus, and Carlingford, De Courcy built strong castles to secure for himself so many alternative lines of entry and retreat. His work in Ulster proves that any good fighting man could turn the Norman military system to some account. He gained certain definite, permanent advantages in spite of having no great forces and being worsted on several occasions. De Courcy was a man of gigantic size and strength and generous disposition, so that not unnaturally scores of legends have sprung up about him. But this does not alter the fact that he was neither such an administrator as De Lacy, nor at all so good a soldier as Raymond le Gros.

After De Courcy's attempt the Norman pressure on Ulster eased off, and did not begin again until about the middle of the 13th century. By this time the invaders largely dominated Connacht, and in great measure the native inhabitants of that province had been forced west of the chain of lakes extending from Killala to Galway Bays. In these circumstances we shall not be surprised to find that it was by the western route that the second series of invasions were sought to be pressed, castles being built at Sligo and on the Erne to facilitate them. Thus in 1247 the clans of Tirconnel were defeated near Ballyshannon and the Normans kept their footing on this fringe of the province until Godfrey O'Donnell's time. Upon the whole, the independence of Ulster was so clear that in 1258 Brian O'Neill, the reigning prince, was elected Ard-Ri and received the support of the O'Connors of Connacht and the O'Briens of Thomond. But two years later he was defeated and slain at the battle of Down by

Stephen de Longespee—almost the last pure-blooded Norman who led the invaders.

### (3) In Connacht.

In the main the western province was immune from Norman aggression for a longer period than any other. It was so remote from the centres of the invaders' power that naturally its conquest could not be attempted until that power had spread considerably. Perhaps this was also the reason why civil feuds of the native chiefs were fostered in Connacht even more than elsewhere. At all events, whether it was a result of deliberate policy or not, Norman expansion in Connacht owed far more to native rivalries than in any other part of the country.

The earlier military attempts on the province were singularly unfortunate. Miles de Cogan as early as 1177 crossed the Shannon at Athlone with 500 men and advanced as far as Tuam. But the inhabitants had fled everywhere into the wooded districts sweeping the country bare of food and forage. After a week in Tuam he began his retreat, his troops being in great hardships from hunger. This was the signal for the return of the clansmen who hung around the retreating Normans and harried them back to the Shannon, which they re-crossed on the verge of demoralisation. For eleven years after this no further attempt was made on Connacht. In 1188, however, De Courcy—returned from Ulster and Viceroy—invaded the province with a strong force. The provincial king, Conor Moinmoy, lay to the south of him and called O'Brien of Thomond to his aid. That warlike prince, Donal Mor, marched promptly and joined Conor near Ballinasloe. The combined forces marched against De Courcy who found himself forced northward, and attempted to penetrate into Tirconnel by Sligo. But Flaherty, chief of Tirconnel, headed him off; and after burning Ballysodare he had to cross the Curlews, and eventually made good his escape—but only with much difficulty and loss. Yet another Norman disaster was what we might call a miniature "Sicilian Vespers" in 1202. By agreement with Cathal Croiderg, De Burgo had quartered 700 of his archers on the province: on a given night in accordance with a secret arrangement they were massacred to a man.



While Cathal Crovderg lived his strong hand maintained the integrity and independence of Connacht, but after his death the renewal of civil strife gave the invaders their chance. By this time—1223—the Normans were fully established on the Shannon and had built a stone bridge at Athlone to replace the old wooden bridge. Very soon advances were made from Athlone, and a line of castles built astride the province from Rindown on Lough Ree, by Dunamon on the Suck and Athenry to Galway, where that important port was made secure. Then the O'Flaherty clans were swept west of the lakes, and De Burgo's stronghold at Castlebar was established, with other castles on the shores of Lough Mask and Lough Corrib. In 1235 De Burgo defeated Felim O'Connor, drove him into Ulster, carried the O'Flaherty's auxiliary fleet up the lakes into Killary Harbour and pillaged the countless island refuges in Clew Bay. By the middle of the 13th century the Norman power was practically supreme over most of Connacht.

In the northern part of the province, however, this was not the case. As we have seen, the Connacht princes often found in Tirconnel a place of refuge in case of disaster. The Normans followed them up and built a castle as far north as Cael-Uisge on the Erne near Belleek, hoping to permanently command that river and separate the two provinces. But in 1257 Godfrey O'Donnell, Prince of Tirconnel, heavily defeated the Normans in the Rosses north of Sligo and demolished the castle on the Erne. The general result was that the Normans never made good their hold on this area. Tirconnel, Breffni, and North Connacht were always fairly closely interconnected and always a native stronghold. The entire region was difficult and extensive and geographically strongly backed by the central area of Tirowen. So that this whole district for many centuries exhibits a picture of resistance to foreign aggression.

Such is a general review of the progress of Norman conquest in Ireland during a century. Of the spread of Norman civil administration nothing has been said—in a measure it followed the military expansion; but, of course, "at a respectful distance," so to speak. Still there was over the country a certain political and cultural ascendancy which left levers for further expansion. The century had

placed the invaders in solid occupation of the south-eastern third of the country—though with native islands so to say in the Wicklow Mountains, Offaly, and Leix. And beyond this area they were Norman settlements pushed out in different directions. By this time, however, the colonists were more English than Norman, except for the nobility which was still largely Norman by descent. The change of race entailed no real change of policy; but the vigour of the invasion was sapped by a long series of French, Scottish, Welsh and civil wars. In the next chapter it will be shown how this factor in conjunction with some others, facilitated such a recovery of native power as to bring about the Bruce invasion.

## CHAPTER IV.

**The Bruce Invasion.**

COMPARED to the struggles of the native Irish against the Norsemen and Normans the Bruce Invasion is a short, definite episode. It covered only four years, so that the military aspect of it is simple enough. It is still further simplified in that it was a definitely national struggle in which a duly-elected King of Ireland sought to sever the connection with England absolutely and definitely.

It has been related how Brian O'Neill, Prince of Tirowen, was elected Ard-Ri in 1258 and slain at Downpatrick two years later. His son and successor, Donal, likewise thought nationally, and possessed an even broader outlook than his father. In all respects he was himself the Irish prince most entitled to be king; but he realised that his contemporaries were incapable of putting aside their jealousies and would never recognise him. On the other hand he considered they might conceivably be got to recognise a foreigner of royal birth and forceful character—and he reasonably assumed that his own submission to such a man would be a strong example to the others to do the like. For this reason he selected Edward Bruce, the brother of King Robert of Scotland—as good a choice as was possible in the circumstances. For centuries Scotland and Ireland—especially Ulster—had maintained friendly intercourse—King Robert himself had found refuge and aid in Ireland. Edward was a renowned warrior, an inveterate enemy of the English, ambitious, and could depend on assistance from the Scottish King. Nor were other circumstances adverse.

The French, Welsh, and Scottish wars of Edward I. had taken their toll of the English King's liegemen in Ireland, and correspondingly weakened the grip of the invaders on the country. In 1314 the Scottish war had gone decisively against Edward II. at Bannockburn and the

English power in Ireland had received a severe blow for Edward had levied great Anglo-Irish forces on that occasion. Nominally the invaders controlled as much territory as a generation before, but their military strength was no longer equal to holding it if resolutely challenged. The invaders were weak, and on the other hand during the latter part of the 13th century a notable Irish military revival had come about.

The causes of this revival were (1) Familiarity with the military equipment and organisation of the invaders, whereby they came to recognise their weak points and to turn them to account by judicious tactics, use of ground, etc.; (2) importation by some of the more powerful chiefs of Hebridean or Scoto-Norse mercenaries, heavily-armed infantry in mail—the “gall-oglash” or “galloglass”; (3) armament in a similar style of native Irish also permanently maintained as mercenary soldiers. The Irish never adopted the mailed horseman to any extent: even the chiefs seem to have fought on foot with sword or battleaxe as a rule. Neither was the bow adopted as a common weapon for the infantry. Still the units of gallowglass supplied a formidable nucleus to the Irish of this time that earlier had been entirely lacking. In other wider branches of the military art also the Irish made considerable progress: we may instance the numerous victories of Turlogh Mor O'Brien towards the end of the 13th century, and the exploits of Art O'Melaghlin who died in 1283—surnamed “Na Caislean” from his having taken in his time no fewer than 27 Norman strongholds! On the other hand, in a whole century the invaders never found a second Raymond le Gros.

Bearing these facts in mind it becomes clear that in respect of actual fighting quality and training there was no reason to think that Irish military success was impossible—difficult though it might be. The main difficulty was occasioned by the distribution of the native power over the country. The centre of that power was in the north, strongest in numbers, in compactness of territory, and in the vigorous character of its princes. In addition there were strongholds of the native race in Connacht, Thomond, West Munster, Leix and around, and Wicklow. But these latter centres were in a great degree

isolated from Ulster by the settlements. By the main routes—east of the Shannon—there was no passage from north to south save by a victorious army; the great river itself was now securely held by a chain of strong castles; and west of the river there was no passage beyond Thomond: and at all events the land west of the Shannon was always a secondary theatre in the Irish wars. Edward Bruce must necessarily start from Ulster: his strongest adherents were there, his enemies were weakest there, and he was nearest his base in Scotland. But Ulster—wide away on the circumference of the country—was not an ideal base for the conquest of Ireland, and this geographical factor had an important effect on the fortunes of Edward's campaign.

### Scottish Troops of Bruce's Day.

One outstanding cause of King Robert's success in the war of Scottish Independence was the excellence of the Scottish infantry, originally organised by Wallace. The Scots, despite their constant wars with the English, never took kindly to the bow: and their favourite infantry weapon was the spear or bill. Formed three-deep in their "schiltrons"—the front rank kneeling, the second stooping, and the third upright—they always from Falkirk (1298) onwards repelled the mailed English knights. Sometimes, it is true, the English archers got their chance and shot the schiltrons to pieces; but the balance of success lay with the "Carrick spearmen." The troops brought to Ireland by Edward Bruce in 1315 were probably in great part victors of Bannockburn, and by far the most formidable body of fighting men that either side in Ireland could dispose of. The invited king sailed from Ayr with 6,000 men in 300 vessels and landed on the east coast of Antrim on May 25th.

The Anglo-Normans whom Edward Bruce might expect to engage in Ireland would not in general be up to the standard of the English armies that had invaded Scotland, and there was no reason to think that the Irish-Scottish armies would find them particularly formidable opponents. In point of fact, the latter quickly established an ascendancy over the settlers that led them in the long run to under-estimate the latter. But that is anticipating.

1315.

Immediately on landing Bruce was joined by O'Neill and some minor Ulster chiefs. He marched inland towards where Antrim now stands, and there—near the north-east angle of Lough Neagh—he was met by the



Savages and Mandevilles with the feudal levy of the Ards. These were totally defeated and the remnants took refuge in Carrickfergus Castle, the strongest hold of the invaders in Ulster. Harrying the nearest settlements, Bruce marched into Oriel or Louth where by the end of June



he had occupied Dundalk and Ardee. Meantime O'Donnell sought to create a diversion in the West by attacking Sligo Castle and pillaging the surrounding districts. This attack, however, did not prevent the suzerain of Connacht—the "Red Earl" De Burgo—from marching against Bruce as the more formidable enemy.

Ardee was only 35 miles from Dublin, and it was inexpedient to have the invaders come much further south. De Burgo collected a large army in Connacht—including the large Irish contingent of Felim O'Connor, the provincial king—marched north-east through Meath, and effected a junction with the Deputy Butler in the Boyne Valley. The joint army numbered some 20,000 men. Bruce could not make head against so great a force and retreated north right away to Coleraine, where he crossed the Bann into Derry and broke the bridge behind him. With the river between the armies, the time was spent in skirmishing and negotiations. As a result of the latter, Felim O'Connor and his clansmen departed for Connacht, a timely revolt in the western province affording the King a decent excuse for withdrawing from De Burgo's army.

After this Bruce was on a more equal footing, and marching southward he re-crossed the river into Antrim, thus threatening to place himself across De Burgo's communications with the south. De Burgo now fell away from the river and fell back to Connor a few miles south of Ballymena. There Bruce overtook him and compelled him to give battle. De Burgo was completely defeated and retreated into Connacht by the road he had come—throwing a further force into Carrickfergus on the way. Bruce followed as far as Kells where he was encountered by Roger Mortimer with 15,000 men—apparently a hasty levy, for the Scoto-Irish troops gained another complete victory. Bruce then marched towards Granard and established his winter quarters around Lough Sheedy in Westmeath. Early in December the Earl of Moray with a reinforcement of 500 men arrived to join him.

### 1316.

The new year opened auspiciously for Edward. Breaking up his winter quarters he marched into Kildare where Butler, Baron Offally, had assembled a large motley



force at the Moat of Ardsclull near Athy. What happened is doubtful—either Offally lost a pitched battle or his heterogeneous force disbanded under pressure of continual severe skirmishing. In any event it was by this time quite clear that the Anglo-Irish lords and their levies were no match in the field for Edward and his veterans. And they realised this fully, and never again ventured to meet the King in an open battle in anything like equal numbers. Soon after this Edward was formally crowned at Dundalk. His position was this : practically all Ulster and most of Connacht gave him adherence; his army dominated Meath, and in Leinster he might expect adherents wherever he showed his standards; native Leinster clans—like the O'Tooles of Imail and the O'Moores of Leix—long surrounded by the settlers, broke into insurrection; the Thomond chiefs favoured an alliance against the English with Felim O'Connor.

After Ardsclull King Edward carried out no considerable military enterprise. The devastated condition of the country prevented any big movements south of Dundalk, and the Scoto-Irish forces concentrated on the reduction of Carrickfergus. That great stronghold—having received succours by sea—held out until September when it fell following on the arrival of King Robert with fresh reinforcements from Scotland. But we must now retrace a little to follow the actions of King Felim O'Connor, whose untoward end had such an unfortunate effect on Edward's fortunes.

On returning to his own province Felim quickly subdued the revolt that had broken out, and then set about expelling the Anglo-Normans from his territory—definitely acknowledging Edward as his overlord. Felim's adherence to his cause was of enormous consequence to the newly-elected monarch. The King of Connacht was the descendant of Roderick, the last Arð-Ri, and was by far the most powerful native prince outside Ulster. Even of more importance was the Connacht King's personality : he was young—only twenty-three years of age—of great personal courage and vigorous character, and of much ability. His action might reasonably be expected to determine that of all the southern chiefs. Heartened and strengthened by an initial victory at Ballylahan in East Mayo, he assembled all his strength for a decisive blow

at Athenry—the stronghold of Anglo-Norman power in southern Connacht.

Apart from its decisive importance, Athenry was technically one of the most interesting battles ever fought in Ireland in mediæval times. It was the greatest victory the English bowman ever gained in Ireland—although King Felim's clansmen stood up under the arrow-flights in a manner quite different from the average continental infantry levies of that period. The English under De Bermingham and William De Burgo took up a suitable position before Athenry—the archers in front, the mailed knights and men-at-arms standing to horse in reserve. So posted on the defensive an English army of the 14th century could only be defeated by breaking the archers—a difficult task where the latter had the time to select their ground. King Felim had some 20,000 men which probably meant a numerical superiority, but he had no troops suitable for breaking the archers. Gallowglasses could do this—and often did in the Irish wars—but the King's bodyguard was a comparatively small body, and so inadequate to turning the day unaided. The battle, however, was fought with almost incredible stubbornness; for though the linen-jacketed clansmen never got to close quarters en masse they did so partially and succeeded in inflicting heavy losses. Finally, though, their attacks were all broken and the mailed horsemen charged in their turn. The King, his bodyguard and all his chiefs and great men stood fast and were cut down to a man. Connacht never recovered and was never again a kingdom: the number of Irish killed is variously estimated between 8,000 and 11,000.

Athenry was a fearful blow to the Irish cause. It all but destroyed the military power of the southern Irish, and compelled King Edward to depend for the maintenance of his authority in great part upon a supply of Scottish mercenaries—and the supply of these could not be expected to be inexhaustible. Moreover, in De Bermingham the Anglo-Normans had found what they badly needed—a great captain. He was at once given command of all their forces in the country, and transferred the bulk of his victorious army into Leinster. Amongst the other forces coming under his control was the Dublin garrison—the Bermingham Tower perpetuates one of his

additions to the capital's defences. And as we have said, the king was to get no more offers of pitched battles : detached forces of his adherents might be engaged, but never again himself. This was more especially the case in

## 1317.

At Shrovetide this year the two kings, Robert and Edward, crossed the Boyne at Slane and marched on Dublin, seizing on the way the stronghold of Castlenock and making it their headquarters. At this time they disposed of fully 20,000 men, and one is prompted to investigate the causes of the lack of result obtained by such a force under so capable a general as King Robert. Why, for instance, did they not take Dublin?

The answer to this question is to be found in the fact that Dublin was no longer the Dublin of 150 years before. It had grown vastly in importance and concurrently in strength. It was now definitely established as the centre and base of English power in the country. It had far out-distanced all the other Anglo-Irish centres in size, in population, and resources; it contained all the machinery of such government as existed in a feudal society, and it was in easy communication with England. Finally, it was a strong walled town with a strong castle to which the Bermingham Tower had recently been added. In short, Dublin was such a place as could only be reduced by a regular siege. And the resolute character and conduct of the Mayor, Robert Nottingham, was an ample guarantee that a siege would be stood to the end—it must be remembered that at this time Dublin was an *English*, not an Irish town. Nottingham pulled down and burned every building outside the walls to prevent Bruce's army from getting any advantage and he imprisoned the Red Earl himself, holding him suspect by reason of a matrimonial relationship with the Scottish King.

Now Bruce's army was capable of conducting a siege—his men had taken Stirling, which was no mean feat. But it was impossible to subsist an army in the wasted country round Dublin for anything like the time a siege would be certain to take. Moreover the Bruces had no fleet at hand to blockade the city from the sea, and succours might accordingly be thrown in at intervals. Accordingly

as soon as it became obvious that Dublin would stand a siege the Bruces had no real alternative to marching away from before it : which they did, marching south-west through Leinster and Ossory to Limerick. As the army moved it continued the work of pillage all through the settlements.

Limerick was not at all as formidable a place as Dublin, and it is possible that the Bruces might have been able to secure it, but by this time the enemy forces had mustered. In front was Roger Mortimer and 15,000 men who had recently landed at Youghal, while threatening his rear was another force of 30,000 assembled by some of the powerful Anglo-Irish lords at Kilkenny. The hardships of the army from hunger increased daily, and Bruce retreated during the month of April following the route Cashel-Kildare-Trim, which had already been laid waste by his advance. On the 1st May the army re-entered Ulster. The Anglo-Irish forces, though considerably superior in numbers, merely hung on the retreat and did not venture to attack. This was in the circumstances thoroughly sound—hunger was defeating the Scoto-Irish army, while in a pitched battle the odds even then were that the two kings would be good for a thoroughgoing victory. Soon after this domestic policy called King Robert to Scotland, and for the whole remainder of the year King Edward was held idle in Dundalk by the state of famine existing in the wasted country.

### 1318.

But the harvest of 1318 was good and both sides made ready for a decisive campaign towards the close of that year. This time, however, the initiative lay with the English. King Edward's army was much reduced by hunger and disease, and he could not expect to do very much until reinforcements arrived—which latter his brother had promised to bring. Upon the English, on the contrary, there was every reason to urge vigorous action—to strike down the King before he could be reinforced. Accordingly De Bermingham marched north with an army that cannot have been less than 10,000 men, the best of the numerous hosts of the year before. King Edward had only 2,000 Scots veterans and perhaps a little more Ulster clansmen. He was certainly out-



numbered at least two to one and all his captains counselled retreat. But his easy victories in the earlier fighting had made him over-confident, and he trusted to a battle to turn the scale in his favour. The decisive battle of Faughart, near Dundalk, might perhaps have had such a result, but unfortunately King Edward was slain early in the fight and his forces overthrown. The risk had not been justified. After Faughart, Edward's adherents dispersed, and when the Scottish King landed later in the year it was only to bring away the surviving veterans of his brother.

The latter has had less than justice done to his memory by Irish historians: they blame his "devastations," forgetting that such formed an inherent element in the warfare of the Middle Ages and that Edward devastated only the Anglo-Norman territory, and not that of the native Irish which had previously suffered most. Again they blame his "rashness," missing the point utterly in respect of the type of a feudal general. "Leaders were esteemed according to their inventiveness and skill in making sudden incursions, in attacking castles, devising stratagems, and drawing up their motley forces in order of battle before charging into the mêlée at their head"—thus the summary of such an authority as Hamley. If we judge the intrusive King by this rule we shall not find him lacking—emphatically he was "a king we could show to the soldiers." We must not in one breath blame the last King Ireland elected for herself for fighting a pitched battle at Faughart with enemies he had already defeated wherever they fought such a battle; and in the next acclaim his brother, the King of Scotland, as wisdom personified. King Robert at Bannockburn faced on his pony the onset of De Bohun in full panoply. What would the verdict of history have been if the English knight had ridden him down?

In point of fact, the Bruce Invasion all but succeeded in undoing the work of the Norman Conquest. The King's brilliant victories at Connor, Kells, and Ardsceull had cut down most of the props of English feudal dominion in Ireland. His military execution in the Central Plain with the ensuing famine and sickness still further enfeebled the settlers. On the other hand the native population in Ulster, Connacht, and Munster got four

years' respite and saw their feudal oppressors crippled. In the circumstances it is only natural to find the century following the invasion marked by a definite national recovery. A century and a half after Faughart, Queen Elizabeth had to achieve the conquest of Ireland practically all over again.

## CHAPTER V.

## Art MacMurrough Kavanagh.

THE martial career of Art MacMurrough Kavanagh, the renowned King of Leinster, during the latter part of the 14th and early part of the 15th centuries forms a remarkable episode in Irish military history. But it is only an episode, because the operations it embraced were confined



to a limited area and there was not any general national principle involved in them. Still the campaigns of Art MacMurrough have several features of the greatest interest: they illustrate very completely the strategic features of the south-east of Ireland, and exhibit the great



soldier's turning of those features to account. Again, the tactical methods of Art merit very careful consideration: they were methods which could have been—but too often were not—turned to great advantage all through the struggle with the invaders in the Middle Ages. Finally, it would be not unprofitable to consider what would have been the result had the first Norman invaders encountered such an adversary in the same territory.

Art MacMurrough well merits his foremost place in Irish History: we might, however, with fitness regard him as a general rather than as a statesman. Thus he does not seem to have had such breadth of view as had Donal O'Neill a century earlier, nor to have sought to make himself Ard-Ri. This is not surprising, for he was very much isolated from the greater centres of the native Irish population. His alliances with other princes were of a military, not a political, nature—such, for example, was his co-operation with Desmond against Ormond. Such also was his standing alliance with O'Connor of Offaly, enterprises by whom against the opposite flank of the area of English settlement would naturally be of much assistance to him. In the actual conditions of the time Art MacMurrough performed a really big task in once more establishing and maintaining the Leinster Kingship in a manner not unworthy of the palmy days of that sovereignty. An investigation into the state of political and military state of Ireland in his day will probably satisfy most people that nothing further was possible for him.

We have seen that the Bruce Invasion greatly weakened the English hold on Ireland; and the French Wars of Edward III. during the 14th century prevented any serious attempts at its restoration. At the same time the native Irish increased appreciably in numbers and resources. This was so in Ulster, Connacht, and Munster; in Leix and Offaly and in the Wicklow region. At the same time many of the older settlers became assimilated by the native population—though as a body they never *politically* identified themselves with them. Continual feudal and domestic strife over most of Ireland, and the absence of any outstanding personage, caused no advantage to be taken of the English decay in the country as a whole. Art MacMurrough stands out alone as a figure of the first rank.

This prince had come into possession of his territories in 1377 when he was about twenty years old. Already he had seen much fighting in his father's raiding expeditions. His patrimony comprised most of Idrone or Carlow, with territory in the south of Wicklow and north of Wexford. In addition he claimed the lands of his wife—a lady of the Kildare Fitzgeralds—around Naas. This, of course, in defiance of the Statute of Kilkenny under which those lands would have become forfeit. Art's rule in Leinster was recognised by the O'Toole and O'Byrne clans of the Wicklow Mountains: these always either marched under him or co-operated with him. Gradually he extended and consolidated his sway, and received "Black Rent" from the settlers—a sort of tribute by which they purchased the right of way through his territories. We see, then, that he possessed an extensive and at the same time compact domain and could dispose in case of war several thousands of warlike clansmen, while his material resources were also very considerable.

Evidently the restored Kingdom of Leinster constituted a serious military embarrassment to the settlers. It formed a solid block of territory in between Dublin and the seaport towns of the south-east, so that land communication between the two zones could be cut at will. In addition, this territory flanked—at easy raiding distance—the route from Dublin through Kildare and Kilkenny into Munster. Moreover, this territory was particularly difficult and uninviting to an invader. In the north it consisted of the Wicklow Mountains, overlooking Dublin from a few miles distance with the level, wooded land of Carlow to the west of them: the southern part was the deep, wooded valley of the Barrow, backed to the east by the Leinster chain with the single pass of Scullogue Gap in the middle of it. Another pass at Bunclody or Newtownbarry divides the northern end of this chain from the mountain mass of Wicklow, which is penetrated by only a few difficult valleys. The Leinster monarch either owned or had seized all the castles and towers in the mountain passes: thus he could at will march into Ossory or Wexford or northward into Kildare, while securing himself against attack from the flank or rear. In short, he enjoyed all the military advantages of "Interior Lines," and his military successes were due to his never failing to turn those advantages to account.

Such a military power as Art MacMurrough's, had it existed in Leinster in Edward Bruce's time, would have been of the greatest help to that monarch : it could serve as an anvil on which the hammer of the Scoto-Irish army might pound the English settlers to pieces. But in Art's day there was no force in the rest of the country to turn his successes to any such account, and his successes were his own merely. Accordingly we must observe a sense of proportion, and it need not surprise us that the Leinster King never attacked Dublin. A surprise was not possible owing to the distance, and the material strength of the city was altogether beyond his power to cope with. Dublin had greatly increased in size and resources during the 14th century. In 1399 when Richard II. and his famished army—over 20,000 men—marched in, the event did not even raise the price of provisions.

With all that Art MacMurrough constituted such a menace to the English settlements that Richard II. determined to crush him. In October, 1394, he landed at Waterford with 4,000 men-at-arms and 30,000 foot, mainly archers—by far the largest English force that had yet appeared in Ireland. But formidable as this expedition was the King of Leinster discounted it in advance.

For the invasion of his territories by a force landing at Waterford, New Ross was by far the most important, and indeed necessary, base. It linked Waterford and Wexford, it was open for supplies by sea, and it commanded the passages of the Barrow and Nore, and gave the option of advancing northwards by either flank of the Leinster Chain. Accordingly MacMurrough determined to strike such a blow as would at least seriously cripple any movement pivoting on Ross, even if it did not altogether prevent such an operation. To this end he made a sudden vigorous dash upon the town. Now Ross was a walled town of considerable size : it could muster 100 men-at-arms, 360 cross-bowmen, 1,200 spearmen and 1,200 archers—in other words it was as strongly held as a strategic point of that importance ought to be. Yet MacMurrough's swoop was completely successful : the walls and towers were thrown down ; all valuables and hostages were carried off, and surplus stores were destroyed. King Richard was unable to prosecute any

campaign from Ross as a base, and bent his march by Thomastown to Kilkenny. Parties of the Leinstermen hung around the march and cut off stragglers, beat up the bivouacs, and generally inflicted all possible kinds of guerilla annoyance. So that when Kilkenny was reached the self-confidence of the army as a whole was to a great extent shaken. Arrived at Kilkenny, King Richard began to negotiate with MacMurrough, but his terms were so domineering that the King of Leinster broke off the parley; and Richard breaking up from Kilkenny marched eastward into Idrone. Thereupon Art and his clansmen again had recourse to the tactics of the march to Kilkenny—and in the shortening days and worse country with still more success. With difficulty the English army worked its way to the coast and then bent north for Dublin. Indeed the latter part of the journey was eased by a truce pending the attendance of MacMurrough in Dublin for negotiations. Eventually he made a submission in Dublin which saved Richard's face, and did not do anything which in the least changed his own status or attitude.

An arrangement of this kind, which left everything precisely as it found it, could hardly be expected to last very long. The probability was that upon the first fairly reasonable pretext a state of war would again result between the native Irish and the Colonists. And in point of fact Richard II. and his forces were not long gone—leaving Mortimer, Earl of March, as Viceroy—when hostilities broke out as before. It is, of course, not to be supposed that during these years the Irish chiefs throughout the rest of the country were not from time to time engaged in conflicts with the settlers: but our only concern here is with the operations of the King of Leinster and his more immediate adherents.

One of these last, O'Toole, swept down from Imail in 1396 and inflicted a shrewd blow on the Palesmen near Dublin; and the following year Art himself surprised and captured the town and castle of Carlow. This furnished the King with a very strong and important supporting point at what was up to then the weakest angle of his territory: it afforded an admirable entry into Ossory and a strong flank-guard in case he wished to advance north into Kildare. But the climax of these campaigns was in 1398 when Mortimer was defeated and slain at Kells, near

Callan, together with large numbers of his men. The Annalists refer this victory to the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles; but it is in the last degree unlikely that these two clans would have marched so far afield into Ossory except as part of the forces of MacMurrough. Mortimer was the heir of Richard II. and his death was a big affair, which that monarch determined to revenge. For this reason he made his second expedition to Ireland the following year.

This time King Richard made sure to have at all events the summer season for his campaign, and he landed at Waterford on June 1st. His force was considerably less than the first time—when indeed it was too unwieldy for the country it was to fight in: it numbered some 20,000 of all arms. The line of march this time again was to Kilkenny, whence the army marched east on June 23rd. Art to meet this great array mustered 3,000 of his clansmen in the woods of Idrone, but naturally had no intention of fighting a pitched battle. Richard burned all the buildings in the clearings and set 2,500 of the inhabitants to work clearing a road through the forest; the clansmen all the while continuing their harassing tactics of the first expedition, and with the same demoralising effects on the spirits of the invaders. Again the shortage of provisions became acute and one loaf was the ration for half-a-dozen men. For eleven days the army toiled eastward—apparently by Shillelagh, Tinahely, and the Ovoca valley to Arklow where it arrived in dire distress. Three ships from Dublin with provisions relieved the privations of the men to some extent, but the scenes of hunger, drunkenness and indiscipline were incredible. After this Richard took the road for Dublin along the sea, on which stage of the march a parley with the King of Leinster once more proved resultless. After a six weeks' stay in Dublin English affairs demanded his return—to lose his crown.

For some years after the opening of the 15th century no further very notable exploit is to be credited to Art MacMurrough. All hope of questioning his power was abandoned by the English, and for his part he was content to let his subordinate chiefs carry on any operations they wished. In England the usurper Henry IV. was busied with civil wars, and later his son, Henry V., devoted all his attention to the war with France. In such circumstances the English in Ireland were left to their own



resources, and in consequence the fighting in Ir eland was desultory—until 1406 when a dispute with the Wexford colonists roused the warrior-king once more.

Art on this occasion marched through Scullogue Gap, taking the castles of Enniscorthy, Ferns, and Camolin in quick succession and thus entirely dominating the northern half of the county. Then he returned northward and took Castledermot in the southern angle of Kildare, and continuing his march inflicted a defeat on an English detachment near Naas. The successful activities of this year roused the Deputy, Sir Stephen Scroope, to unusual measures in the year following. He marched south to Callan on the borders of Ossory and MacMurrough's country and there defeated the Leinster King after a hard-fought struggle. Soon after, however, Scroope died of a plague which caused great havoc.

His successor, the Duke of Lancaster, was less fortunate. While Lancaster was preparing an expedition to the south in 1408 Art gathered a great force of all his clans—the Wicklowmen as well as his own, and marched right up to the walls of Dublin, encamping at Kilmainham where he completely commanded all routes from the city. Lancaster marched out to drive him away, the four divisions of his army being commanded by himself, Sir Edward Perrers, the Sieur Jenico d'Artois, a Gascon knight who spent most of his life in Ireland, and Butler Prior of the Order of St. John. Probably 10,000 men were ranked on each side. The result was a complete victory for the Leinster King—a fitting end to his career, which had little more fighting. He died on New Year's Day, 1417.

It need not surprise us that no outstanding national results followed from the martial career of Art MacMurrough. The Leinster King was not in any general sense an Irish statesman—he was an able general whose military resources, even, were limited. Even after his victory at Kilmainham he did not attempt Dublin. That city was even stronger than when the Bruces marched away from it a hundred years before: in 1399 when Richard II. and his starving army—20,000 strong—marched in the prices of provisions didn't even go up. But when this much has been said as to the limitations of the Leinster King's position, there is little else to be



said except praise for his military skill. Contrast his campaigning with that of Roderic O'Connor and the others who confronted the first Norman invaders in the same theatre of war! Outstanding in his conduct was the judicious exploiting of his interior position, of which he never failed to take advantage. And the physical features of his territory were turned to such advantage that he never suffered a thorough-going defeat, though usually inferior in numbers or equipment or both. Suppose such a leader had encountered the first Norman invaders: of what avail would be the skill of the bowmen in the great woods of Idrone? And in that rugged country the mailed knights would have been still more helpless than the archers. Art MacMurrough fully grasped the weak points of the mediæval English army and resolutely declined to be drawn into battle on ground unfavourable to himself. And so with his career the mediæval period of Irish warfare comes to an honourable end.

## CHAPTER VI.

**The Tudor Policy of Re-Conquest.**

AFTER the time of Art MacMurrough the English power in Ireland dwindled away owing to the Wars of the Roses which took up all the energies of England during the 15th century. The famous Pale marked the boundary of the executive power of the invaders—enclosing the present counties of Louth and Dublin with parts of Meath and Kildare. The “Pale” itself or rampart, by the way, was not a fortification: it was mainly intended as a physical barrier across which the cattle of the English settlers could not be conveniently driven. For such small mercies were the invaders thankful in those days! Outside the Pale Ireland presented a picture—quite normal in the 15th century—of chaotic disturbance and petty local disputes between the various chiefs and lords. And thus it offered no insoluble problem to the capable and far-seeing Tudor Kings.

The Wars of the Roses were the last struggle of feudalism in England. They ended by leaving the King supreme over the nobility, and in a position to dictate national policy as he wished. Simultaneously the policy of Continental aggression—inaugurated by the naval victory of Sluys in 1340—was permanently finished by the disasters in France, after being persevered in for well over a hundred years. So that Henry VII., now fully master in his own house, had to seek new objectives. He did so—and laid the foundations of the British Empire.

In 1453 the Turks captured Constantinople and the Levant was closed to Christian trade. Eastern trade had to find new routes, either around Africa or across the Atlantic—and hence the great maritime discoveries that so greatly influenced the subsequent history of the world. “At the commencement of this period England was an insignificant power situated on the margin of the then

known world. Far away from the commercial centre of the world, weakened by civil wars, dependent largely for her manufactures upon Flemish and Florentine workmen, her shipping controlled by Italians, her finance in the hands of Florentine bankers, she grew from this to be an independent nation, controlling the shipping, the finance, and a great part of the manufactures of the world."

Henry VII. set about securing for England a share in the profits of the new development of ocean trade. England was well-placed with reference to the new Atlantic routes—as she had not been for the old Mediterranean ones. So we find Henry in 1497—the first year of Kildare's Viceroyalty—enlisting the Cabots, two distinguished Venetian mariners, in the work of American exploration. Evidently if England was to become great overseas and develop a world-policy, it was necessary for her to consolidate nearer home as a secure starting-point. So the strong, centralised, Tudor monarchy set about making safe its grip on Ireland—a country lying across those western trade-routes whose importance had now become so great. At the same time, a policy was adopted calculated to gradually undermine the Independence of Scotland which up to then had successfully defied the English.

Changes in the art of war had recently taken place which were calculated to materially assist in the furtherance of English Imperial designs. For though the English were almost always behind the best continental standard in respect of military technique, the Irish were, from the nature of the case, far more behind it. Thus, the invention of gun-powder conferred an incalculable advantage on the invaders, for the Irish were not at all in a position to profit by it to a like extent. Also at this time the trained infantry mercenary came to replace the feudal levy of an earlier time, and of course in the beginning the Irish clansmen were altogether inferior in discipline and cohesion. This continued to be so for a long time, except for small standing forces of Scots or gallowglass kept by some more powerful chief as a bodyguard.

## The Great Earl of Kildare.

The first step towards the consolidation of English

power in Ireland was Henry VII.'s appointment of the "Great Earl" of Kildare to be Viceroy in 1496—which office he held until his death in 1513. This appointment was a master-stroke: Kildare was by far the most powerful man in Ireland and a mediocre King would have distrusted him. But Henry reckoned—quite rightly—that at least he would quell everybody else, so that at worst there would be only one man to reckon with. And so it fell out. Kildare regularly took sides in the various disputes of the provincial chiefs and magnates, and reduced them one after another without any abnormal military effort or expenditure. For Kildare was always able to bring to the assistance of whichever side he espoused a small well-trained contingent armed with firearms, which usually sufficed to turn the scale.

Thus in 1498 Kildare interfering in a quarrel of the O'Neills reduced the castles of Dungannon and Omagh "with great guns"; and in the following year he marched into Roscommon and reduced the castles of O'Connor and O'Kelly. From this time on scarcely a year passed in which he did not take a number of those strong castles which we have seen prove such formidable defences in earlier times. In fact, now that the Irish chiefs had come to realise the military value of castles, those castles were fast becoming obsolete in face of artillery.

To the use of firearms we may also in great part attribute the victory of Knockdoe in 1504—one of the decisive battles of Irish History. We have no very dependable account of this battle, but it was the outcome of MacWilliam Burke's personal quarrels with Kildare and O'Kelly of Hy Many. MacWilliam was supported by the Thomond clans and levies from Ormond: Kildare had the Palesmen and most of the Connacht and Ulster chiefs except O'Neill. Thus it was fought mainly by Irish troops—although one of the greatest successes ever gained by the English interest. On the advance of Kildare MacWilliam gradually retired before him to the hill of Knockdoe, near his castle of Claregalway. There his forces were completely defeated after an obstinate and bloody resistance.

Another open battle fought by Kildare in 1570 had a less fortunate termination. At the head of an army of Palesmen he marched into Desmond against the



MacCarthys, reduced several of their castles in Cork and Kerry, and then wheeled northward to Limerick. His main object there was to crush O'Brien of Thomond, a chief ally of MacWilliam. Crossing the Shannon at Limerick he marched up the river and destroyed the wooden bridge at Castleconnell, giving O'Brien access to the eastern bank. But O'Brien quickly assembled the Dalcassian levies and, reinforced by MacWilliam, marched up under cover of darkness; and encamped so close to Kildare that the latter in the morning found himself almost hemmed against the river and decided to

strike camp and fall back to Limerick. The long-drawn-out fighting retirement which resulted is known as the Battle of Monabraher—from the boggy expanse over which it took place. O'Brien hung doggedly on the Deputy's flank and rear, inflicting heavy loss and capturing much baggage and stores, but Kildare extricated himself without positive disaster. For the time, though, designs against Thomond were abandoned.

It will be seen that Kildare had done much to break down the Irish national resistance and to confirm the English power. But in the process he had—by weakening the other Irish magnates—greatly exalted the power and prestige of his own family, the Leinster Geraldines. To have a powerful subject was abhorrent to the Tudors, so that not unnaturally charges of treason were brought against the Kildares—resulting in imprisonments and exactions, and finally in the Rebellion of Silken Thomas, grandson of the Great Earl.

### Lord Leonard Grey.

In July, 1535, Lord Leonard Grey was sent to Ireland as Marshal or Commander-in-Chief to suppress the forces of Silken Thomas and speedily did so. At the end of the same year Skeffington, the Deputy, died, and Grey was appointed his successor by Henry VIII. Certain Irish chiefs had adhered to Silken Thomas, and Grey decided to avail of this fact as an excuse for attacking them in detail. He was deputy until 1540, and during that period he was unremitting in his operations, north, south, and west. The system of striking around from the centre, used by Kildare, was followed by Grey; but Grey's operations were more systematic, more continuous, and more obviously military in character.

We have had frequent occasion to observe the importance of the Thomond territory as a barrier to the conquest of the country. It was remote from a suitable English base, it was defensible in character by reason of the Shannon and the mountains, it flanked Connacht on the north and Munster on the south. Moreover, O'Brien could muster 2,000 good fighting men, and his fortified bridge over the Shannon—O'Brien's Bridge half way from Limerick to Killaloe—gave him assured access to the eastern bank where the English possessions in



Ormond were at his mercy. "It was of unusual strength. On the numerous arches that spanned the river there were built two strong towers, each some distance off the land, the strongest facing the east bank, built of hewn marble and having walls at least twelve or thirteen feet thick. These towers were filled with many defenders—gunners, gallowlasses, and horsemen—they were armed with hand-guns, had some lighter pieces of ordnance and one enormous gun, which discharged balls as large as a man's head." In 1536 when Grey attacked the bridge the arches between the tower and the eastern bank were broken down, extra defences of beams and hogsheds of earth were added, while the river bank was difficult of access to guns.

Grey made his campaign in July. Collecting a strong force of Palesmen, and levies of minor chiefs, he marched to Limerick, took Desmond's castles of Loughgur and Carrigogunnell, and then marched against the great bridge. A traitor of the O'Briens showed a track by which some pieces could be brought within bombarding range, ladders were brought up to span the broken arches, and the storm was carried out with much boldness and skill, the survivors of the garrison escaping to the Clare side of the river. The bridge was levelled, but a mutiny prevented Grey's pursuit of the Irish and he returned to Dublin. But he had at least seriously curtailed O'Brien's capacity for mischief east of the Shannon, where the men of Thomond were often regarded by O'Moore, O'Connor, and O'Carroll as valuable supports against the English. And it was the territory of these chiefs that Grey marked out as his next objective.

This 1537 campaign—resulting in the virtual subjugation of Leinster except the Wicklow mountains—consisted of the ravaging of Offaly, Ely O'Carroll and MacMurrough's country. Crops were cut down, steadings burnt, and cattle driven off. Dublin, the English administrative centre, was safeguarded from any possibility of interference by the native Irish except sporadic raids by O'Toole or O'Byrne; and so the zone of complete occupation was extended and consolidated. Apropos of raids on Dublin, it is worth while mentioning the exploit of Eamon Oge O'Byrne—some years before Grey's time—who surprised the castle, liberated the prisoners there,

and carried off the stores! As a fitting round-off to these campaigns against Thomond and the Leinster Irish, Grey early in 1538 made a circular march—into Ormond, thence to Limerick, northward through Thomond and southern Connacht, across the Shannon at Athlone, and so to Maynooth. The energetic and capable Deputy had now not very much serious trouble to fear in the southern half of the country.

During the remainder of 1538 and the following year the Ulster chiefs were the objects of attack. The territories of O'Reilly, Maguire and MacMahon in the present counties of Cavan, Monaghan and Armagh were laid waste—the aim being to extend the zone of English military power on its northern flank. These chiefs were the border magnates between the English settlements and the county of O'Neill, whom Grey did not as yet see fit to attack directly. But the invasion of Armagh roused O'Neill, who, with O'Donnell, promptly marched into Leinster, devastated Louth and Meath, and amassed considerable booty. When the Deputy marched against them they turned northward with their spoils; but, all encumbered as they were, were overtaken at Bellahoe on the Meath-Monaghan border. Grey defeated them and recovered the spoil; and pressed his advantage by invading Down and reducing half-a-dozen castles of Magennis and Savage.

In short, by the end of 1539 Grey had broken down any semblance of military strength among the Irish clans in the immediate vicinity of the English settlements—settlements that at this time were sought to be increased and strengthened. There was no longer any question but that the military and political conquest of the country was largely complete, for there was no individual at all strong enough to really dispute Grey's authority. For all that he fared no better than Kildare, for in 1540 he was recalled to England and beheaded—an act of wanton tyranny to his loyal and capable general, that even in Henry VIII. is hard to understand.

### Scots-Irish Negotiations.

We have said that English Imperial policy began with the Tudor Kings. They aimed at subduing Ireland and

had also designs against the independence of Scotland at the same time—all this to consolidate their position at the commencement of the struggle for World-Power. There were not wholly wanting among the Irish chiefs traces of an anti-Imperial policy in the shape of negotiations with foreign powers with a view to resisting English aggression. These negotiations were much facilitated by the attempts of the pretenders, Simmel and Warbeck, on the English throne in the time of Henry VII., in connection with which international relations of a sort sprang up. Thus Desmond corresponded with both Francis I. of France and the Emperor Charles V., though nothing came of it. Much more might be expected of a Scottish alliance: nearness of territory, racial kinship, historical tradition, above all the sense of a grave common danger—all these factors made the Scottish kings give a ready ear to Irish envoys. This was so in the case of James IV. and James V., who continually corresponded with the Ulster Chiefs. In 1495 O'Donnell visited the court of the former monarch, and again in 1513, before the battle of Flodden. In that year a Scottish fleet raided the Antrim coast, threatening the English settlements, and it is said that James had the intention of coming in person to Ireland. This monarch gave his approval to the settling of some of the O'Donnell's and other Ulster Irish in Scotland as well as to emigration of certain of the islesmen to Ireland. O'Neill and O'Donnell frequently employed Scottish mercenaries in their wars. The Scottish defeat of Flodden and Solway Moss indirectly contributed to the re-conquest of Ireland, by definitely discounting Scotland as an ally against English aggression. 1540 was the date of Solway Moss, and in 1542 Henry VIII. was proclaimed "King" of Ireland instead of "Lord" of Ireland—which hitherto had been the customary style for his predecessors.

During the reigns of Henry's children efforts were made to complete the military victory by extending and consolidating the civil power, by planting colonies of English settlers, by crushing native industries, etc. But the military success had not been complete enough to justify all this.

### Shane O'Neill's Rebellion.

This is the name popularly but not very accurately given

to the long-drawn-out struggle of fifteen years or so carried out by Shane O'Neill against the encroachments of the English on Ulster, and which only ended with his death in 1567. As a matter of fact, the resistance of Shane O'Neill came about when the English Government set about definitely establishing their sovereignty—which, despite the proclamation of Henry VIII. as “King” of Ireland, was as yet purely nominal in the northern part of the country. English rule was as yet so weak over this part of Ireland that it only needed a prince of strong character on the Irish side to again reduce it to a nullity.

Such a man was Shane O'Neill. His clan had for hundreds of years claimed—and in the main had made good the claim—a suzerainty over all Ulster. Shane determined to assert this over-lordship again, regardless of the fact that such a course would be certain to bring him into conflict with the Dublin Government. His method was simple: he just “carried on” as if no English power, good, bad, or indifferent, existed in Ireland. He made war, dispensed justice, and governed the clans exactly as his ancestors had done hundreds of years before. This line of action was greatly facilitated by the presence of the Scottish settlers on the Ulster coast; who were a constant thorn in the side to the English, and with whom Shane formed alliances as he thought fit. At this time the English military forces in Ireland were not very formidable, and O'Neill's clansmen and Scots mercenaries established a complete ascendancy over them. In the words of Sussex, the Deputy: “Never before durst Scot or Irishman look an Englishman in the face in plain or wood, and now Shane, in a plain three miles away from any wood, hath with 120 horse, and a few Scots and gallowglasses, scarce half in numbers, charged our whole army, and by the cowardice of one wretch was like, in one hour, to have left not one man of that army alive, and after to have taken me and the rest at Armagh.”

No special interest attaches to the actual fighting between Shane O'Neill and the English. Upon the whole he had the best of matters—in the sense that his independence was never seriously curtailed. Whenever the English Deputy collected an overwhelming force Shane simply declined battle and the invaders marched through

his territory to the shores of Lough Foyle—and then had to march away again.

The real military value of Shane's struggle lies in the lessons it conveyed to Hugh, then a boy growing into manhood and very apt to learn. Thus it would become evident to him that the O'Neill country, by reason of its extent, its difficult character, and its distance from Dublin, was very difficult to subdue and capable of formidable military effort. Besides, the English had here no moral ascendancy, for they had shown their standards but seldom in the country, and then by no means always with success. Again it was seen that the clansmen were well able to win battles over the ordinary mercenary soldiers of the time if only suitable tactical conditions existed. And this obviously was merely a matter of applying military study. Finally Shane's defeat and miserable death in Antrim drove home the lesson that no Irish chief could hope to dominate his neighbours and at the same time wage a successful war against the English. If anything great was to be achieved it must be by a confederacy of some sort. Thus Hugh learned what to do and what to avoid in Ulster, and the Geraldine Rebellion later on—when he was grown a man—conveyed to him still other lessons which he turned to similar account.

### **The Geraldine Rebellion.**

The Irish case was not quite similar in the south to what it was in the north. In the north Shane O'Neill was the descendant of Irish Ard-Ris and ruled a territory never actually dominated by the invaders. But in Munster the greater magnates were of Norman-Irish race and the land had been substantially conquered. Shane's resistance, therefore, was not unnaturally of a more distinctively national character than the other. It was only when definite religious and confiscatory persecution was put into operation that the southern nobility took up arms. At the same time, the new religious aspect of the struggle very naturally involved in the Irish question the Pope and the King of Spain, and so brought about a certain international policy on the Irish side.

We can conveniently place together under the heading "Geraldine Rebellion" both the rebellion of James Fitz-Maurice and the Geraldine League from 1569-73 and the



Desmond Rebellion proper of ten years later. The two were part and parcel of the same movement, springing from the same causes.

Fitzmaurice went into revolt in 1569, in which year Sir Henry Sydney was Deputy. Sydney forthwith started on a punitive expedition to the south of Ireland, marching through Ormond to Waterford and thence up along the Suir to Youghal. At the same time he employed politic measures to detach from Fitzmaurice's confederacy the lukewarm lords of the Ormond faction, so that he gradually shepherded disaffection into the south-west angle into "deep-valleyed Desmond" proper. The strong castle of Castlemartyr resisted him for a week, after which he moved by Barrymore to Cork, where he received more submissions, and then by Mallow to Limerick. It will be observed that Sydney followed a route of invasion of Munster as old as Raymond le Gros—400 years before. In Kilmallock, Sydney placed a garrison as a bulwark of the plain towards the Galtees and an important point on the route to Cork. From Limerick he marched up through Thomond—O'Brien being a member of the League—and then returned to Dublin by Athlone. The Confederates had no force capable of taking the field against him in a regular manner and FitzMaurice drew into the Galtees while the English set about reducing the castles which held out for him. But as long as Castlemaine, at the head of Dingle Bay, held out for him FitzMaurice never lost contact with the sea. In the Galtees—a well-wooded and in parts inaccessible mountain system—he was able to maintain himself and to husband his resources during the winter of every year.

The following year, 1570, on March 2nd FitzMaurice swooped down from the mountains on Kilmallock, carried the town by escalade, killed all the garrison and plundered and burned the entire place. This was a really noteworthy success as it broke the English communications between Limerick and Cork and secured for FitzMaurice himself complete freedom of action. Then and for some years afterwards FitzMaurice maintained an unbroken defence. In 1571 Perrott made a most vigorous and comprehensive effort to round up himself and his small band of adherents in the Galtees, but in vain. FitzMaurice never let himself be run to earth, and the following year saw him in



Connacht stiffening the forces of certain Burkes and O'Flahertys who were in arms against the English Government. But the Deputy made terms with the Connachtmen and the tireless FitzMaurice had to betake himself to Kerry—only to find that Castlemaine was lost to him at last. Shepherded back into the Galtees he was attacked at night by the garrison of Kilmallock—rebuilt and consolidated by that fine soldier Perrott—and his small band of followers so cut up that presently he was constrained to seek terms. After that he spent years on the Continent, endeavouring to enlist foreign aid in the Irish cause.

With Stukely's expedition Irish military history has no concern; but in July, 1579, FitzMaurice with three small vessels and some 80 Spanish soldiers landed on the rocky spit of Fort-del-Oro in Smerwick Harbour near Dingle. There they were joined by FitzMaurice's cousins, John and James Desmond, the Earl's brothers, and by 200 O'Flahertys in a few small galleys. Two English ships of war came from Kinsale and captured the Spanish vessels, whereupon the O'Flahertys withdrew and the Spaniards marched inland. Thus the ball was set rolling for the last stage of the Geraldine Rebellion—although FitzMaurice was killed in a chance brawl near Limerick a little later. John of Desmond now took command of the Irish forces, into whom the Spanish officers introduced a proper discipline and system that enabled them to make head against the English. At times Desmond had as many as 2,000 men, and the preliminary training was given these among the inaccessible Kerry mountains. By and by, they moved east to the great woods of Kilmore near Charleville, flanking the Limerick-Cork line of communications in defence of which Drury assembled some 3,000 men in Kilmallock, now a formidably fortified town. For over two months Fitzgerald kept up harassing guerilla warfare and inflicted one serious defeat on a detachment of Drury's force at Springfield in Co. Limerick. In fact, neither Drury nor Malby, his successor in command, achieved anything, and John of Desmond was enabled to win through to the old-established winter quarters in the Galtees where his forces once more were enabled to hold out until spring. But, unhappily, John allowed himself to be entrapped into a

parley with the English at Castlelyons where he was murdered, and the vacillating Earl, his brother, then definitely took up the Irish side—largely forced to the step by the reduction of his castles, and particularly of Carrickfoyle, a strong work commanding the estuary of the Shannon opposite Kilrush.

It was now a case of holding out in hopes of aid from overseas. During this period the principal Irish success was far from Desmond—in Glenmalure. There on August 25th the English met with a bloody defeat in one of the best-laid and managed ambushes on record. Deputy Grey, the vanquished of that occasion, was anxious to wipe out the disgrace; so when a month later 700 Spanish and Italian soldiers landed once more at Limerick he headed south in all haste. The new arrivals had arms for 5,000 men, and money as well. But Grey hemmed them in in front and winter brought the fleet round from Kinsale. With no prospect of the siege being raised, the Spaniards surrendered after a week's defence—and in face of express conditions were all put to the sword! After this the war in Munster became a matter of systematic ravaging, pillage, and extermination. It was carried out with considerable thoroughness, but inasmuch as it failed to exterminate it failed altogether. It was not until November, 1583, that the Earl of Desmond was hunted down and slain. And his patrimony was largely a desert.

We have said that the Geraldine Rebellion had lessons for Hugh O'Neill—as well it might, seeing that he served through it as a Queen's officer! First of all it showed the possibility and value of foreign assistance—in this FitzMaurice was his fore-runner. Next it showed the value of disciplined men—and in this respect the success of FitzMaurice's few score of Spanish officers in training Desmond's followers was most remarkable.

## CHAPTER VII.

## Hugh O'Neill's War.

WE have seen in the last chapter that it was the definite and consistent aim of the Tudors to complete the conquest of Ireland with a view to facilitate the growth of English world-power. We have seen how the Deputies of successive sovereigns sought to realise that aim. Their military operations had a cumulative effect, which was to place English power in the country on a stronger basis than ever before. Elizabeth in 1583 had a more secure hold on Ireland than the Normans in their heyday; so that the task of any Irishman who opposed her power was in reality one of re-conquest. And it was this task—the re-conquest of Ireland—that Hugh O'Neill set himself, and very nearly achieved.

O'Neill was so circumstanced as to be able to deal with the English on a far more equal footing than any Irishman before his time. There is nothing to be gained by losing sight of the fact that all through the Middle Ages the Normans and English possessed a superiority in the arts of government and policy—and in that of war also. Their success was not accidental. But over Hugh O'Neill the English possessed no such superiority; he had lived among them for years, and was thoroughly at home with their methods and well able to size up their aims and policy. In short, he had opportunities for training in statecraft that none of his predecessors had, and had not failed to make the most of them. In the art of war he had similar opportunities, and as we have seen the earlier campaigns in Ireland during Elizabeth's reign afforded certain military lessons of value to one with a natural aptitude for war.

In the broadest outline Hugh O'Neill's plan was to use Ulster as the base of operations, to consolidate there

his power—military, political, economic—to gain time by every possible means, so that gradually a certain degree of strength might be won back to the ruined south of the country, and an auxiliary force of Spanish troops might arrive of sufficient strength to be decisive. To these ends all his energies were directed during a period of many years; naturally a cautious man, he was in no hurry to force the pace until he saw his way clear. It needed time to build up his own resources, to conciliate conflicting Irish interests, to permit his foreign negotiations to develop. As it was the English were certainly not more ready for war than O'Neill, when the great struggle began in 1549, and quite possibly they were less ready. For Elizabeth, though greedy enough of empire, was parsimonious about the cost of it, and never acted fairly by her soldiers, from dread of the expense.

### O'Neill's Military Preparations.

O'Neill, being the "Queen's O'Neill," to begin with, was authorised to maintain six companies of soldiers for her service and was provided with arms and equipment for same. These companies were always kept at full strength, and as soon as the men were sufficiently trained they were disbanded and replaced by fresh levies, who, as they in turn became trained, were replaced by still others. In this way O'Neill each year trained several thousand of his clansmen, without at any given time exceeding the Queen's six companies.

At the same time he laid in a vast quantity of lead—for roofing his new castle at Dungannon—tons upon tons of it. In point of fact the lead was never used for roofing, but was cast into bullets; so that on taking the field O'Neill's troops were in possession of abundant reserves of ammunition.

The change in the Irish is suitably described by Fynes Morrison, secretary to Mountjoy: "The Irish Kerne were at the first rude soldiers, so as two or three of them were employed to discharge one piece . . . but now they were grown ready in managing their pieces, and bold to skirmish in bogs and woody passages"—the last, by the way, a tribute to their use of ground.

### Conditions of Fighting in Ulster.

It has been pointed out earlier that there were two land routes into Ulster, an eastern and a western. Consequently each year saw two separate campaigns—one between O'Neill and the English on the Leinster side, the other between O'Donnell and the Connacht English and their allies. Sometimes these simultaneous campaigns were mutually helpful; sometimes the Connacht operations adversely affected the main theatre in the east; sometimes, though seldom, it was possible to transfer forces from one theatre to the other. In any event, it must be observed, O'Neill was not in a position to exercise the functions of a generalissimo. O'Donnell was his ally, not his subordinate. O'Neill might advise what he thought the soundest military course, but he could not compel obedience. In strictness, of course, O'Donnell's operations were subsidiary—to contain as many hostile troops as possible west of the Shannon. The smallest force that could achieve this was sufficient, and every man over this minimum could be more profitably employed in the eastern theatre. But the special aims of O'Donnell sometimes conflicted with sound strategy: he did not realise that victory in Connacht had no value, if the English were victorious in the east.

At the beginning of Hugh O'Neill's war the English had established certain footholds on the southern border of Ulster. They had posts in Cavan and Monaghan which served as a buffer between Ulster and the rich midland territories. In the commanding position of Enniskillen they had a strong castle, and at Portmore on the Blackwater Hugh O'Neill himself had recently conceded to the Queen some 240 acres as a site for a fort—near the present Blackwater town. This fort, of course, while it was occupied, secured passage into Ulster by the eastern route.

Hostilities—which for years had appeared imminent—definitely broke out in 1594. In that year O'Neill himself did not participate, and the fighting was confined to the western side. In reviewing the long-sustained operations of this war it will be best to take each year separately, for in that way the course of the struggle can be more exactly followed.





1594.

The Lord Deputy Fitzwilliam, in pursuance of a scheme of "peaceful penetration" of the Ulster borders, had placed a strong garrison in the castle of Enniskillen. Maguire, the lord of that territory, as soon as Fitzwilliam departed, entered into an alliance with O'Donnell to recover this most important strategic point. The Irish chiefs, having no siege appliances, blockaded the castle and reduced the garrison to very severe straits. Bingham, the Lord President of Connacht, was ordered to relieve the beleaguered garrison and to that end collected a force of English from the border posts and some auxiliaries together with much stores of provisions. It happened that O'Donnell had marched home at this time, and Maguire was maintaining the investment alone—for frequently it was difficult to keep the clansmen in the field for a prolonged stretch at any distance from home. Fortunately, Cormac O'Neill, Hugh's brother, had joined Maguire with 100 horse and 300 foot, and made good the deficiency. The Irish chiefs attacked the relieving force under disadvantageous conditions at a ford on the Erne five miles from Enniskillen, and gained a complete victory. All Bingham's waggon-train was lost, and the Irish thereafter called the place Bellanabriska, or the Ford of the Biscuits, from the store of provisions they captured. Soon after the garrison of the castle surrendered and were replaced by a garrison of Maguire's men; while that chief marched into Connacht devastating the English settlements in that province. So that the opening of the great struggle was marked by a very respectable success for the Irish.

1595.

Everything now indicated a decisive struggle, and both sides set about adequate preparations for it. O'Donnell hired 600 Scots mercenaries under MacLeod of Ara; and Elizabeth sent over as her general-in-chief Sir John Norris, a celebrated veteran of the Netherlands campaigns, with 3,000 fresh troops—2,000 being men who had seen service in Brittany. Russell had replaced Fitzwilliam as Lord Deputy.

In the main eastern theatre O'Neill commenced opera-

tions by a surprise attack on the fort of Portmore by a detachment under his brother Art. This enterprise was completely successful and was followed up by incursions into Cavan. In May O'Neill took the field in person and laid siege to Monaghan with a large Confederate force. Bagenal, marching with 1,800 men from Newry, contrived to throw succours into the place; and made his way back though hard pressed by O'Neill on the way. A month later Norris made a determined attempt to restore the situation in Ulster, having now got his new army in marching trim. Accompanied by the Deputy he marched to Armagh and made that his base. O'Neill declined battle and fell back northward, abandoning and levelling the works at Portmore. Norris did not follow him into the woods and mountains of Tyrone but strengthened and garrisoned Armagh, and then turning westward he re-victualled and stiffened Monaghan, and with his field army stayed in readiness at Newry.

No sooner had Norris returned to Newry than O'Neill re-invested Monaghan—a point of great menace to Ulster if held by the English in permanence. Norris once more marched to relieve the garrison; but this time O'Neill had sufficient forces to engage him, and took post at Clontibret on a tributary stream of the Blackwater five miles from the town. The English infantry made two fruitless attacks and Norris himself was wounded. A final effort was made by the English cavalry under Segrave, a Meath man. Segrave was a man of gigantic size and strength and distinguished personal courage, and he singled out O'Neill. The latter, though a far slighter man, was the quicker, and possessed the better skill-at-arms, and killed his man in single combat, whereupon the English horsemen gave way and the entire force fell back to Newry in some confusion. After this Monaghan surrendered and operations ceased for the year.

1595 was also marked by a western campaign under the direction of O'Donnell. Enniskillen, the reward of the previous year's victories, was his base for this year's operations. Moving down through Fermanagh and Leitrim he entered the rich lands of Roscommon, destroyed the English holdings there and drove the cattle across the Shannon, where he served in like fashion the English settlements in Longford or Annally O'Farrell.

Bingham was quite unable to make head against him, though he assembled at Boyle the garrisons of Sligo, Ballymote and Tulsk. In addition he sent a naval raiding force against the Donegal coast. But O'Donnell was not in the least deterred and marched into Galway as far as Dunmore and Tuam, pillaging and burning the holdings of the English and their partisans. All the province now began to come over to him—notably Ulick Burke, who held the castle of Sligo and who previously killed Bingham's brother. Secure in the possession of Sligo, O'Donnell returned to Tirconnel by the coast route, thus evading Bingham who had thought to catch him in the Curlew Hills near Boyle—assuming O'Donnell returned the way he came. O'Donnell had succeeded in practically abolishing the English military power in north Connacht; and at the end of the year he returned to the province to clinch matters and destroyed 13 castles.

The important thing about O'Donnell's operations this year was that they fitted in exactly with O'Neill's. He was able to get his own work done—and very well done—in time to march with a strong contingent to join O'Neill in front of Monaghan, and thus materially contributed to the successes in the main theatre of operations. The Irish chiefs had good reason to be satisfied with the results of the year's fighting. The English position on the Ulster border had been completely put out of joint and practically all of North Connacht had been secured to their interests. And the moral gain was altogether incalculable.

## 1596.

In view of the Irish successes of the previous year it is not surprising to find the English ready to negotiate. O'Neill also was ready to negotiate and spun out time in that manner. In addition he negotiated to more effect with Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne and the O'Moores of Leix to keep the English busy around Dublin, and the O'Moores gained a not inconsiderable success at Stradbally. Norris withdrew most of his troops from the Ulster frontier and moved into Connacht where he placed strong fresh garrisons in Galway, Athenry, Roscommon and Boyle, but did not dispute the north-western portion of the province with O'Donnell, who was again on the move

there. This summer three Spanish ships reached Donegal Bay for O'Donnell with a supply of arms and ammunition and 180 musketeers, besides a promise of further assistance. O'Neill's only military activity this year was towards the end of it when he attacked and captured Armagh and demolished the fortifications—thus depriving the English of their last important pied-à-terre in Ulster. The year 1596, though not marked by any very noteworthy fighting, had the net result of still further strengthening the hold of O'Neill's confederacy through the northern half of Ireland. For the following year Clifford succeeded Bingham in Connacht, while Borough succeeded Russell as Deputy besides supplanting Norris as Commander-in-Chief.

### 1597.

Although it had no effect on the general course of history we must not omit to narrate the death in this spring of Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne. The great old guerilla chief was betrayed by a villainous kinsman and slain. For a generation he had held his mountaineers as a menace in the vicinity of Dublin; though never strong enough to inflict a decisive defeat on the English he never gave them long repose. He was a permanent "containing force," pinning a strong force in the neighbourhood of Dublin, and ready to co-operate with anyone and everyone who raised the native standard in any part of the country. As a soldier Feagh holds a high place among the great guerilla leaders of history.

The new Deputy, Lord Borough, resolved to make a comprehensive effort against the confederated chieftains. Clifford was to assemble all the available troops in Connacht at Boyle and to invade Tirconnel by Sligo and the coast route; Barnewell of Trimleston with 1,000 Palesmen was to move from Mullingar into Cavan to co-operate with the Deputy; the latter concentrated his main army at Drogheda for an invasion of Tyrone by the historic Armagh route. We have seen how geography naturally caused an invasion of Ulster to operate on two widely-separated lines; but to operate on *three* was a glaring military fault that neither geography nor anything else could condone—and for which Borough in due course had to pay dearly.

The Deputy entered Armagh about the beginning of August and advanced to the Blackwater. O'Neill offered but little opposition, confining his troops to continual skirmishing; and Borough was enabled to re-build and fortify Portmore, placing therein Captain Williams and a garrison of 300 men well munitioned and provisioned. Borough then prepared to move on Dungannon, but O'Neill, who had by now assembled all his forces, drew him into a general engagement on very unfavourable ground at Drumlinch about midway between Portmore and Dungannon. The English were totally defeated and Borough himself was mortally wounded, dying at Newry whither he retreated. But Williams, a most capable officer, held Portmore for all the rest of this year against repeated attacks though often in sore straits for food.

Unfortunate as the Deputy's own army had been, Barnewell's column fared much worse. O'Neill had sent against him into the midlands a force of 400 mercenaries under his best officer, Tyrrell—one of that class described by English writers as "loose men, and such as be mere captains of bonnoghts" or mercenary soldiers. Tyrrell had far less than half Barnewell's force, but his troops were of far superior quality and far better led. The Irish commander hung around Mullingar and hampered all Barnewell's movements, eventually drawing the whole column into ambush. With half his force he enticed the English into the wooded defile ever since known as Tyrrell's Pass, where his lieutenant, O'Connor Faly, lay hidden with the rest, drew them past O'Connor's men who then fired a murderous volley into the column. Tyrrell faced about, and the rest was a massacre. As the signal to O'Connor, Tyrrell had arranged that his own pipers should strike up his march at the selected moment. No English soldier escaped from this masterpiece of tactical skill, while in its general results the battle was important also. This successful "showing the flag" in the very heart of Ireland could not fail to impress the Irish in the south with a sense of O'Neill's military strength; while the victory could not but seriously impede communications between Dublin and Connacht.

In the latter province Clifford had to some extent undone O'Donnell's work by judicious negotiations in a conciliatory vein, and O'Donnell raided as far south as



Oranmore, Galway and Athenry. But this time it was Irish possessions he harried and Irish cattle he drove north. He inflicted more damage on the Connacht Irish than on Clifford, and in the circumstances counter-machinations after O'Neill's manner would have been more profitable. At all events, Clifford assembled 700 men at Boyle and marched to Sligo and thence northward, crossing the Erne near Belleek. Tibbot-na-Long, "the Queen's MacWilliam," co-operated from the sea and had brought from Galway some pieces of heavy ordnance to attack O'Donnell's strong castle of Ballyshannon. This stronghold was held for O'Donnell by a Scots officer of determined bravery, one Captain Hugh Crawford, with 80 soldiers, half of them Spanish and half Irish. Clifford bombarded the castle for three days, but the walls were too strong; so that an attempt was made to approach under a pent-house and sap them. But the garrison destroyed the shelter by hurling down rocks and beams, and every attack was beaten off. Very soon O'Donnell, with O'Rourke and Maguire—in all 2,000 men—arrived and hemmed in the besiegers. At dawn on August 18th Clifford slipped away, fording the river just above the falls of Assaroe, over which several of his men were drowned. He was forced to abandon three cannon and considerable stores, but succeeded in regaining Boyle by resolute fighting. The operations of 1597 terminated by negotiations concluding a truce until the following May—one provision being that Williams' garrison in Portmore should be re-victualled. But the next year witnessed more severe fighting than ever.

### 1598.

O'Neill commenced operations immediately on the expiry of the truce and laid siege to Portmore. This time he made no effort to force the place, but drew lines of circumvallation round it and prevented all foraging. At the same time he invested Armagh and took post with a field force at Mullaghbane between Armagh and Newry to cover the two sieges. In the meantime Tyrrell dominated the Midlands completely, and this energetic officer O'Neill now sent through Leix into Ormond to raise the standard of revolt in Munster. There was in the south at that time no force capable of making head against



Tyrrell, and an English detachment which landed at Dungarvan and set out northward towards Dublin was defeated with the loss of 400 men.

The Earl of Ormond was Deputy for this year and marched to rescue his own patrimony from Tyrrell, sending Bagenal, the Marshal or Commander-in-Chief, against O'Neill. Ormond did nothing, was severely handled in Leix, and shut himself up in Kilkenny. Tyrrell was left with a free hand, and he was the very man to make the most of it. The O'Moores and O'Connors rallied to him and English interests were lost in the southern Midlands and Ormond. Bagenal assembled 4,000 foot, 350 horse and some field pieces at Newry for an overwhelming attack on O'Neill.

His advance was very rapid. He forced O'Neill's covering detachment from Mullaghbane, relieved Armagh and quartered himself there. O'Neill took up a position covering the siege of Portmore and about a mile from that place, facing towards Armagh. He was joined by O'Donnell who marched rapidly in response to an urgent summons. The total Irish strength was about 4,500 foot and 600 horse—a slight numerical superiority that did not compensate for inferiority of equipment. O'Neill had selected and prepared his ground with much skill, and throughout the battle the Irish forces were excellently handled. The victory—the Yellow Ford—was one of the most complete ever gained by the Irish. Bagenal was killed, and the English lost about 1,700 men besides artillery, baggage and colours. The remnants sought refuge in Armagh, the cavalry riding for Dundalk. Portmore and Armagh speedily surrendered, and Ulster was cleared of the invaders, while O'Neill's stores of war material were very appreciably increased.

The results of this great victory were very far-reaching. O'Donnell at once established his headquarters in the strong castle of Ballymote, from which he was able to dominate a great extent of Connacht. The O'Tooles, O'Byrnes, and Kavanaghs once more became a menace to Dublin and the south-east, while in the south English affairs went from bad to worse. Tyrrell succeeded in rallying to his standard many of the Munster chiefs, including most of the Geraldines who were now somewhat recovered materially from the ravages of Sidney and

Grev. Sir Thomas Norris, the Lord President, abandoned Kilmallock and retired to Cork; and all the old Desmond strongholds except Askeaton, Castlemaine, and Mallow were recovered. A nephew of the last Earl of Desmond was created Earl by O'Neill and recognised his suzerainty, and except in the coast towns English power was non-existent. In effect, by the end of 1598 the entire fabric of Tudor conquest in Ireland was overthrown and Elizabeth found herself not a whit more forward than her grandfather was when he started his task. No wonder she resolved to make a supreme effort to recover her possession of the country.

### 1599.

Elizabeth had sent 2,000 men to Ireland in the latter part of 1598 and the next year she sent a further 16,000 foot and 1,300 horse. There was now no illusion as to the nature and importance of the Irish war, but the Queen let her heart get the better of her head when she sent Essex to take the command. Instead of attacking O'Neill, Essex was persuaded by the Council—who owned lands in Munster—to make an expedition to the south. He did so with 7,000 men. Now, 7,000 men might well have made a triumphal march through Munster a couple of years earlier; but Tyrrell's operations had borne fruit, for that tireless soldier had stayed on in Munster to organise and train troops for the new Earl of Desmond. So that now there were in the south some 8,000 fighting men of fair quality, and the march of Essex was ceaselessly harassed. Strengthening the garrisons of Wicklow and Naas as a check to the mountaineers, the new Deputy set out for Maryborough. Near that town Owny MacRory O'Moore mauled him severely at the Pass of Plumes, as it was called, from the fine feathers left on the field. The English loss is stated by some at 500 men. Turning south through Tipperary Essex took the castle of Cahir on the Suir and then moved up that river to Kilmallock, where the President, Norris, was awaiting him. He moved as far west as Askeaton, and at Croom had rather the worse of an encounter with Desmond's levies. From Limerick he set out on his return march by Mallow, Fermoy, Lismore and Waterford. The concluding stages, from Waterford to Dublin,

were persistently harassed by the Wicklow clansmen. This aimless campaign accomplished nothing whatever, and had the moral effect of still further encouraging the Irish. Against the main enemy, O'Neill, Essex had done nothing whatever beyond strengthening the garrisons of Carrickfergus, Newry, Dundalk and Drogheda, which alone held out for the English in the north. His subordinate, Harrington, with a column of 600 men, was cut to pieces in the Wicklow Mountains by Felim O'Byrne.

Pressure was brought to bear on Essex to adopt more vigorous measures, and 2,000 more troops were sent over. This time the old double invasion was once more tried, but the Deputy himself merely made a reconnaissance in force on the Ulster border with 300 horse and 1,300 foot. There was no fighting, and another truce was the result. Clifford in Connacht, however, prepared to make serious war on O'Donnell. That chief controlled nearly all the province and made forays into Thomond, but O'Connor in Sligo held out stubbornly against him in Collooney Castle.

Early in August Clifford was at Boyle with 1,900 foot and 200 horse. Tibbot-na-Long was again to co-operate—this time coming by sea to Sligo with material to re-fortify that important post. O'Donnell despatched 400 men under MacWilliam to oppose this landing, left his cousin, Nial Garv, to continue the siege of Collooney, and himself with his main force moved up to hold the passes of the Curlew Hills, half-a-dozen miles north-west of Boyle. There on August 14th he gained a complete victory—a very typical victory of the O'Neill—Tyrrell stamp, won by use of ground and excellent troop-leading by himself and his subordinates. For unquestionably by this time the better stamp of Irish troops had established a definite tactical ascendancy over any in the English service.

This Viceroyalty of Essex marked the highest point in O'Neill's fortunes. That Deputy had done nothing except to fritter away a great army in petty garrisons and useless marches. Continental interest in O'Neill's struggle was now much more marked, and in this year he received from the Pope 22,000 gold pieces, and from the King of Spain a couple of vessels with arms for 2,000 men and

other stores. Finally he marched with 3,000 men down through the Midlands to within a few miles of Cork and made a comprehensive attempt to consolidate his political alliances in Munster. But this work was still unfinished when Mountjoy came over.

### 1600.

The new Deputy landed about the end of February in this year. The total forces at his disposal totalled about 14,000 foot, 2,000 horse, and 1,500 "gunners, cannoneers, armorers, and clerks of the ordnance." Of these some 3,000 were allotted for service in Munster, a like number for Leinster, and the bulk of the rest to the main theatre of war, Ulster. The earlier reverses had taught Mountjoy one important lesson—the great difficulty of attacking O'Neill's country by land. So he decided on an intelligent use of sea-power which the English in their war with O'Neill had never yet turned to account.

The main attack on Ulster this year was to be made by sea, by a landing in Lough Foyle. That deep inlet with the river-valley leading up from it offered a way of penetrating between the territories of O'Neill and O'Donnell, of getting a footing in their home districts, and of breaking down their resistance from the rear. Mountjoy did not do things by halves: he assigned to this expedition 4,000 foot, 200 horse, 3 pieces of ordnance, supplies for a hospital, and material for fortifications. The command was given to Sir Henry Docwra, a thoroughly capable officer. Mountjoy himself, with 2,000 men, took the field in the Newry district and drew O'Neill thither, but this was only a feint to enable Docwra to make good his landing, which he did about the middle of May. The first landing was effected at Culmore, just at the head of Lough Foyle, and here a fort was built with a garrison of 600 men. Then the column marched across the isthmus and occupied Aileach, the old royal seat at the head of Lough Swilly, with 150 men; and next moving up the Foyle, Derry was fortified as the main garrison, and Dun-na-long as an auxiliary post. The stone for the works was secured from some churches and monasteries and the wood from the forests in the river-valleys.

O'Neill and O'Donnell concentrated towards Derry

when they had news of the landing, but their forces were ill-adapted for siege operations, and there was no fighting beyond a few desultory skirmishes. O'Neill had enough to busy himself with on his own southern border where Mountjoy again became active; and O'Donnell went on his customary foray into Connacht and Thomond, leaving his cousin Nial to maintain a blockade or rather an observation of Docwra's posts. But Nial turned traitor and was instrumental in securing for Docwra the Castle of Lifford ten miles up the Foyle—an accession of incalculable value to the English. Docwra's chain of posts now formed an impassable barrier between Tirconnell and Tirowen. In that mountainous and wooded region the only routes practicable for large forces were the river valleys, and these the English now dominated. They could always keep their posts equipped, provisioned, and garrisoned by sea and only needed to maintain a successful defence. Docwra, though his force numbered several thousands, never took the field except for forays around his garrisons. But he made secure his footing. O'Donnell's treatment of the question of these garrisons is the test of his generalship—he was only a good troop-leader, and not a strategist at all. His was the force to operate against these invaders and an energetic and continued blockade would have achieved much. It was no time to go plundering in Connacht when the enemy was at his own back gates. It is true that when he returned after his cousin's treachery he did achieve some slight successes, but the damage was done then. And it should be remembered that at this time there was no question of any English invasion coming from Connacht into Tirconnell.

O'Neill could not himself maintain a blockade of the Lough Foyle garrisons, for Mountjoy kept him fully occupied. In May the Deputy had strengthened the garrisons of Carlingford, Newry, and Dundalk, and in September he began working up into Ulster again by the old route. He had 2,400 foot and 300 horse, and his primary objective was Armagh. This proved beyond his strength, though he succeeded in forcing O'Neill's works in the "Moyry Pass" in the Fews Mountains between Dundalk and Armagh. To secure this for future operations he built the fort of Mount Norris and garrisoned



it with 400 men. Then he turned east to Carlingford, near which place he was fiercely struck into by O'Neill and his force heavily mauled before he made good his retreat.

During this year the operations in the remainder of Ireland were of minor importance. Mountjoy was concentrating at the decisive point. In the rest of the country his aim and that of his lieutenants was to undermine the political confederacy O'Neill had so laboriously built up—and in this they were largely successful. This policy was worked in co-operation with another of military execution against those who adhered to the Irish side. Lands were pillaged and ravaged, houses burned, hostages seized—and generally the machinery used for suppressing the Geraldine Rebellion was put in operation. Mountjoy in his first year of office as Deputy unquestionably made up a vast amount of the leeway.

#### 1601.

In June of this year Mountjoy began a systematic attack on Ulster which he pressed with great vigour during the rest of the year. Moving north by Mount Norris he re-occupied Armagh and garrisoned it with 750 foot and 100 horse, built a new fort at Charlemont near the old site of Portmore and placed there 350 men under the old commandant, Williams. As a link connecting his garrisons on the coast from Carrickfergus to Newry he fortified Downpatrick, leaving there 300 men. In all he had in garrisons in south-east Ulster fully 4,000 men. Up to the end of August he spent the time cutting down the woods, making causeways over the bogs, and generally improving his communications. Ulster was being gradually penetrated: from Docwra's castle at Lifford to Williams' at Portmore was not much more than forty miles as the crow flies.

Nor was there much relief for O'Neill to be expected from elsewhere in Ireland. The indefatigable Tyrrell kept up a guerilla warfare in the Midlands, but in Munster there was no opposition to the English. O'Donnell's hands were kept full by an exceedingly bold stroke of Nial Garv. That resolute and capable renegade got 500 English soldiers from Docwra, and while Red Hugh was absent in Connacht marched out of Lifford, through the



Barnesmore Gap, and seized Donegal Abbey, a strong and large stone structure at the head of Donegal Bay, where he could be provisioned by sea. There he resisted all attacks from the end of June to the end of September. Then one night the powder-magazine exploded and the entire building burst into flames. Most of the garrison were burned or cut down by O'Donnell's men, but Nial and a couple of hundred escaped along the strand covered by the guns of an English ship in the bay. But evidently O'Donnell could take no pressure off O'Neill.

In short it was only a question of time until O'Neill would have to submit if left to his own resources. But at last it seemed that his negotiations with Spain had borne fruit. On September 23 Don Juan del Aguila landed at Kinsale with 3,200 Spanish infantry and prepared to fortify himself there and wait for O'Neill or some of the other Irish notables to join forces with him. A little later 700 more Spaniards under Ocampo landed at Castlehaven thirty miles further west. O'Sullivan Beare offered 1,000 armed men and another 1,000 if arms were available for them. Mountjoy, who was in Kilkenny when Aguila landed, collecting all available forces and summoning reinforcements, marched at once to Kinsale. About the middle of October he had 10,000 men before the town and a fleet off the coast, and later 6,000 men with ample cannon and stores came from England.

Early in November O'Donnell collected 2,500 picked men and marched south, evading Carew in the Slieve Felim mountains by an extraordinary forced march. He effected a junction with O'Sullivan Beare and Ocampo and took post at Bandon, flanking Mountjoy's investing army at a distance of five or six miles. On December 19th O'Neill arrived and occupied the road to Cork. The Deputy's army was now virtually surrounded itself, and it was O'Neill's policy to blockade the English in turn. The severities of the winter weather were causing great havoc in Mountjoy's ranks, and the sallies of the Spaniards gave them no rest. To isolate them on the land side, to harry them ceaselessly, seemed to promise the best results—more especially as large numbers of the Irish troops were very raw, all the Munster levies in fact.

But O'Neill was overruled by his allies and a combined night attack on the English lines was planned for Xmas

Eve. This miscarried owing to fearful weather, lack of discipline among the troops, and, it is said, faulty work of the guides—if no worse. Mountjoy gained a complete victory, and a week later Aguila surrendered Kinsale after a three months' siege.

### 1602.

The Irish cause was now hopeless, though O'Donnell went to Spain in a vain endeavour to get further assistance. The fighting of this final year has little technical interest, but there were many heroic incidents on the Irish side such as the defence of Dunboy, and the retreat or rather migration of O'Sullivan Beare. But it should not be overlooked that the soldiers who made these exploits possible were the veterans of the invincible Tyrrell who kept the field through the year in face of all sorts of odds.

In O'Neill's own territory Mountjoy—now secure from all possible interference in other quarters—set about a wholesale policy of destruction. 8,000 soldiers were set the task of making a desert of Tirowen, and largely accomplished it. O'Neill submitted at Mellifont in March, 1603.

The causes of O'Neill's ultimate defeat were various. One was the exhaustion of his resources. Munitions of war were very hard to procure in suitable quantity, and his supplies could not be always replenished as he needed. Then, too, the nature of the struggle put a very severe drain on his man-power. The old trained men gradually were killed off and were not easy to replace. Only the professional soldiers like Tyrrell's men kept up the high standard of tactical efficiency to the very end. Another really serious drawback was O'Neill's lack of artillery: the English really defeated O'Neill by a system of fortified posts that could not have withstood any ordnance except light field pieces. A few heavy cannon would have made an enormous difference.

In point of generalship there were few grave faults on the Irish side, and many very able achievements. The two serious errors were on the part of O'Donnell—in giving Docwra a free hand in 1600, and in forcing the hand of O'Neill at Kinsale in the following year. The fact is that O'Neill was too far ahead of all his allies:

most of them could not or would not bring themselves to co-operate steadily and determinedly with him. They were all thinking feudally still, not nationally: he had not the material to make a confederacy at all. And the net result of his ten years' war was that at last the English did really possess and dominate the whole of Ireland, as far as the assertion of military strength was concerned.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## The Confederate War.

AFTER the crushing of Hugh O'Neill no further serious attempt was made to wrest the country from the English for about 40 years. On the contrary, the victors largely strengthened their grip by confiscations and plantations, and by the general introduction of English forms of administration and government. But after a time, as English affairs took on a troubled aspect at home, discontent in Ireland again began to make itself felt. An effort was made to turn to account the difficulties in which the conquerors were gradually becoming entangled. As events in England trended towards the Civil War, so almost inevitably there came about in Ireland the Rebellion of 1641, as it is generally called.

On the purely military side there were in Ireland many of the elements of warfare on the most serious scale. In fact, the main difference between the Irish armies—once they were got together—and any others of the period, was that they were worse paid! The Thirty Years' War on the Continent—in which practically every State in Europe took part—afforded an excellent training ground for officers, and practically every Irish family of note had some of its men serving in the "Low Countries" or in "High Germanie." And as for the rank and file, there were the disbanded soldiers of the army Strafford had raised for the King and been compelled to disband. These amounted to 1,000 cavalrymen and 8,000 foot, and were described as "a number of idle fellows, who had learned the use of arms, and were fit to give spirit to others."

The plan of the Irish leaders had four chief objects: (a) A rising after harvest when their own supplies were assured and the season unfavourable to the English—always severely tried by the Irish winters; (b) a simultaneous attack on all towns and posts in the country;

(c) the capture of Dublin Castle—said to contain 12,000 stand of arms; (d) to obtain officers, munitions, and money from the Continent. Of these they accomplished the first, rising out on October 22nd; they also succeeded in obtaining the last in reasonable time and quantity. Also the rising met a very fair measure of success in number and value of places seized; and in fact the only part that failed altogether was the attempt to capture Dublin Castle. Not unnaturally, Ulster, as the most recently subdued province, was where the success of the insurgents was most outstanding. In fact, very speedily, a very large force took the field in the northern province under the leadership of Sir Felim O'Neill of the great Tirowen family. Their numbers were placed as high as 30,000, which is probably an exaggeration. Certainly nothing like half that number were properly armed. These Ulster insurgents formed the backbone of the Irish resistance during the entire war.

The insurgents managed to secure some of the most important strategic points in Ulster by surprise or stratagem, including the fort of Charlemont, Newry, Carrickmacross, and Castleblayney. The Planter garrisons retained Enniskillen, Derry, Lisburn, Belfast, and Carrickfergus. Charles I. immediately sent them 1,500 men and authorised the levying of regiments of the settlers. But at first their forces were neither sufficiently numerous nor sufficiently concentrated to take any offensive action. Ormond, appointed Lieutenant-General or Commander-in-Chief, had 1,500 standing troops, and embodied six new regiments and thirteen volunteer companies. In addition landowners of the English interest were authorised to raise troops. In all Sir Felim probably had as many men available as the two bodies of his enemies combined, but in point of training and equipment he was at the moment very inferior to them.

The military operations in 1641 were not very noteworthy. Sir Felim, after an unsuccessful attempt on Lisburn, marched into Leinster and blockaded Drogheda with his tumultuary host. A reinforcement of six companies from Dublin were annihilated at Julianstown, which considerably enhanced the prestige of the insurgents. Coote's savageries alienated many of the Leinster

peasantry from Ormond and the English side; and altogether up to the end of the year the insurrection gathered force and spread with some steadiness and rapidity.

### 1642.

This was a sort of transition year, in so far as a national government grew up gradually and directed the warlike energies of the country. This entailed a unification and regularising of the military operations in all quarters. The process was gradual and extended over the greatest part of the year. Moreover it was partly a matter of accident; not altogether one of design.

One of the chief events of military interest in the early part of the year was the arrival of Munro with 2,500 Scottish troops at Carrickfergus in April. These were sent by the Scottish Government to protect the interests of the settlers in East Ulster, who were in the main of Scottish descent. Carrickfergus, the strongest post in this region, was the main headquarters and base of the Scottish armies during all the years of the war. As the months went on these Scottish forces were heavily reinforced. Thus seriously menaced at home and equally by Ormond on the southern flank, Sir Felim raised the siege of Drogheda early in March\* and abandoned Dundalk at the end of that month. Later on the Insurgents lost Newry, Armagh and Dungannon, but held on stubbornly to the fort of Charlemont. In the north-west Sir William Stewart with the force called the "Lagan Army" gained other successes; and altogether by the middle of the year the Irish in Ulster were reduced to complete impotence.

Ormond in Leinster had also received a steady flow of reinforcements, but for a long time he achieved nothing beyond a few forays near Dublin and the recovery of Drogheda. Lord Mountgarrett, a nobleman of great influence, was the main lever of the Irish success in the southern parts of Leinster: largely through his influence the counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny, and Waterford were secured. Even his rout at Kilrush in Co. Kildare when he rashly engaged Ormond in a general action did not nullify the good results of the securing of these counties. The Irish had now a wide area of territory in their control



separating the English in the Dublin district from those in Cork and the adjoining areas, and it was rich territory too in natural resources. Moreover it gave them complete control of the Barrow-Suir entry into the country, which was admirably placed with reference to those continental countries from which assistance might be expected.

In Connacht there were desultory operations. A disorderly Irish force was defeated at Ballintubber, but in seizing and holding Galway the Irish achieved a considerable success. County Clare or Thomond was also completely in their hands, while the capture of Limerick and its castle at the end of June was an event of the very first importance. Limerick Castle contained ample stores of ammunition and a number of pieces of ordnance. The latter included one 32-pounder with the aid of which all the castles in Co. Limerick were reduced except Askeaton and Lough Gur. Invading Cork they captured the castle of Liscarroll near Buttevant; but just afterwards were badly defeated on the ground by Inchiquin, lately made Lord President of Munster. Inchiquin made his winter quarters in Mallow, where he was conveniently posted to cover his sea bases at Youghal, Cork, and Kinsale and hold county Cork for the English.

It will be seen that at the end of 1642 the Irish were quite well situated in a military sense. They dominated a large expanse of the country, and had possession of three of the most important seaports. In point of fact they got in at this period ample stores of ammunition, thousands of stands of arms, hundreds of veteran officers, and one great general. The reason of their failure was the fact that old Irish and Anglo-Irish were not properly fused into one homogeneous nation. The only common bond between them was the Catholic religion, and in Ireland this fact was utilised by the English Royalists to the undoing of the national cause.

### 1643.

In October, 1642, the Confederate Parliament sat in Kilkenny, which remained for many years the capital of Ireland. For Kilkenny was the seat of the Government

that *de facto* administered most of the country. And in many respects it was a suitable choice: as far as the southern half of the country was concerned it was centrally placed, it was convenient to Waterford, and it was a town of very fair size and importance. It was sufficiently distant from Dublin—the nearest English base—to be secure from sudden attack, and yet near enough to impair the freedom of action of an army based on Dublin. The main defect in its situation was the distance from Ulster; but no town nearer to Ulster was as suitable as Kilkenny, having reference to all circumstances.

The Confederation, as it is commonly called, enacted that an army should be maintained in each province, and that O'Neill should command in Ulster, Preston in Leinster, Barry in Munster, and Burke in Connacht. Now the provinces were on the whole distinct military areas, and the arrangement was not inherently vicious. But there was no co-ordination of effort; there was not even unity of aim among the armies—for some sought independence, others merely religious liberty. The numbers, stores, etc., were allotted on a basis of provincial "pull," and with no regard to the requirements of the military situation as a whole. However, let us trace the course of operations in the four provinces.

In Ulster Owen Roe O'Neill, who had landed in July of last year, spent the earlier months of his command in organising and training the Ulstermen, disheartened as they were at the adverse turn in their fortunes. Occupying Charlemont strongly as an advanced post towards the Anglo-Scottish garrisons in Antrim and Down, he continued the training of his forces in Monaghan, Cavan, and Leitrim, well beyond striking distance of the hostile forces. Of heavy fighting there was little, but there was never any lengthy period without some partial combats, by dint of which the Irish became gradually inured to war and acquired confidence in themselves. For all that the opposing forces in Ulster were too numerous and too well-found for O'Neill to make any real headway against them; and accordingly about the end of June, 1643, he marched into Leinster.

This was a perfectly sound military step. It was in fact the taking over by the Irish troops of the most valuable supply-area in the country. Meath was pro-

verbially fertile, had suffered no depredations, and an army there could easily co-operate with the other armies of the Confederation as occasion offered. Moore held Drogheda with a considerable garrison, and Dublin was, of course, strongly garrisoned also. Monk, with the English field force, was in Wicklow. On the Irish side there was a detachment in Westmeath and the main forces were in Queen's County and Kildare. Moore was



quite unable to resist O'Neill in the open field, and during July, August, and September the Irish general reduced all the posts in the region except Trim and Athboy, which latter place he was besieging. In this strait the English Government recalled Monk from Wicklow and moved him northward to reinforce Moore and drive the Ulster army out of Leinster. O'Neill selected a strong position at Portlester on the Blackwater some miles from Trim, and there gave battle on September 11th when he gained a complete victory, Moore being killed. Four days afterwards a cessation of hostilities—with Ormonde alone, be it noted—was signed by the Confederation, and the fruits of the campaign in Meath were lost.

In the rest of Leinster, too, the Confederation's troops had met with success upon the whole. Preston secured control of King's County early on after stubborn fighting. But in February he failed to cut off the retreat of the English forces, evacuating Connacht and marching from Athlone to Dublin, suffering a severe repulse in the attempt. The following month he met an even worse rebuff in an attempt to intercept Ormonde, when the latter was retreating from before Ross. But in April and May he secured control of Westmeath, Kildare, and Carlow.

In Connacht the Confederates, as we have seen, compelled the evacuation of the province by the main English forces and secured it entirely except for a few castles in Galway and Roscommon. In Munster, also, victory inclined to the Irish side. It was Purcell, Barry's second-in-command, who compelled Ormonde to raise the siege of Ross; while in the old strategic centre of Kilmallock Barry beat off a determined attack on his headquarters. In June Barry inflicted on Vavasour at Kilworth an utter defeat, capturing himself, his standards, and his guns, and leaving the English forces in the south powerless outside their garrisons.

In sum, the military position of the Confederation was materially improved by the events of 1643. They dominated far more of the country—and far more important districts—than had any Irish force at war since the time of Edward Bruce 300 years before. Not even Hugh O'Neill in his best days had control of as much of the country. With three-fourths of the country in their hands the proper policy was now to concentrate against

the Scots in Ulster—who from the start repudiated the Cessation of Hostilities. But, of course, the cessation was a colossal blunder to begin with : it merely enabled Ormonde to draft with impunity to England for the King's service troops that the King would probably have to get in any event.

### Events to the Arrival of the Papal Nuncio.

It now became necessary to make head against the forces which declined to participate in the Cessation, and which inclined rather against Charles I. in favour of the English and Scottish Parliamentarians. Ulster was naturally the theatre where these forces were strongest, and it became desirable to send reinforcements there. These reinforcements, amounting to the considerable figure of 7,000 men, were not put under O'Neill's command but under Castlehaven, Preston's Lieutenant-General—a virtual supersession of the best soldier in Ireland. But O'Neill took it as became the best soldier in Ireland.

Castlehaven first marched into Connacht, crossing the Shannon at Banagher, and reducing a number of outlying garrisons of small size before entering on his Ulster campaign. Then he concentrated at Granard preparatory to uniting with O'Neill—still at Portlester—for an advance into Ulster. Munro was at Cavan with 7,000 men; and Castlehaven broke camp and fell back on O'Neill, leaving a rearguard of 100 horse and 500 foot at the Bridge of Finea. The fight there with Munro's advance guard was distinctly unfortunate—not at all like the traditional story. All the same, Munro declined to attack the Irish in their strong position at Portlester and turned north again. Castlehaven followed him into Armagh, but accomplished—and attempted nothing. Out of his own mouth we can condemn him : “ But after all the three provinces had no reason to complain of this campaign, for this army they sent kept them from being troubled either with Scots or Ulster people that year ! ”

In the south Duncannon Fort, on the Wexford side of Waterford Harbour, was handed over to the Parliamentarians, but was recovered after a 10-weeks' siege—in



which 19,000 lbs. of valuable powder was shot away. Cappoquin, Lismore, Mallow, Mitchelstown, Doneraile, Liscarroll, and Rostellan Castle on Cork Harbour were surrendered or taken; so that in the southern province the Irish position was exceedingly strong indeed. In Connacht, however, Parliamentarians, reinforced from Ulster, seized Sligo and used it as a base for raids and forays all over north Connacht.

Such was the general military position when the Papal Nuncio, Rinuccini, Archbishop of Fermo, reached Ireland at the end of October, 1645, in a 26-gun ship of war. He brought a considerable sum of money and a number of officers, together with 4,000 stand of arms, 4,000 swords, 2,000 cartouch belts, 400 pairs of pistols for cavalry, 20,000 lbs. of powder, and abundance of match, shot, and other stores. The Nuncio was a man of forceful character, and a sincere supporter of the Irish national cause in so far as he understood it—as a Catholic struggle against Protestant encroachment. Accordingly it was not surprising that his arrival was the signal for more vigorous military action by the Irish forces.

### 1646.

All this time negotiations were going on with Ormonde, the Cessation was extended, and all sorts of agreements were made by his half-hearted opponents in Kilkenny. But, as the Nuncio very properly thought, all this was no reason why military action should not be taken against the Puritan or Scottish and Parliamentary forces. To this end Castlehaven was kept in the field against Inchiquin in Munster, and Preston with most of the Leinster army crossed the Shannon to reinforce the Confederates in Connacht. The strong castle of Bunratty on the Shannon seven or eight miles below Limerick was taken and a severe defeat was inflicted on Coote in Co. Roscommon.

This divesting Leinster of troops decided Munro in favour of invading that province. Successes in Connacht would be dearly gained if in order to gain them Leinster was lost. Moreover, O'Neill's passive defensive had somewhat misled the Scottish general: he made no allowance for the fact that now at last the Ulster army was



a well-found force with every military need properly supplied. The invasion of Leinster was intended to be made down through the Midlands by way of Cavan, Finea, Mullingar, and Maryborough to Kilkenny. O'Neill was at this time in his old cantonments in the Leitrim-Cavan area, so disposed as to be able to concentrate "in a posture for service," to quote himself, "within five days at furthest."

Munro's southward advance was to be made in three columns: with the main army 6,000 foot, 800 horse, and 6 pieces of cannon he in person was to leave Carrickfergus and move by Belfast to Armagh; his brother George was to join him in Armagh with 300 foot and 3 troops of horse from Coleraine—a very ill-judged move, for a junction at Lisburn out of O'Neill's reach was almost as easy; Stewart with the third column, 2,000 strong, was to march up the Mourne valley from Derry, in a position to join Munro or turn west into Connacht as seemed most advisable. O'Neill had 5,000 foot and 500 horse—a considerable minority which he trusted to compensate for by his own superior skill as a general. His aim was to defeat Munro's main force before the others could join him. Distance by itself was sufficient to prevent this in the case of Stewart, so he wasted no containing force against him: by a rapid march he reached Glasslough—between the Munros—in time to prevent a junction, and held off George with a detached body of cavalry. At Benburb on the Blackwater on June 5th he inflicted a total defeat on the Anglo-Scottish army: thousands were killed in battle, cut down in the pursuit or drowned in the river, and all their cannon and stores were captured. O'Neill's own loss was only about 300 men. Stewart immediately retreated by the way he came to Derry.

Political intrigues between the Confederation and Ormonde prevented O'Neill from following up his victory in the north to the full extent. But he was able to waste a good deal of Armagh and Down, to greatly strengthen and supply Charlemont, and to double his numerical strength before marching into Leinster at the Nuncio's summons. Rinuccini was disgusted with the Ormonde negotiations, repudiated the Confederate Supreme Council and established a Council of his own in Waterford. O'Neill adhered to the Nuncio as being the most decided

champion of the Irish side, and also as being the only dependable source he had for keeping his troops armed and equipped. O'Neill's large army—now fully 10,000 strong—completely overawed Leinster, but of active military success there was none. Preston, at heart hostile to the Nuncio and the purely Irish interest, was a constant drag on O'Neill—if not actually a traitor; at least one for all practical purposes. For this reason a movement against Dublin in November came to nothing. But on the English side—despite the Civil War in England—there was no divergence of views as to the “Irish Rebels.” The Parliament was now the strong party, and that body supplied Munro, Ormonde, and Inchiquin with entire impartiality. Evidently in their opinion any army was worth paying to fight the Irish. The result was that the year 1646, when a really good chance existed of making a clean sweep of the foreign dominion, saw that dominion provided with what was in effect a new lease of life.

### 1647.

This year Preston was retained in Leinster and O'Neill was given the command in Connacht as well as in Ulster: Munster still maintained a separate army. The Parliamentary cause was by this time victorious in England, with the result that it was now the Parliament that was directing the war in Ireland. Ormonde was at one with them until he left the country in July—having previously handed over Dublin. Even before this there were Parliamentary troops in Dundalk, Drogheda, and Dublin.

O'Neill was directed to clear the English out of North Connacht and for that purpose to occupy Sligo. All this time he kept his army quartered in the north midlands where it was easily supplied, easy to concentrate, strongly posted by reason of his holding Athlone, Maryborough and other points, and in a position to protect the Confederation against both the Northern and Dublin armies of the Parliamentarians. O'Neill selected the old line of advance from Boyle over the Curlew Hills, but designed to make a permanent job of it. For this purpose he made a regular military road over the range, so as never to be troubled again by supply difficulties. But before Sligo could fall O'Neill was recalled hot-foot over the Shannon

to retrieve the position in Leinster. There on August 6th Colonel Michael Jones, the Governor of Dublin, had defeated Preston at Dungan Hill near Trim and practically destroyed the Leinster Army. This battle was in a very great measure the decisive point of the whole Confederate War: it constituted an absolute check to the Irish Government at a time when that Government's military strength was most formidable, and gained a vital breathing space for the hostile interests. In point of fact, truth was that most of the armies of the Confederation were of a mediocre stamp. Only O'Neill had taken the necessary pains to organise and train a dependable army: Preston's army and Taaffe's—like the first armies raised in England at the same time—were not at all as dependable. As often as not they "fought without discipline and fled without shame."

At all events, O'Neill had to abandon the Connacht expedition and hastened back across the Shannon into Meath, whence he followed Jones up to Dublin, so wasting the plain of Fingall that Jones could find no supplies there in case he sought to make another sally from the capital. For the rest of the year he quartered his army in Meath and Kildare, in order to set free as many troops as possible for operations in Munster where also the Confederate cause had sustained heavy reverses.

In that province Inchiquin now had a well-appointed army of 5,000 foot and 1,000 horse. The Irish opposed to them were half-mutinous as far as the rank and file were concerned, and jealous and distrustful as to the command. No wonder, then, the energetic Inchiquin had matters all his own way. He raided at will through the province, moving well up into Ormonde and taking Cahir, Cashel and Fethard—in circumstances of great barbarity. At Clonmel he suffered a repulse at the hands of Alistair MacDonnell—Colkitto as he was called—and fell back southward when Taaffe, the ultimate choice for general in Munster, had assembled a very superior force. But on 13th November he engaged Taaffe at Knocknanoss, between Mallow and Kanturk, and inflicted a crushing defeat. So that, altogether, the Confederation was now in very bad case: it was hemmed in on two sides and had lost two armies. But, fortunately its remaining army was still firmly astride the main supply region of the

country, in touch with its recruiting-grounds, and in a central position with respect to the English armies.

### 1648.

The events of 1648 are very involved and of little military interest. Inchiquin after his great victory at Knocknanoss marched into Leinster, abandoned the Parliament who now viewed him with suspicion and made a truce with the Preston people in the King's interest. This was in April, and Preston and Inchiquin now proposed to march against O'Neill. But the latter, alert and well posted, gave no opportunity of attack, and the Nuncio formally excommunicated Preston for his alliance with heretics against Catholics. This reacted at once on the common soldiers: 2,000 deserted to O'Neill and the rest lost all stomach for their work. But at the end of September Ormonde returned to Ireland and rallied together the Royalist and Confederate interests with much address. O'Neill maintained himself all autumn in the Midlands and drew off a still large and formidable army to his old winter quarters in Cavan and Leitrim. It was just five years since his troops had first marched into Leinster and there established an Irish supremacy that was virtually unquestioned. The evacuation of Leinster was an infallible indication that O'Neill no longer represented a national interest—besides, the Nuncio left Ireland soon after this time. The best he could now hope to fight for was a good peace for his veterans and their homes. Late in November the Confederation was formally dissolved and Ormonde was unopposed all over the country—outside the Ulster Army's cantonments—except by the Parliamentary Commandants of Dublin and Derry, Jones and Coote. For the Anglo-Scottish forces in East Ulster were now also in league with him.

### Events to the Arrival of Cromwell.

On January 30th, 1649, Charles I. was executed and Ormonde proclaimed Charles II. King in Ireland. A fortnight later Prince Rupert with a fleet of 16 frigates entered the harbour of Kinsale—a reinforcement of the first importance. About this time, too, the Enniskillen garrison revolted from the Parliament and went over to

Ormonde while the "Lagan Army" blockaded Coote in Derry. O'Neill now began—in the local interest of his Ulstermen—to apply a "balance of power" doctrine. To this end he marched to Coote's relief and raised the siege of Derry, and in general co-operated with the Parliamentary generals, Coote in the north, Monk in the north-east, and Jones in Leinster. One main reason for this line of action was that in no other way could he procure any munitions of war—for Rinuccini had now left Ireland. But the Ulster army was no longer a deciding factor, and the Parliamentary commanders had no intention of doing anything until Cromwell should arrive with an overwhelming force.

Ormonde and Inchiquin had collected 7,000 foot and 2,000 horse in Munster, well armed and equipped; and with this force advanced into Leinster with a view to seizing Dublin and expelling the Parliamentary garrisons from the province. Crossing the Liffey near Castleknock on June 19th they marched to Finglas, a couple of miles north of the city, and there encamped. Then Inchiquin was sent north with a strong column and captured Maynooth, Drogheda, Trim and Dundalk. The whole country north of Dublin was thus cleared of the enemy, and Ormonde was free to attack the capital itself. He re-passed the Liffey and encamped near Rathmines on the southern side about two miles from the city. Then came information that Cromwell was at Milford Haven preparing to embark for Munster, and Ormonde despatched Inchiquin to the south with a strong detachment: this left his force around Dublin unequal to its task, and to make matters worse he scattered his troops in four bodies in a long, weak investment on both sides of the river. His gross blunders had a fitting sequel: on the night of August 2nd Jones attacked his chief concentration in a well-conducted sortie and totally defeated him. The broken army rallied at Trim and a detachment was sent to reinforce the Drogheda garrison.

Ormonde now opened negotiations with O'Neill, who for his part was ready to entertain proposals; for the Parliament had declined to ratify his agreements with Coote and Monk. The Ulster command sent Ormonde without delay a detachment of 3,000 men, and was on his way with the rest of his command when he died at



Cloughouter Castle in Cavan. That was in November, when Cromwell had already achieved considerable successes. The death of O'Neill removed the only soldier capable of making head against Cromwell and seriously disheartened the best troops left to oppose him.

### Campaign of Cromwell.

Cromwell's nine months' Irish campaign is a well-defined event. In contrast to the chaotic fighting of the Confederate War in its early years, it was distinguished by singleness of purpose and thoroughness of execution. But it would be easy to exaggerate the military merit of it, for the task was not very difficult. Cromwell made full use of vastly superior resources—that is the sum and substance of it. His original plan, as we have seen, was to land in Munster and move northward—by reason of the investment of Jones in Dublin. But Jones's victory at Rathmines changed all that, and Cromwell was now free to land in Dublin and begin the conquest of the country at the heart instead of at the extremity.

The army landed about the middle of August, and on the last day of that month active operations began. Briefly, Cromwell's plan was this: to march as close to the sea as possible and have his fleet accompany the army as far as possible. This he could do, for now Rupert was cooped up in Kinsale. In this way the army could move rapidly unimpeded by slow waggon-trains and supplied from the ships. The latter could also supply heavy artillery for the reduction of Ormonde's garrisons. Cromwell marched first to Drogheda, his advanced parties appearing before that town on September 2nd. On the 10th he stormed the place and put the garrison to the sword. Within a few days Dundalk and Trim surrendered, and Ormonde retreated south with 5,000 men. The prosecution of the war in Ulster was left to Venables and a flying column based on the sea: by a judicious display of vigour and a readiness to co-operate with the Scots and English in Ulster the desired aim was achieved without any very serious difficulty.

Cromwell himself returned to Dublin determined to press home his initial success before winter. He marched south along the coast accompanied as before by the fleet,



the force he commanded totalling 4,000 foot, 1,600 horse and 6 cannon. The army left Dublin on September 23rd, and Arklow fell on the 28th. Enniscorthy was also taken, and on October 1st the army appeared before Wexford, the fleet having preceded it by two days. On the 11th the town fell and there were treachery and slaughter: on October 17th Cromwell's army appeared before Ross which surrendered three days later. Ross was an exceedingly valuable prize, giving "an opportunity towards Munster," as Cromwell reported. In fact, after the fall of Ross most of the Munster garrisons surrendered without striking a blow: Youghal, Cork, Kinsale, Bandon, Cappoquin, Baltimore, Castlehaven, and Mallow. Rupert broke out of Kinsale and sailed away to Lisbon. The readiness of these garrisons to capitulate was due to their being composed for the most part of English Royalists in the service of Ormonde, to whom an Irish war à outrance was quite foreign. For example, 500 of the Ross garrison at once took service with Cromwell.

With Wexford and Ross gone, Ormonde's facilities for communicating with the Continent were much reduced. There still remained, however, Waterford, and it was to the reduction of this that Cromwell now directed himself. Even before the capture of Ross, Cromwell had sent Ireton with a force to reduce the fort of Duncannon on the Wexford side of Waterford Harbour, but the attempt failed on that occasion. Ireton and Jones crossed the Barrow in force and gradually edged Ormonde northward towards Kilkenny, and Reynolds was sent with a cavalry detachment to seize Carrick where there was a bridge over the Suir into Co. Waterford. Cromwell, who had fallen ill at Ross, was in Carrick with his main force on November 23rd and next day appeared before Waterford. His garrison in Carrick were attacked by Inchiquin but beat him off. Cromwell's force numbered 4,000 foot and 2,500 horse and was ample, though Waterford was a strong place, were it not for the winter season which always undermined the health of the English troops in Ireland. Cromwell took the fort of Passage six miles below the city—nearly opposite Duncannon—but the city itself and Duncannon held out and he was compelled to raise both sieges. He marched west to Cork into winter quarters around Youghal and the other towns on the

Blackwater. Ormonde wintered as best he could in the counties of Limerick, Tipperary, and Kilkenny.

As the weather became unusually favourable, Cromwell again took the field in the end of January. Fethard capitulated on February 3rd; Ardfinnan and Callan followed quickly, and Cahir on the 23rd. There was a veritable dégringolade of castles in Tipperary and Kilkenny, and Cromwell gradually pushed up towards Kilkenny City. On February 24th Hewson marched out of Dublin to co-operate with 2,000 foot, 1,000 horse and 2 field-pieces. During the winter that officer had reduced any posts he could reach around Dublin; and now he had little trouble in effecting a junction with his chief. Kilkenny soon fell, and then to brighten the disasters came the terrible repulse of Cromwell at Clonmel—a mere incident, however, that had no effect at all. Inchiquin's forces were meantime defeated in Munster, and it became a question of reducing Limerick, Waterford and a few minor garrisons. Cromwell left Ireland in May, 1650. A month later what was left of Owen Roe O'Neill's army was destroyed by Coote at Scarriffhollis in Donegal.

All through the Confederate War only one army—O'Neill's—was really Irish, and the others never genuinely supported it. 1646 was the critical year, and had the Confederation then united all its forces under O'Neill, it would have been comparatively easy to consolidate the country and successfully resist even Cromwell fresh from victories over the Royalists. In point of fact, though, it is a mistake to regard the Confederation as a national body at all. All the interests it regarded were those of the planted landowners of the Pale and their imitators.

## CHAPTER IX.

## The Jacobite War.

IN November, 1688, William III. landed in England and James II. fled to France. Ireland took the side of James except in the north, which was now—since the war of the Confederation—more largely than ever planted with Protestant settlers. Sligo, Coleraine, Culmore Fort at the mouth of the Foyle, were all occupied by Protestants; but these were only refugee concentration points—for a massacre was professed to be feared by all, and probably was by some. The real military centres of resistance were Derry and Enniskillen. In the former town were two companies of regular soldiers, all Protestants: these were a nucleus enabling the embodying and training of volunteers from the citizens to be completed, and a useful stiffening to the raw levies. In Enniskillen a local force of 150 horse and 200 foot was raised, and these troops were greatly heartened by a successful brush with a small Jacobite force early on.

James, for his part, was fortunate to have as Viceroy Richard Talbot, Duke of Tyrconnell, a loyal, capable, and energetic Governor, who spent the winter of 1688-9 in organising the whole country outside Ulster in the Jacobite interest. Richard Hamilton, with 2,500 regular troops, was sent into Ulster, and fresh troops were raised in the southern provinces to the number of 25,000 or 30,000 foot. Arms were neither sufficiently numerous nor particularly serviceable, but Louis XIV., who entered into an alliance with James, sent 7,000 muskets. The Irish cavalry, however, amounting to some thousands, was excellent, and in Sarsfield possessed the best general of the arm from Cromwell to Seydlitz. James landed at Kinsale in March, 1689, with 1,200 veteran Irish troops from France, about a hundred officers and a supply of stores of war.

1689.

Early in March Hamilton entered Ulster with a small force of good troops. He defeated the Williamite levies at Dromore in the middle of Lagan valley—an important strategic point relatively to Lough Neagh, Belfast Lough, the Antrim mountains, and County Down. The victory decided the fate of Down and Antrim, and the Williamites fell back to Coleraine whither Hamilton followed them. At the same time James—preceded by a force under the



French General Rosen, moved into Ulster by the traditional eastern route, and the Williamites abandoned Dungannon and Omagh. All the outlying garrisons were now evacuated for Derry. Rosen and Hamilton following up gained further successes at Strabane and Cladyford. Sarsfield simultaneously operated with a detached force from Sligo, now also abandoned for Enniskillen. On April 18th the whole main Irish army was united at Johnstown, five miles up the Foyle from Derry. Its numbers are variously stated—as high as 20,000 and as low as 6,000: the probability is that they fluctuated considerably and averaged 10,000 to 14,000.

Derry had a numerous and well-trained garrison. When all the outlying posts had concentrated the total was about 7,500 regular troops. In addition there were some thousands of volunteers who by this time had acquired some considerable training. There were arms for 10,000 men and 480 barrels of powder. The wall—8 feet thick and 20 high in places—was a formidable work to a besieger without a regular siege-train. Altogether Derry was quite capable of a strong defence were it not for the shortage of food. The Jacobites were none too successful in their preliminary attacks, but they succeeded in drawing a close investment of the place both by land and by the river—by means of works down-stream and a strong boom. The defenders after three months were reduced to great extremity and their steadfastness is a matter of history. Finally on July 28th a relieving squadron broke the boom and reached the city and the Jacobites raised the siege. The Williamite successes around Enniskillen were less remarkable: owing to the great natural strength of its situation and the number of acquisitions of force it had received from adjoining settlements there was no question of an investment. Excellently led by Lloyd, Wolseley, and Berry, the Enniskillen men turned the strategic value of their town to the fullest account, striking out in all directions. They sent a column quite early to try and take pressure off Derry, raided successfully to Ballincarrig, Belturbet, and Omagh in May and June. In July they got via Ballyshannon and Lough Erne supplies that could not get into Derry and had comeround the coast, and attacked Berwick's quarters at Trillick—without success, however. But on the day

Derry was relieved they successfully engaged the Jacobites at Lisnaskea and utterly destroyed Mountcashel's force at Newtown Butler. This last defeat caused Sarsfield, who had advanced to Ballyshannon, by the old coastal route to return to Sligo.

The stubborn defence of Derry and the masterly little campaign around Enniskillen altogether broke the back of the Jacobite campaign in Ulster. At the same time the death of Dundee at Killiecrankie relieved William from all anxiety about Scotland, and he was able to send Schomberg to Ireland with a powerful army of 20,000 men. He landed at Bangor on August 12th, by which time the Jacobites in Ulster held only three places: Carrickfergus, Charlemont, and Newry. And in Connacht Sarsfield had fallen back from Sligo to Athlone. But Schomberg was not a Cromwell—nor, to be fair, had he as good an army. Carrickfergus was not attacked until the 20th and held out eight days. After the fall of Carrickfergus, Schomberg moved south and Newry was evacuated. Then the Williamite army settled down for three months in an entrenched camp north of Dundalk. There was no fighting except for a couple of unsuccessful Jacobite attempts to re-enter Newry. Berwick had plenty of men and outnumbered Schomberg—though the Jacobites were far inferior in training and equipment. During this period of inactivity Schomberg lost more men by disease and exposure than in a lost battle, and in November he retreated to Lisburn.

This slowness of Schomberg was utilised by Sarsfield to recover ground in the west. Lloyd had crossed the Curlews and inflicted a defeat on some Connacht levies in October and garrisoned Jamestown on the Shannon six miles east of Boyle. By a rapid march Sarsfield recovered that post, and took Sligo immediately after by a fine forced night march. By placing a strong garrison there and another in Galway he secured two sea bases and definitely fixed his grip on the western province. The year ended much as it had begun: Schomberg's dilatoriness had neutralised the initial advantages gained by the Derrymen and Enniskilleners.

### 1690.

Opinion in England was highly irritated at the poor



results from the great army in Ireland, and William decided to conduct the next campaign there in person. Reinforcements—beginning with 7,000 Danish troops in January—were forwarded in abundance. Wolseley, from Enniskillen, succeeded in securing Belturbet and Cavan; and in May Charlemont fell after a heroic defence by Sir Tadg O'Regan, to whom Schomberg conceded the full honours of war. A month later, on June 14th, William landed at Carrickfergus. The Williamite forces in Ireland now numbered between 40,000 and 50,000, the bulk concentrated in the Lagan Vale. Most of the troops were excellent—continental mercenaries or Anglo-Irish now quite equal to the best. They were abundantly supplied, having, for example, 60 pieces of artillery. James had 23,000 men and 12 pieces of artillery, and his troops were worse trained and supplied.

Now in the Irish wars we have repeatedly seen that the possession of Leinster afforded unmistakable military advantages, so that the desirability of maintaining oneself in that province was not to be questioned. But desirable or not, James had not the means of doing it—his army was numerically but little more than half William's, and in fighting power was less than half. And there were no naturally strong positions to compensate for this. In the circumstances the only sound strategy was to fall back and hold the strong natural line of the Shannon: in that way he would secure time to train his troops, to raise new levies, and to get arms and reinforcements from France. But James would insist on fighting a battle, and marched out of Dublin on June 16th, reaching Dundalk on the 22nd. But he was too late to hold the border mountains for William's advanced forces were at Newry. In face of the great numerical superiority James now retreated and took up a position on the southern bank of the Boyne. The Boyne was by no means a formidable obstacle, there being numerous shallow fords; but there was no other possible line at all. On July 1st William attacked the Jacobite army and drove it southward in a demoralised condition. A total rout was only avoided by the really splendid fighting of the Irish cavalry. The Jacobites—James himself fled to France—had now to do what they might have done before without losing a battle at all. They retired behind the Shannon, and their

successful defence of that line is the best proof of what might have been effected earlier by sound strategy.

About this time Tourville defeated William's fleet in the Channel and the King was fearful for his transports in the mediocre harbours of the Irish Sea. In consequence he marched south to secure Waterford, and did so, taking Wexford, Kilkenny, Clonmel, and Carrick en route. Eventually he concentrated his army at Carrick for an attack on Limerick. Thither most of the Irish army had marched, William having turned away from them to Waterford and left them unmolested. But the King had previously despatched Lieut.-Gen. Douglas with 12,000 men, 12 field pieces and 2 mortars against Athlone, whither another strong body of Irish troops had congregated. This army appeared before the town on July 17th. The Commander of Athlone was Colonel Richard Grace, a veteran of the Confederate War half a century before: the fine old officer had broken down the bridge and refused to even discuss terms. Douglas opened his batteries and also tried to cross at Lanesborough—20 miles north at the other end of Lough Ree. But Grace, old as he was, was vigilant, and had Lanesborough in safe keeping, and Douglas could make nothing of the town itself. After a week he raised the siege and retired to Mullingar whence he marched to join William before Limerick. The King arrived before that city on August 9th with about 25,000 men—or 35,000 in all.

Limerick was no stronger than Derry—if, indeed, as strong. And William could bring up a siege-train, given time: which James could not have done. But as against this Limerick was not isolated, and there was no danger of supplies giving out: Sarsfield with 3,500 cavalry was quartered on the Clare side of the river over an expanse of some miles. The garrison consisted of some 20,000 foot, none too well armed. All these were Irish, for the French troops had marched away to take ship at Galway—their general asserting that Limerick could be taken by a bombardment of roasted apples. William for his part decided to try an ordinary siege-train which was coming from Dublin via Cashel.

On the night of August 10th the garrison got information about the siege-train from a French deserter. Thereupon Sarsfield at once took 600 cavalry and rode off

in the darkness to Killaloe, crossed the river there, and lay concealed all the next day in the Keeper mountains. On the night of the 11th, guided by Galloping Hogan, a famous Rapparee, he reached the encampment of the train and its meagre escort—100 men—at Ballyneety. The guards were cut down, the guns filled with powder and buried, the pontoons for a bridge broken up and the whole piled together with the powder and a train laid. Sir John Lanier with 500 Williamite horse were coming out to meet the guns; but the explosion marking their destruction was the first signal that it was too late. Sarsfield on his return journey rode northward nearly 50 miles to Banagher and crossed the Shannon there, evading all attempts to intercept him. This exploit—"Sarsfield's Ride," as it is always known—is in every way a model of what a cavalry raid should be. It procured a badly-needed respite for the garrison of Limerick.

But William brought up more heavy guns from Waterford and two of the pieces so severely handled at Ballyneety were found to be serviceable. On the 24th he had enough guns of one sort or another in battery to open a bombardment, and on the 27th August a 36-foot breach was made in the wall and the trenches were pushed close up to the defences. A vigorous and determined assault was then delivered and there were several hours of murderous fighting, which ended in the complete repulse of the Williamites after losing 2,000 men. On the 31st William raised the siege and marched for Clonmel, returning to England the next week. Solms and later Ginkell took over the command in Ireland.

The Dutch generals, after the pedantic manner of their time and school, would have done nothing until the following spring. But in John Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, William—though he did not appreciate him—had a general of another stamp. Churchill saw how a telling blow might be struck before winter; how Cork and Kinsale, the best harbours the Irish had and the nearest to France, were practically detached posts in the hands of isolated garrisons and liable to fall to a prompt attack. Their capture would off-set the failures at Athlone and Limerick, and would probably have far-reaching effects on the next year's campaign. With the backings of the naval officers Churchill won his

point and received the direction of a combined expedition, the military part of which numbered 8,000 men. Cork fell on September 27th, and Kinsale about a fortnight later. Five weeks had sufficed for Churchill's little campaign which definitely restricted the Jacobites to Connacht.

### 1691.

The Jacobites spent the winter in improving the training and organisation of the troops, with the result that the army that fought this year at Aughrim was quite good enough for anything. In January a supply of arms came from France, and the general military position was not bad. The Jacobites were restricted to the Shannon, but as occasion offered they took action to the east of the river. Thus Sarsfield, who commanded in the northern sector, placed a garrison of 500 men at Ballymore half way from Athlone to Mullingar, to facilitate the raids of his foraging parties from Lanesboro' and Athlone. Similarly a force was maintained in front of Banagher in the Birr-Roscrea district. In addition there were Rapparee bands, which corresponded to the Pandours of the contemporary Austrian Army—then under Prince Eugene, the best army in Europe. Roving about through Leinster and Munster, they cut off small detachments and burned or drove off supplies. In this way they procured 1,000 horses—a few at a time—and constituted a valuable remount service for Sarsfield.

Early in the year Ginkell made an aimless advance from Clonmel—apparently stirred to activity by Rapparee bands in Limerick and Kerry. Bad weather prevented any actual movement, even if such were necessary. At the same time Douglas from Belturbet and Kirke from Mullingar were to attack Jamestown and Lanesborough respectively. Sarsfield's garrisons in these posts were commanded by O'Hara and Clifford; and with characteristic daring he planned to defend the river by crossing at Athlone and moving up from Ballymore against Kirke's flank, using his two river posts as a containing force the while. O'Hara, however, was distrustful about his ability to hold out, and Sarsfield marched direct to his aid. As a matter of fact, both O'Hara and Clifford did repel the attacks and Sarsfield's bold plan was thus fully vindicated.

Ginkell concentrated his main force for the 1691 campaign at Mullingar, intending to take Athlone and over-run Connacht instead of tackling Limerick again. In May St. Ruth landed at Limerick to take command of all the troops in Ireland, and brought abundance of war-like stores of all kinds. There were difficulties in bringing supplies up river to Athlone, but eventually these were surmounted. Ginkell began his advance from Mullingar on June 7th, took the small post of Ballymore which should have been evacuated, and was before Athlone with all his army and artillery on the 19th, on which day heavy guns were placed in position. After several unsuccessful assaults the town was taken by surprise on the night of the 30th, old Colonel Grace being among the slain.

After the fall of Athlone St. Ruth fell back to Ballinasloe, and on July 12th he gave battle at Aughrim in a position selected and prepared with admirable skill. His own death was practically the deciding factor in that stubborn battle—and ultimately in the war. Sligo and Galway fell within a few days, and Limerick, whither the Irish army retreated, capitulated after another memorable siege on October 3rd.

## CHAPTER X.

## The Insurrection of 1798.

THE '98 Insurrection differed materially from the previous campaigns of which Ireland had been the theatre. In the previous wars the Irish had, indeed, been invariably at a disadvantage as regards resources and equipment, but never to the same extent as in 1798. Moreover, the Irish had not on this occasion the advantage of superior training—an advantage they had frequently possessed in former wars, and which frequently gave them striking tactical victories. So that on several counts the Irish were less favourably placed on this occasion. Their disadvantages were considerably accentuated by the considerable advance in the economic development of the country. The communications in respect to roads and bridges were more numerous and better, and in consequence the old-time refuges and rallying-points lost much of their value. Still, though the Insurrection was merely a rising-out of an oppressed people—without arms or training beyond what they could pick up for themselves—it is not devoid of military interest.

The fighting covered a period of nearly four months in all—from the 23rd May to the 8th September, and can be divided into four distinct portions: (1) The Rising in Leinster in accordance with the Original Plan; (2) the Rising in Ulster in accordance with the Original Plan; (3) the Campaign in Wexford—by far the most serious; (4) Humbert's Campaign in Connacht. Now, although a peasant insurrection is necessarily sporadic there were certain factors that tended towards a partial unifying of the fighting into a single whole: the chief moving parties everywhere were the United Irishmen, and naturally this gave some unity; everywhere the question of aid from France was kept in view. For these reasons,



it is possible to view the fighting as a single war fought with the object of securing control of the country to the people.

### 1.—The Original Rising in Leinster.

The outstanding feature of the plan of the United Irishmen in Leinster was to seize the City of Dublin on the night of May 23rd. For this purpose the city lamp-lighters on that night omitted to carry out their work as usual. This rising in Dublin was to be seconded by local risings in the surrounding counties—Meath, Dublin, Kildare, and Wicklow : the local risings aimed at destroying the small detachments in the several localities, isolating the capital from any relieving force, and securing as wide a zone of operations as possible round it. Then measures were to be taken to organise and equip the insurgent army round Dublin and other armies in different districts through the country. Any general engagements were to be avoided until a satisfactory standard of training and organisation was reached or a considerable French force should be able to effect a landing. Lord Edward Fitzgerald—a soldier who had seen much service, and in addition was well informed as to the condition of Ireland—had prepared a general scheme, sound in all essentials, and possessed in addition the personality requisite to impress his views on others. His arrest on May 19th was a blow of the first consequence.

The Rising in Dublin City itself never came off at all. The Government—well informed by spies and traitors—took all the necessary measures : guards were trebled at all the suspected points of attack, and the northern and southern halves of the city were isolated from each other by occupying the bridges. And the supporting attempts in North and South County Dublin were abortive. The Ulster mail coaches were stopped at Santry on the night of May 23rd, but the force assembled there was inadequate to attempt anything more serious. The southern insurgents assembled at Rathfarnham to the number of 400, but they were surprised and dispersed by a detachment of Lord Roden's dragoons and a supporting party of infantry. As far as the City of Dublin was concerned the Insurrection was a complete failure.

The second part of the Insurgent plan—the isolation of Dublin from the English troops through the country—was not quite so unsuccessful, though its success was short-lived. One factor that militated considerably against its success was the terrain of County Kildare—a very open, level country quite unsuitable to effective action by poorly armed and ill-disciplined men. For all that the Kildare



insurgents and those of Meath and Carlow had a number of minor successes to their credit, chequered as these were by reverses. One of the most notable actions took place at Old Kilcullen: "General Dundas confidently determined upon breaking a solid body of pikemen, by the impetuosity and weight of his heavy cavalry. The peasantry in a deep, close column, and under the ruined church of Old Kilcullen, received them on their pikes; two captains were killed, with many of the heavy cavalry, and the general escaped with difficulty. The same body was attacked again the same day, with artillery, and quickly broken; but not until lanes had been repeatedly cut through them by round shot." There in two sentences we have the strength and the weakness of the Insurgents from the military point of view.

Eventually it was found possible to pour sufficient troops into the counties round Dublin to put down all serious military opposition. An example of the movements in question was Duff's forced march from Limerick to Monasterevan in two days—"by means of cars for the infantry." On May 26th the Meath Insurgents were dispersed in a fight on the Hill of Tara, and by the end of the month the insurrection was practically over. William Aylmer, with some of the more resolute men, kept up a guerilla warfare of exceptional skill for months after in hopes of being able to co-operate with the Wexford men or the French. But that properly belongs to a later section.

## 2.—The Original Rising in Ulster.

Ulster was the province in which the United Irishmen were best organised and most efficient. But there, too, the arrests of leaders struck a heavy initial blow at the chances of a successful insurrection. For all that the Ulstermen were sufficiently well compacted to be still a force "in being" in spite of the arrests: the Rising was postponed a couple of weeks, and new leaders were elected. It eventually broke out on June 7th. On that day the town of Antrim—a most important centre of communications between Belfast and the North-West, at the north-eastern angle of Lough Neagh—was attacked by the Insurgents. The town was taken and lost again and

the Insurgents retreated westwards towards Randalstown, and the Rising practically collapsed.

Yet on the 8th and 9th there were some thousands of men at Ballymena, and considerable bodies had assembled at Glenarm, Ballycastle, Rasharkin and Portglenone. These must have aggregated 5,000 men, yet they all dispersed. The fact was they knew nothing of one another's situation, strength, or intentions. County Antrim is largely mountainous, the main routes were comparatively few, and the centres of population separated. A good system of despatch-riders might have made an enormous difference. It would have been easy to issue orders for the assembly of all contingents at some central point like Ballymena, and then have marched them into County Derry, where there were no English troops and many recruits could be secured. This would have diverted a large part of the Belfast garrison, and would have given the County Down Insurgents a far freer hand.

Down was the more important of the two counties both in resources and numbers, and especially by reason of its geographical situation in the direct line between Belfast and Dublin. The English had no very large forces at hand to repair any reverse, and any marked initial successes might easily result in a wholesale insurrection throughout Ulster. The Down Insurgents were commanded by Henry Munro. His army, numbering about 5,000, was recruited mainly from North Down and concentrated in the Saintfield-Ballynahinch area after initial successes at Bangor, Newtownards and Saintfield. General Nugent with a strong column from Belfast, another detachment from Downpatrick, and the remnants of the force beaten at Saintfield concentrated to attack the Insurgents. After a series of combats extending over the 11th, 12th, and 13th of June, Munro was finally defeated on the last-named day in a general action. With the defeat of the Down Insurgents, the operations in Ulster came to an end.

### 3.—The Campaign in Wexford.

In Wexford the Insurgents had in their favour some factors not operative elsewhere, and which enabled them to develop their military power in a way that their fellow-insurgents had not found possible. For one thing, the

terrain—a somewhat broken and wooded, as well as a much-enclosed, country—favoured the operations of troops inferior in training and armament: for another, the English forces—apart from Yeomanry—were at first not available in any numbers. Thus the Insurgents were accorded sufficient time to perfect their military development.

The immediate occasion of the outbreak in Wexford was the burning of Boolavogue Chapel by some yeomanry. The Parish Priest, Father John Murphy, thereupon collected a band of peasants armed with pitchforks and scythes and a few guns, and ambushed the troopers. The people now flocked around the warlike priest, who marched with a large force to Camolin Park, Lord Mountnorris's house, halfway between Ferns and Gorey, where was a depot of arms and ammunition for the yeomanry—a formidable initial advantage not duplicated anywhere else. Father Murphy fixed his first camp on the Hill of Oulart, five miles east of Enniscorthy, and there on May 28th he annihilated a column of militia sent out from Wexford to disperse his force. Next day the victorious Insurgents marched on Enniscorthy, coming down the northern road from Scarawalsh Bridge. After a fierce engagement the town was taken by storm, but the survivors of the garrison got away to Wexford. The Insurgents were too much fatigued to pursue—they had been marching and fighting incessantly for three days together. Father Murphy now fixed his camp on Vinegar Hill over the river from Enniscorthy.

Vinegar Hill was established as a permanent headquarters, and a strong force maintained there. The remainder marched on Wexford, collecting recruits as they moved. General Fawcett from Duncannon Fort threw a garrison into the town, and later marched to its relief when it was threatened. On May 30th his advanced guard was destroyed near the Three Rock Mountain, half-a-dozen miles from Wexford; whereupon he retreated to Duncannon, and the garrison evacuated the town—marching to Duncannon by a wide circuit to southward. This gave the Insurgents possession of a harbour, though only a mediocre one and not easily reachable in safety by French ships. And now that practically all County Wexford was in their hands the Insurgents set about



establishing contact with the United Irishmen in the rest of Ireland—no easy task in view of the way in which Wexford county is isolated away in a corner of the country. In furtherance of this plan the following operations took place: On June 1st a column marched from Enniscorthy up the Slaney with the object of penetrating into Carlow by the Bunclody Gap. The town of Bunclody or Newtown Barry in that pass was strongly occupied by the English and at Clonegal, a few miles in rear, there were reinforcements. The attack was not very well carried out and the attempt to enter Carlow failed.

On June 5th one main army of the Insurgents under Bagenal Harvey launched a determined attack on New Ross, having moved west from Three Rock Mountain. This was really the principal effort: if the passage of the Barrow could be forced it gave access to the counties of Kilkenny, Waterford, and Tipperary, and important areas might easily pass into Insurgent control. The vital issue at stake sufficiently explains the duration and ferocity of the battle—which was in the end lost by the Insurgents owing to their poor discipline. The defeated army was not pursued and remained a couple of miles east of Ross.

A third column marched north towards Wicklow. This force met with considerably more success than either of the others. On June 4th it disastrously defeated an English force at Tubberneering, about half-way between Ferns and Gorey. But on the 9th the English succeeded in fighting an indecisive battle at Arklow, just a couple of miles inside the county border. To the Insurgents, however, this was equivalent to a strategic defeat—it meant that any victorious march was impossible and the English had only to await reinforcements from Dublin. In any event Wicklow was a very defensible terrain, and no success here would have been equivalent to a victory at Ross.

After the repulse of these several attempts to break out of County Wexford the prospects of success for the Insurgents dwindled rapidly. For a couple of weeks longer there was serious fighting—both in the south against the English advancing from Ross, and in the north against converging columns from Carlow and Wicklow. Not until the culminating battle of Vinegar Hill on June 21st—a pitched battle of 40,000 men—did



the Irish resistance cease to be formidable. After that only a few small isolated columns kept the field, in the hope of keeping the flag flying until a French landing should take place.

The main effort was that of a column that marched out through Scullogue Gap to Goresbridge on the Barrow and up to Castlecomer in the northern part of County Kilkenny. Unsuccessful there, the Insurgents split up into a number of guerilla bands, one of which actually did effect a junction with Aylmer. That leader with a small force had maintained an epic struggle in the Midlands, with every disadvantage of terrain. On June 10th, heartened by the news from Wexford, he attacked and seized Maynooth : by the 19th he had again assembled 3,000 men who, however, were defeated at Ovidstown : about the end of June he effected his junction with a small band of the Wexford veterans and endeavoured to force his way to Athlone—breaking out through the English cordons. But at Clonard—a passage of the Boyne—he was finally defeated and forced to surrender. There was no further fighting until the landing of the French in August, with the exception of the few bands of outlawed guerillas in the Wicklow Mountains and the great Woods of Killoughrim in Wexford.

#### 4.—The Campaign of Humbert.

The design of the French Directory was to send in the first instance to Ireland a force of 1,000 men under General Humbert to follow this up with another of 3,000 men under General Hardy, and to send a powerful force of 8,000 under General Kilmaine to back up the others. This last army was only to sail in case of marked success, and in point of fact never left France. Humbert landed at Killala with 1,100 of all ranks and a few small guns on August 22nd. By this time the Insurrection had been over for at least a month, and the English had 100,000 men in the country. Humbert's operations are an object-lesson in what is possible for really good troops when capably led.

Killala was rushed the evening of the landing, and on August 24th Ballina was occupied. That same day the

Government in Dublin had news of the landing, and the following movements were ordered: troops from Tuam, Galway, Loughrea, Gort, and Athenry to concentrate at Castlebar; a battalion from Athlone to Carrick-on-Shannon; units from Enniskillen to Sligo—the aim being to hem in the small French force. But on the 27th Humbert—now joined by some thousands of Insurgents—utterly defeated the English at Castlebar, and Cornwallis, who now commanded in chief, determined to confine the French in the first instance behind the Shannon. Troops were ordered up from Lisburn to Enniskillen, from Dublin to Mullingar, and even from Wexford. When his concentration along the Shannon was ready Cornwallis moved to Hollymount—on September 4th; but meantime the English movements had determined Humbert to march north into Ulster—as being the most suitable terrain for a defensive campaign and also the most promising recruiting-ground.

In pursuance of this design the French were moving north, when on September 5th he was brought to action near Collooney by Colonel Vereker who had marched out from Sligo with a small force of all arms. Humbert drove him off the field, but judged that any advance towards Sligo was now very doubtful and turned to the right into the Leitrim mountains hoping to make his way north by that route. The column passed Dromahaire on the way to Manor Hamilton, throwing its few cannon into the rivers as it passed; but just short of Manor Hamilton it wheeled south by Drumkeeran. Intelligence had come that the Westmeath United Irishmen were in the field, and Humbert determined to cross the Shannon in its upper reaches to their assistance. He did so at Ballintra where the river leaves Lough Allen, and headed for Granard. On September 7th he repulsed one English detachment that was dogging his march; but next day he was headed off at Ballinamuck in Co. Longford and surrendered with all his force. His Irish auxiliaries got no quarter, nor did those left behind in Ballina, Killala and elsewhere. The Westmeath Insurrection collapsed.

Hardy's reinforcements only left Brest on September 20th, and did not reach Lough Swilly until October 10th. By that time all opposition was crushed by the English troops. It should be observed that the French were at a

serious disadvantage as far as naval matters were concerned at this time. In the ordinary course they were not able to engage the English on equal terms and had to trust to evasion in their overseas expeditions. Naturally this caused a big element of uncertainty in their forwarding of auxiliary forces to assist any Irish Insurrection.









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