Irish Journalists and Litterateurs in Late Victorian London

c.1870-1910

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D.Phil. thesis

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Irish Journalists and Litterateurs in late Victorian London, c.1870-1910

This thesis is an exploration of Irish literary emigration to London in the nineteenth century, with particular reference to the 1880s and 1890s. These two decades witnessed a conflict between two generations of Irish emigrant writers and it is this conflict which forms the basis of the thesis. On the one hand were those emigrants - T.P. O'Connor, Justin McCarthy and R. Barry O'Brien - who typified the Irish literary defection to London in the nineteenth century, moving to England for a mixture of political, social, economic and cultural reasons. They were nationalists, but, like most Irish literary emigrants before them, they integrated themselves with British political and cultural life, developing a 'mixed' political-cultural identity in which British elements - principally Liberalism - were at play as well as Irish ones. By the 1880s they were well established in the world of Liberal London and played a prominent role in the Liberal Home Rule campaign of 1886-92. In these years, however, a new generation of Irish literary emigrants arrived in London - men like W.P. Ryan and D.P. Moran - and they were to be influenced by the Irish cultural revival rather than British Liberalism, becoming involved in the Southwark Irish Literary Club, the Irish Literary Society and the London Gaelic League during the 1880s and 1890s. Coming into contact with the 'Home Rule' writers, this 'Revival' generation would see their forerunners, with their 'mixed' identities, as Irishmen who had compromised culturally, who were essentially Anglicised. These cultural 'warnings' helped stimulate the cultural nationalism of the younger men, who, in the early 1900s, rejected the example of the 'Home Rule' generation and the long-standing pattern of cultural assimilation that they represented, by returning to Ireland and working for the Gaelic revival there. In doing so they illustrated the contrasting ways in which emigration to London could affect Irish litterateurs in the late nineteenth century.

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Irish Journalists and Litterateurs in late Victorian London, c.1870-1910

The above thesis is an examination of nineteenth century Irish literary emigration to London, with particular reference to the 1880s and 1890s. It begins with an exploration of the political, social, economic and cultural reasons, both in Ireland and Britain, why Irish writers, Catholic and Protestant, flocked to London, and especially Fleet Street, during this period. The most immediate factor was the limited Irish reading public, which made it virtually impossible for Irish writers to support themselves by their pens in Ireland. When coupled with the opportunities awaiting them in London, with its larger reading audience and vast array of literary and political journals, the pull of the Imperial capital was irresistible. It was increased by the romantic attraction that the city possessed for Irishmen through its layers of literary and historical association. Most of these factors grew in force as the century wore on, so that Irish literary emigration steadily increased. By the 1880s the number of Irish writers in London was seemingly greater than ever. Yet this decade would see the beginning of a crucial change in literary emigrant attitudes. Hitherto Irish emigrant writers had been largely absorbed within English culture. Even when they had written on Ireland it had been for English rather than Irish readers. With the advent of the Southwark Irish Literary Club and the Irish Literary Society in 1883 and 1892 respectively, this changed. Many Irish emigrant writers now began to explore and assert their separate Irish cultural identity. This is because both bodies sought to generate interest in Irish literature, art and history. Their focus was the Irish audience in Britain and Ireland, not the English reading public. This trend intensified with the foundation of the London Gaelic League in 1896. For the most zealous, rejection of the cultural assimilation that had until now characterised the Irish literary emigrant would lead to a rejection of 'literary London' itself and a return to Ireland. These changes were of course bound up with similar critical shifts in Ireland as the literary and Gaelic revivals developed momentum. It meant that in London-Irish literary circles during the 1880s and 1890s two opposing forces clashed: the long-standing pattern of emigration and integration that appeared to climax in the 1880s, and the nationalist cultural reaction represented by the various revivalist groups. Crucially, at the centre of this conflict was a gulf between two different generations of Irish literary emigrants: one, well established in

London life and becoming increasingly so, the other having only just reached the Imperial capital. This generation divide forms the basis of the thesis.

The first group examined is the 'Home Rule' writers. Men like T.P. O'Connor, Justin, McCarthy and R. Barry O'Brien typified the Irish literary emigrant drain to London in the nineteenth century. Of Catholic middle class backgrounds, they moved to London in the 1850s and 1860s. It was their cultural 'capital' and it was to the English audience that their political, historical and fictional writings were directed. Nationalism was their chief political cause, but emigration resulted in them being heavily influenced, politically and intellectually, by British Liberalism, and especially by William Gladstone and John Bright, so that their political identities exhibited a mixture of nationalism and Liberalism. All three were drawn into the political, journalistic and social world of Liberal London. McCarthy established himself there first, in the 1860s and 1870s, whilst O'Connor and O'Brien did not do so until the later 1880s. In their case this was due to Gladstone's adoption of Home Rule in 1886, since the Liberal need for Irish political expertise led to a marked upturn in their metropolitan careers. All three men were heavily involved in the subsequent Liberal Home Rule campaign in Britain. By the 1890s they were firmly entrenched in London life, and through their 'mixed' political and cultural identities showed how emigration could shape the outlook of the Irish litterateur. Much of the thesis is concerned with tracking the development of these identities by examining the Home Rule litterateurs' writings and their political and cultural activities. Their mixed identities, along with their positions in Liberal London, would endure for the next three decades, to reach a fitting conclusion in their support for Britain during the First World War.

Long before then their cultural choices had been challenged by the arrival in London of the younger 'Revival' generation of Irish literary emigrants. These men - W.P. Ryan and D.P. Moran principally - were born twenty years after the Home Rule writers and so arrived in London in the mid-1880s. Like them they were educated Catholics, but not necessarily middle class, Ryan being from more of a peasant background. In London they were drawn into the revival activities of the groups noted above rather than the culture of British Liberalism, so that for them emigration led to a more intense sense of Irishness. They came to see Ireland's national identity as essentially cultural, not political, and, after an initial commitment to literary revivalism, they had, by the end of the century, embraced the 'Irish-Ireland' ideal of the Gaelic League. This meant an Ireland pursuing its own Gaelic customs and language as well as building up its own national literature, with the latter now to be written in Irish. Simultaneously, living in London convinced

them that the romantic image of 'literary London' was a sham, being more about commercial imperatives than literature. As a result, contact in the 1880s and 1890s with the Home Rule writers led to the Revival emigrants depicting their elders as Anglicised. With their mixed identities and focus on the British audience, the Home Rule litterateurs had, in the eyes of the younger men, allowed their Irishness to be undermined by London life. This charge was particularly strong in O'Connor's case, as his later years saw him move into popular gossip weeklies at a time when revivalists in Ireland and London were denouncing such aspects of English life and seeking to prevent their proliferation in Ireland. A desire to avoid the Anglicised fate of the Home Rule writers helped fuel the cultural nationalist activities of the Revival emigrants, and these activities led eventually to their return to Ireland, where they could promote the revival at first hand. In doing so they rejected not only the example of the Home Rule writers but the century-long pattern of Irish emigration to 'literary London' which the Home Rule writers represented. Like other revivalists, including Yeats, they aimed to establish Dublin rather than London as the Irish 'intellectual capital' and this obviously entailed Irish writers and intellectuals returning home. The second half of the thesis delineates the revivalist activities of Ryan and Moran, and explores the areas where they clashed directly with the Home Rule generation, such as Fleet Street (where both men worked under O'Connor's editorship) and the Irish Literary Society (where Ryan's desire for a new Irish literature came into conflict with O'Brien's intellectual liberalism during the early 1890s).

This main concern of this study of the Irish literary emigrant world of the 1880s and 1890s is obviously with the nature of Irish identity and the contrasting ways in which emigration to London could affect that identity. It is part of the continuing scholarly examination of the revival and the changing conceptions of Irishness that it generated. Within this debate it illustrates a number of important points. First, it shows just how close and immediate the cultural clash between 'Home Rulers' and 'Revivalists' could be, and how the Home Rule litterateurs acted as something of a 'cultural warning' for their Revival successors, pushing the latter into cultural nationalism. This aspect of the revival has not been emphasised until now, the modern biographies of O'Connor and McCarthy concentrating on their political careers rather than their cultural significance, whilst studies of the revival have noted the generation clash in general terms only. Secondly, it shows that the revival portrayal of England as a decadent, materialistic society (as against Irish spirituality and imagination) received considerable impetus from those writers, like Ryan and Moran, who had experienced English life at close hand and brought their

hostility to it back to Ireland. Further, this study offers the first comprehensive account of the Irish literary revival in London through its exploration of the Southwark Irish Literary Club and the Irish Literary Society. In doing so it offers an important non-Yeatsian perspective of these events. It corroborates what has been suggested elsewhere: that, although the revival later prompted criticism of the narrow political nationalism of the parliamentarians, it began as a outgrowth of their success in the 1880s rather than as a reaction to their demise in the 1890s.

At the same time, through its study of the 'mixed' identities of the Home Rule writers this thesis brings into view important but neglected areas of late Victorian political history, both British and Irish. It shows, for example, that the 'British' side to the Irish Land War of 1879-82 was greater than has been hitherto recognised, with emigrant Parnellites like O'Connor and McCarthy making extensive efforts to recruit working class and Radical support for the Irish tenants. By exploring the part played by the Home Rule litterateurs in the Liberal Home Rule literary campaign of 1886-92, the first full account of that campaign is provided, especially how it evolved in Fleet Street. It reveals the beneficial effect that the Liberal adoption of Home Rule had on the Fleet Street status of Catholic-nationalist Irish journalists on the political press. It also shows how O'Connor and Radical allies like Labouchere sought through their newspapers, *The Star* and *Truth* respectively, to re-shape Liberal policy after 1886 and turn the Home Rule alliance into a combination of mutual reform. For O'Connor, this represented a successful revival of his project of 1880-1, when he tried, but failed, to mould the Land War into a struggle for land reform in Britain as well as Ireland. The role of Barry O'Brien in the Liberal Home Rule campaign is similarly revealing. In contrast to T.P., he was closely associated with the Liberal leadership and their policy of focusing on Home Rule alone. His work on the *Speaker*, a Liberal weekly, involved responding to the Radical pressure from *The Star* and reasserting the Home Rule priorities of the front bench. He was also a leading figure in Gladstone's 'historical' campaign and, through his Irish historical writings of the 1880s, had a considerable influence on Gladstone's thinking on Irish history and politics, particularly his concept of Home Rule as a measure of 'historical justice' to Ireland. This study constitutes the first detailed examination of O'Brien's political and literary career. Finally, the Home Rule writers' support for Britain in the First World War highlights an Imperial commitment stretching back over four decades, and so reveals the full extent to which Imperial loyalty was part of the Home Rule nationalist tradition.

Irish Journalists and Litterateurs in Late Victorian London

c.1870-1910

Contents

Acknowledgements ii

Abbreviations iii

1. 'The Road of Imagination": Irish literary emigration to London in the nineteenth century 1

2. Liberal Titans: W.E. Gladstone and John Bright 29

3. "Against the Grain": responses to the Liberal-Parnellite divide, 1880-5 63

4. "Home Rule in Fleet Street": T.P. O'Connor and *The Star*, 1886-90 127

5. "Not a Parnellite": R. Barry O'Brien and the Liberal Home Rule Campaign, 1886-93 167

6. "Old Fogeyism": W.P. Ryan, R. Barry O'Brien and the Irish Literary Society, 1891-1906 200

7. "The Fairy Gold of Fleet Street": T.P. O'Connor, W.P. Ryan and cultural 'corruption', 1891-1910 254

Bibliography 298

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library
CL, i	*The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats, Vol.1: 1865-95*, eds. John Kelly and Eric Domville (Oxford, 1986).
CL, ii	*The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats, Vol.2: 1896-1900*, eds. Warwick Gould, John Kelly and Deirdre Toomey (Oxford, 1996).
CL, iii	*The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats, Vol.3: 1901-1904*, eds. John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (Oxford, 1994).
D.N.B.	Dictionary of National Biography
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NLS	National Library of Scotland

1

"The Road of Imagination": Irish literary emigration to London in the nineteenth century

Sixty-eight years after the Union of 1800, the English historian Goldwin Smith vividly described the effect that Act had had on Ireland's capital city: "Dublin is a modern Tara, a metropolis from which the glory has departed and the viceroyalty, though it pleases some of the tradesmen, fails altogether to satisfy the people." Few would have disagreed with his verdict. Whilst Dublin's splendid Georgian architecture was a testament to its eighteenth century heyday, the moulding of the British and Irish Parliaments into one inevitably shifted Ireland's centre of gravity across the Irish Sea. Dublin shed its national lustre and donned a provincial guise. It was, in Mary Daly's phrase, 'the deposed capital' and growing urbanisation in Britain meant that Dublin lost out further. The second largest city in the British Isles in 1800, it was only the fifth largest in the United Kingdom by 1860.[1] Accordingly, ambitious middle class Irishmen increasingly looked to Britain, into whose framework the Union had drawn them, as the nineteenth century wore on, not the faded grandeur of Dublin. Improved communications and transport made the cities of Britain both more familiar and more accessible. Boarding the boat to England in 1827, the novelist Gerald Griffin observed "adventurers of every description who devoutly believed gold and fame grew like blackberries upon hedges everywhere except in poor Ireland."[2] For many of them, their ultimate destination was London. The metropolitan core of an expanding Empire and seemingly the greatest city in the world, it had become their capital too.

This was most clearly the case in politics. With Irish MPs now at Westminster, those fixed on a political career naturally turned their attention towards London (and after Emancipation in 1829 this included Catholics). Dublin political life had lost its glamour and it was Westminster which exercised the imagination of budding Irish statesmen. "To become a member of the British Parliament! In all those hot contests at the two debating clubs to which he had belonged, this had been the ambition which had moved him." These are the thoughts of Anthony Trollope's 1860s Irish Catholic adventurer Phineas

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[1] Goldwin Smith, from *The Irish Question* (1868), quoted in R. Barry O'Brien, *The Home Ruler's Manual* (London, 1890), p.12; Mary E. Daly, *Dublin: The Deposed Capital, A Social and Economic History, 1860-1914* (Cork, 1984), pp.1-2.

[2] R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch, Connections in Irish and English History* (London, 1993), p.283.

Finn, but they faithfully reflect the mindset of the author's Irish contemporaries, such as the writer Justin McCarthy. He too dreamt of graduating from his local debating club (the Cork Historical Society of the late 1840s) to Westminster. To be elected to the House of Commons was one of the "great desires" of his early life and passing Parliament during his first visit to London in 1852 he "formed...the audacious ambition" that he might one day enter that 'privileged' place.[3] His wish was gratified in 1879 when he became a Home Rule MP. But the Union did not simply bring Irish nationalists to Westminster. It also heightened the numbers of Irishmen at the very heart of British party politics, both on the Liberal and the Conservative side.[4]

Outside of politics, the pull towards London was just as strong. Those with professional, business or, after the introduction of entrance examinations in 1870, civil service aspirations felt its magnetism too. Many Irishmen went to London hoping for fortune at the English Bar.[5] Two of the most distinguished both hailed from Ulster: the Protestant Hugh Cairns, who arrived in 1838 and, making his mark in politics as well as law, later became Disraeli's Lord Chancellor, and the Catholic Charles Russell, who enjoyed a glittering legal career after coming to London in 1858.[6] Away from the law, the story was the same. Edmund Downey, the son of a Catholic shipbroker from Waterford, crossed to London in 1878, joining the publishing firm of Tinsley Brothers in 1879 and then, in 1884, becoming a partner in the publishing company of Ward and Downey. His friend Charles Gavan Duffy, the ex-Young Ireland revolutionary, told him in later years: "You did well in going to England. There is unhappily no place in Ireland for a man of energy and resources." Thomas Lough, a Protestant Liberal, no doubt shared these

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[3] Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Finn* (Oxford, 1973), I, p.7; Justin McCarthy, *Irish Recollections* (London, 1911), p.13; T.P. O'Connor (ed.), *In the Days of My Youth* (London, 1901), p.158; Justin McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman* (London, 1904), pp.91-2.

[4] Examples here include, on the Liberal side, Chichester Fortescue, who served as Chief Secretary of Ireland (1865-66, 1868-71) and President of the Board of Trade (1871-74), and, on the Conservative side, Henry Corry, who served under Disraeli in 1867-8 as a first lord of the admiralty.

[5] John Hutchinson and Alan O'Day, "The Gaelic Revival in London, 1900-22: Limits of Ethnic Identity", in Swift and Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Victorian Britain, The Local Dimension*, pp.254-76. In their 1889 survey of the Irish contribution to London life, F.A. Fahy (himself a civil servant) and D.J. O'Donoghue wrote: "In the various Civil Service departments throughout the country there are thousands of Irishmen...the Irish medical men in London are another important body, large in numbers [and] there is no profession more remarkable for its Irish associations than that of the lawyer" (F.A. Fahy and D.J. O'Donoghue, "Ireland in London", *Evening Telegraph Reprints, No.7* (Dublin, 1889), p.11).

[6] Russell, who recurs in this study, became Lord Chief Justice of England in 1894. Although based in London, he began on the northern circuit in Liverpool and, significantly, gained his chance through the help of another enterprising Irish emigrant, James Whitty, who was 'an influential Irish Catholic woollen merchant' in Liverpool (R. Barry O'Brien, *Life of Lord Russell of Killowen* (London, 1901), p.69). Other Irish lawyers in London who appear in this study include Patrick MacMahon and A.M. Sullivan, who were both Irish MPs, and R. Barry O'Brien, although the latter gave up the law for a writing career.

sentiments to some extent, for he too left Ireland, setting up as a London tea merchant in 1880. The defection of such enterprising men to the Imperial capital was captured, albeit in an extreme fashion, by the character of Larry Doyle in G.B. Shaw's 1904 play *John Bull's Other Island.* A partner in a profitable civil engineering business in London, Doyle has "an instinct against going back to Ireland: an instinct so strong I'd rather go...to the South Pole than...Rosscullen."[7]

Yet, it was the pursuit Shaw followed – literature – which demonstrated this pattern to perhaps the greatest degree. Irish writers had defected to London in the past, but the Union era undoubtedly saw an intensification of this process. As the nineteenth century progressed an ever-growing army of Irish writers and journalists could be found in Fleet Street and the world of 'literary London', with Shaw, who arrived in 1876, being a case in point. There were various reasons for this increase, the reorientation of Irish life which the Union entailed being the most obvious. Other reasons will soon be noted. But one of the most important, and which, as figures like Russell and Downey show, also swelled the ranks of emigrant Irish professionals and businessmen, was the steady rise of an educated, English-speaking, Catholic middle class in Ireland. It had been gaining in strength since the later eighteenth century, so that unlike that epoch, in which literary emigration had consisted mainly of Protestants like Goldsmith, the Union saw both Protestant and Catholic litterateurs flock to London, as more and more Catholics had the skills required for a journalistic or writing career. Catholic poets and novelists, such as Thomas Moore, John Banim and Gerald Griffin, had made their way in London by the 1820s and were followed later by the likes of McCarthy.[8] Protestant writers such as Shaw still did the same, but their Catholic counterparts had now joined them. And with Irish education continuing to improve over the century, it was a trend that only deepened.

This growing literary migration to the Imperial centre did not go unnoticed. Instead, it frequently caught the eye of observers on both sides of the Irish Sea. In 1837 Isaac Butt, the future Home Rule leader, was moved to point out the "uniform resort of our Irish writers to the London press", whilst between 1848 and 1850 W.M. Thackeray drew attention to the same phenomenon in the pages of *Pendennis*. There, for instance, we meet a Mr Hoolan and a Mr Doolan of the *Dawn* and the *Day*. Similarly, when in 1872

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[7] Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago* (London, 1905), preface; NLI, MS 10, 009, Downey Papers: Duffy to Edmund Downey, n.d.; G.B. Shaw, *John Bull's Other Island*, in Brendan Kennelly (ed.), *Landmarks in Irish Drama* (London, 1988) p.79.

[8] J.C. Beckett, "The Irish Writer and his Public in the Nineteenth Century", *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 11 (1981), pp.106-7.

Hugo Heinrick surveyed the Irish in England for the Dublin *Nation*, he claimed there "was not a newspaper in London without its one, two, three, and four Irish writers and reporters on its staff."[9] One of the journals he might easily have been referring to was the Conservative *Morning Post*, for, according to F.H. O'Donnell, the Home Rule MP, this paper was a veritable nest of Irishmen in the early 1870s:

> The *Morning Post*, dear to duchesses and to suburbia, had been for many years, in almost everything except the profits, an Irish Nationalist possession. I say nothing of its policy, which was the policy of its amiable... proprietor, Algernon Borthwick...The leader writer on general affairs was an Irish Nationalist. The leader writer on parliamentary affairs...was an Irish Nationalist. The leader writer on foreign affairs was an Irish Nationalist. The leading writers on Art and Literature and the Drama were Irish Nationalists.[10]

Despite O'Donnell's tendency to exaggerate, the picture drawn here is by no means inaccurate. Besides O'Donnell himself, who wrote on foreign affairs, the other Irishmen on the *Morning Post* included J. Baker Greene, Richard Brinsley Knowles and Henry M. Dunphy, the latter two being among the paper's parliamentary reporters. By the time of his death in 1889 Dunphy had been connected with the *Post* for forty years. As Heinrick suggests, other London journals, like the *Daily News* and the *Standard*, found themselves equally indebted to Irish talent during the Victorian era. By the 1880s the long-standing Irish contribution to Fleet Street was there for all to see, with the Parnellite *United Ireland* acknowledging in 1887 that "hundreds and hundreds of young Irishmen have come to London to try their 'prentice hands at journalism...the roll-call of English journalism is...thick with Irish names."[11]

One area where this Fleet Street reliance on Irishmen was especially pronounced was war and foreign correspondents. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the growth of something like an Irish tradition in this line. The doyen of Irish war correspondents was William Howard Russell, whose celebrated dispatches for the *Times* during the Crimean War did so much to discredit the Aberdeen administration in the winter of 1854-55. Another Irishman to cover this conflict, this time for the *Daily News*, was E.L. Godkin. They were followed by such notable figures as John Augustus O'Shea, who reported the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and the Indian famine of 1877-8 for the *Standard*, Frank Power, who, before his death in the autumn of 1884, sent graphic accounts of the siege of Khartoum to the *Times* and, the most flamboyant of them all,

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[9] Isaac Butt, "Past and Present State of Literature in Ireland", in Seamus Deane (ed.), *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (3 vols., Derry, 1991), I, p.1207; *Hugo Heinrick, A Survey of the Irish in England, ca. 1830-1877*, ed. Alan O'Day (London, 1990), p.11.

[10] F.H. O'Donnell, *A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party* (2 vols., London, 1910), pp.174-6.

Edmund O'Donovan of the *Daily News*. He reported on the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8 and then gained fame in 1879 by undertaking a solo ride into the heart of Central Asia. However, in 1883 O'Donovan, like his friend Power, met his fate in the Sudan. Whilst the latter remained at Khartoum, O'Donovan travelled with the army of Hicks Pasha, perishing, along with Pasha's force, at the hands of the Mahdi in November 1883. As his replacement, the *Daily News* sent an equally fearless Irishman: the Parnellite MP J.J. O'Kelly, who had previously served as a war correspondent for the *New York Herald.* This tradition culminated with Arthur Lynch, who, covering the South African war of 1899-1902 for *Black and White* magazine, gave up his commission to lead 'The Second Irish Brigade' on the Boer side.[12]

But what made so many Irish journalists and writers switch to London in this fashion? Most immediately, there was the question of economic force. Ireland's population was small and grew smaller over the course of the nineteenth century. In addition, although by now largely Anglophone, much of it during the Union's early decades lacked both education and the money to buy books. It meant there was simply not enough of a reading audience for Irish writers to make a living in their native land. "The Irish reading public", says J.C. Beckett, "was not large enough or wealthy enough to support any considerable body of writers."[13] Even with the greater prosperity and increased literacy of post-Famine Ireland, prospects did not seem to improve, leading many writers to charge the Irish people with a distinct lack of interest in literature. W.B. Yeats, who did much to try and change this situation, wrote in 1892: "[The] people of Ireland respect letters and read nothing...They are proud of being a more imaginative people than the English...yet compel their own imaginative writers to seek an audience across the sea." "Are we really a reading people", asked John Augustus O'Shea that same year. "How many Irish publishers are there? ...[Literature] is admired, but in Ireland [it] does not pay the rent."[14]

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[11] Ibid, p.175; Fahy and O'Donoghue, "Ireland in London", pp.157-60; *United Ireland*, 2 July 1887. Echoing *United Ireland*, Fahy and O'Donoghue wrote: "Most Irish writers of this century...have been connected with London as journalists, or in other capacities."

[12] O'Shea recalled his exploits in *Leaves from the Life of a Special Correspondent* (2 vols., London, 1885), whilst O'Donovan was feted by London society after publishing *The Merv Oasis* (2 vols., London, 1882), an account of his Asian adventure. O'Kelly recounted his experiences as a *Herald* correspondent in Cuba in *The Mambi-Land* (London, 1874). All three men appear frequently in the memoirs of their Irish contemporaries. See, for example, Mark Ryan, *Fenian Memories* (Dublin, 1945) and Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*. As for Lynch, his career was sketched by W.M. Crook, another London-Irish journalist in 1900 (Bodleian Library, Crook Papers, MS Eng.hist.d.381, fol.1-6: "Colonel Arthur Lynch, Some Personal Reminiscences"). To Crook, only the "West of Ireland" produced such men.

[13] Beckett, "The Irish Writer and his Public in the Nineteenth Century", pp.104-5.

[14] *CL*, I, p.296; *United Ireland*, 9 Apr. 1892. For similar expressions that year by Yeats, see his *Letters to the New Island*, ed. George Bornstein and Hugh Witemeyer (London, 1989), p.64-5. At this time he was

Where literature did make a large impact in Ireland in the nineteenth century, it tended to be due to the national sentiment it evoked rather than literary enthusiasm, as in the case of Moore's 'Melodies' (1807-34) or the poetry of Young Ireland in the 1840s.[15]

This lack of a reading public hardly augured well for publishing in Ireland and so, as O'Shea's comments show, the absence of publishers in Ireland was another frequent lament. Certainly, it was not a flourishing business there. Irish publishers were small in number and the staple fare of those that did exist was school, law and medical books rather than poetry or fiction. "Judging from the meagre catalogues of the Dublin publishers", said O'Shea in 1892, "no writers thrive but those who compile...books of devotion, school-books...and treatises on horse-doctoring."[16] The Irish book trade had been badly affected by the Union of 1800, for this extended the copyright law to Ireland, which meant Irish printers and publishers could no longer supplement their incomes by reprinting British works. According to one bookseller in 1821, the printing of books in Ireland was "comparatively nothing", having been "almost annihilated" since the Union.[17] Although publishing in Ireland recovered from this nadir over the ensuing decades, the general outlook remained bleak, as reflected by the fact that Edmund Downey became a publisher in London rather than Dublin.[18] When, therefore, the writer Stephen Gwynn tried to improve matters in 1905 by helping to found 'Maunsel & Co', a new Dublin publishing house, he faced little competition. "Our reason for existence", he told the British litterateur Clement Shorter, "is the absence of any publisher pure & simple here & the need of such a creature in view of the...literary talent."[19]

Inevitably, the limited Irish reading audience also posed problems for literary periodicals and magazines. There was always a relative shortage of these in Ireland.[20]

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seeking to mend matters by launching a new library of 'national' books in Ireland (see Chapter Six below). His sentiments were later echoed by Stephen Gwynn: "So far as concerns the purchase of books, we are a nation of abstainers with a few drunkards...there was never a harder country for a literary man to make a living out of" (*Experiences of a Literary Man* (Dublin, 1926), p.60).

[15] Beckett, "The Irish Writer and his Public in the Nineteenth Century", pp.108-110, 115-16.

[16] *United Ireland*, 9 Apr. 1892; Charles Benson, "Printers and Booksellers in Dublin, 1800-50", in Robin Myers and Michael Harris (eds.), *Spreading the Word, the Distribution Networks of Print, 1550-1850* (Detroit, 1990), pp.53-4.

[17] Ibid, pp.47-8.

[18] Like Yeats and O'Shea, Downey took a grim view of the Irish book trade. "If my twelve or thirteen years of experience of the publishing business is of any account", he told W.P. Ryan in 1892, "I should be inclined to say...it would [take] another St. Patrick...to convert the Irish people into a book-reading and book-buying nation"(W.P. Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival* (London, 1894), pp.58-9).

[19] Leeds University, Clement Shorter Papers: Gwynn to Shorter, 8 Nov. 1905. For Maunsel and Co., see Clare Hutton, "Publishing the Literary Revival: The Evolution of Irish Textual Culture, 1886-1922" (University of Oxford, D.Phil., 1999).

[20] "The people have [no] brilliant literary journals and magazines to awaken their interest in thought and literature; nor would they read them if they had", said Yeats in May 1892 (*CL*, I, p.296).

Many were launched only to cease after a few months. Besides the small market for such journals, they were hampered, particularly during the early years of the Union, by the partisan nature of that market. Any declaration of political or religious affiliation (Catholic-Whig-nationalist or Protestant-Tory-Unionist) swiftly alienated readers who were of a different persuasion. Other problems included the snobbery which often led the wealthier classes to prefer 'cosmopolitan' British magazines to 'provincial' Irish ones and the fact that Dublin booksellers acted as agents for the British periodicals, so had no interest in pushing Irish titles. Nevertheless, there was some progress in this field, most notably the *Dublin University Magazine*, which was started by Butt, Samuel Ferguson and other 'Tory nationalists' in the 1830s and lasted until 1877.[21] But such periodicals as there were could not sustain any significant number of writers in Ireland. Indeed, most Irish magazines either paid very little or nothing at all for contributions.[22] Newspapers alone appeared to hold out the possibility of a writing career at home, but their motive power was political rather than literary, newspapers being the great engine of nineteenth century nationalism. And even here the number of options was comparatively small.

Of course, this overview is not meant to suggest that literary developments were wholly lacking in Ireland during the Union. The 1830s, for instance, saw a burst of activity. Many literary periodicals were started besides the *Dublin University Magazine*, although most were short-lived. Irish fiction was brought to a wider audience than before in the form of 'penny magazines' and Irish work was successfully published in Dublin, the most well known example being William Carleton's *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*. In the introduction to the 'New Edition' of 1842 Carleton admitted that previously "our men and women of genius uniformly carried their talents to the English market, whilst we laboured under the privations of a literary famine."[23] That things were improving in this regard appeared to be shown by the emergence that year in Dublin of the Young Ireland writers and their foundation both of the *Nation* newspaper, with its cultural nationalist agenda, and, later, a series of books called the 'Library of Ireland'.

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[21] Barbara Hayley, "Irish Periodicals from the Union to the *Nation*", *Anglo-Irish Studies*, 2 (1976), pp.83-108; Barbara Hayley and Enda McKay (eds.), *Three Hundred Years of Irish Periodicals* (Mullingar, 1987), pp.29-46. For the *Dublin University Magazine*, see J. Spence, "The Philosophy of Irish Toryism, 1833-52" (University of London, Ph.D. thesis, 1991).

[22] William Carleton, for instance, claimed in 1842 that such was his commitment to Irish literature that he had contributed to native periodicals "whether he received remuneration or not" (William Carleton, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (2 vols., Gerrards Cross, 1990), I, p.vii). Similarly, the *Gael* magazine of 1887 was especially valuable to the young Yeats, since it "actually paid for contributions" (R.F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol.1: The Apprentice Mage* (Oxford, 1997), p.44).

[23] Carleton, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*, I, p.v; Hayley, "Irish Periodicals from the Union to the *Nation*", pp.83-108; Hayley and McKay (eds.), *Three Hundred Years of Irish Periodicals*, pp.29-46.

The simple fact they remained in Ireland was not the least of Young Ireland's achievements in the eyes of later generations.[24] Yet on the whole the nineteenth century Irish journalist or writer took the opposite course to them. Rather than emulating Young Ireland, most Irish litterateurs surveyed the unpropitious conditions in Ireland and came to the same conclusion as the poet George Darley in 1820: "seeing no other prospect", he moved to London.[25]

It was not simply the Irish 'push' factors outlined above that made this so. Unsurprisingly, the 'pull' factors operating from London were equally significant. All that was missing in Ireland seemed to be on offer in the Imperial capital. There was the large reading public necessary to support the would-be writer and the Union had brought that public even closer to the Irish literary man. The nineteenth century English audience also developed a taste for fiction about Ireland, so that Irish writers wishing to take their native land for a subject were by no means discouraged, as the careers of John Banim and Gerald Griffin showed. Further, this reading audience grew ever larger during the century as the population increased and literacy spread, whilst the cheaper book production methods and national railway network fostered by industrialisation allowed that audience to be reached. Naturally, all this meant there was not only a more extensive publishing business in Britain but that it expanded greatly during the Victorian era.[26] Finally, and most strikingly of all, the magazine and press openings for writers in London were infinite when compared to the circumscribed literary world of Dublin. Its vast array of newspapers and periodicals seemed to provide the best opportunity for a literary career and this was even more the case following the repeal of the 'taxes on knowledge' between 1853 and 1861, for the cheap press this created led to a marked rise in the number of London journals.[27]

With such potent forces operating in tandem with those in Ireland, it is little wonder that London became a Mecca for Irish writers. Only there could an Irish literary man seemingly carve out a decent living. For them, says Beckett, "London was the centre of their literary world, the place where the literary aspirant had, or thought he had, the best chance of succeeding." That the 'pull' factors grew in strength during the nineteenth

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[24] "What made the Young Ireland epoch memorable...in our history", asked *United Ireland* (9 April 1892). Was it that the Young Irelanders were able? Yes; but twenty-thousand time more that they were *here*."
[25] *Irish Book Lover*, Sept. 1911, p.106. For Darley, see too *The Irish Catholic*, 9 July 1892.
[26] Beckett, "The Irish Writer and his Public in the Nineteenth Century", pp.102-6; John Feather, *A History of British Publishing* (London, 1991), pp.129-37, 179.
[27] Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain* (2 vols., London, 1981, 1984), I, p.1; Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press, 1855-1914* (London, 1976), pp.67-72.

century helps explain the way that Irish literary migration increased under the Union. Justin McCarthy, who began to make his way as a London journalist and novelist in the 1860s, was well aware of the economic realities. In his early years in Ireland he felt that London was "the only place where a young man with a love for literary work, who had already become associated with journalism, could hope to make a good living by...his pen." George Darley had evidently felt the same and once resident in London he was not disappointed, establishing his name as a poet and becoming a contributor to the *London Magazine* and, later, the *Atheneaum*. Even when a journalistic berth had already been gained at home, ambitious Irishmen could not resist the lure of Fleet Street. W.B. Guinee, for instance, had previously transferred from Cork to Dublin to work on the *Freemans Journal* when, in the mid-1870s, he "folded his tent once more" and went to London "determined to compel success."[28]

Publishers in London, with their larger reading audience, were far more likely to take a chance on a young, unknown author than their cautious counterparts in Dublin. Between 1866 and 1883 Tinsley Brothers issued the debut novels of several Irish writers who were necessarily obscure then but became well known afterwards, such as Justin McCarthy, Richard Dowling and George Moore.[29] Dowling owed his break (in 1879) to the fact that, like Downey, he worked at Tinsley's, something that brings another facet of this literary gravitation to London into view: the Irish networks that were built up. William Tinsley, one of the two brothers in charge, recalled in connection with Dowling "that several clever young Irishmen found their way almost direct from Ireland to my office." One of those he surely had in mind was Downey, for it was Dowling, his cousin, who helped him gain employment there. In turn, these two possibly played a part in Tinsley's acceptance of Moore's novel in 1883. Downey himself also edited *Tinsley's Magazine* between 1879 and 1884 and ensured its pages were always open to his own countrymen. John Augustus O'Shea, Dowling, Guinee, Moore and McCarthy were all among its contributors.[30] The

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[28] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.82; *Irish Book Lover*, Sept. 1911, p.106; Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, pp.152-8.

[29] Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, p.10; William Tinsley, *Random Recollections of an Old Publisher* (2 vols., London, 1900), I, pp.305-8; McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.137; Adrian Frazier, *George Moore* (New Haven and London, 2000), pp.88-9. The debut novels in question were Justin McCarthy's *Paul Massie* (1866), Richard Dowling's *The Mystery of Killard* (1879) and George Moore's *A Modern Lover* (1883). Tinsley also published McCarthy's next novel, *The Waterdale Neighbours*, in 1867.

[30] Tinsley, *Random Recollections of an Old Publisher*, II, p.325; Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, pp.155-8, 271-2; Fahy and O'Donoghue, "Ireland in London", p.158. It must be said, however, that Moore's recent biographer, Adrian Frazier, does not suggest that the Downey-Dowling axis was of use to Moore in the acceptance of his novel. Indeed, Frazier says that Downey only printed one story of Moore's, "Under the Fan" in 1882, before transferring his literary admiration to another Irish contributor, John Hill. Besides Hill

theme of Irishman helping Irishman in the London literary world will recur in this study. Such networks are a familiar feature of most immigrant communities, not just Irish ones. Here, their development can only have further facilitated the removal of Irish writers and journalists to the Imperial centre, since Irishmen were more likely to decamp to London if they knew a fellow countryman who could get them a job. It was another reason why Irish literary migration to London grew as the nineteenth century wore on.

As strong a 'pull' factor as economic motives were cultural ones. It was London's status as the hub of British cultural and artistic life and its closer connection with European currents which also made it a must for many Irish writers. They felt that they needed the stimulus of an 'international culture' and that this was simply not available at home. "Every Irishman who felt that his business in life was on the higher planes of the cultural professions", said Shaw, "felt that he must have a metropolitan domicile and an international culture; that is, he felt his first business was to get out of Ireland."[31] More specifically, it was the romantic or picturesque image of 'literary London' which particularly caught the imagination of literary-minded Victorian Irishmen. Steeped in history, London was associated with nearly all the major figures of English literary history from Chaucer to Johnson. It had close links with the greatest of them all, Shakespeare, and of course there was the attraction of following in the footsteps of famous Irish writers like Goldsmith. The various parts of London had been immortalised in the works of the past.

Ireland's long-standing exposure to English cultural influence had made this image of 'literary London' familiar enough, but it became even more so during the Union, thereby offering yet another explanation for the nineteenth century growth in Irish literary emigration. For a start, English cultural influence was necessarily increased by an arrangement which bound Ireland closer to Britain both politically and economically. That influence also became stronger in the nineteenth century because economic union coincided with some of the developments noted above. The rise of the cheap press and the improvements in production and transport that expanded the book trade in Britain inevitably meant more British books, newspapers and periodicals circulating in Ireland too.[32] This heightened cultural influence no doubt raised Irish interest in and knowledge of 'literary London'. Moreover, among the books arriving from Britain were the works of

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and those mentioned above, Frazier lists Lady Wilde, Tighe Hopkins, John F. Keane and J. Fitzgerald Molloy as among the Irish writers for *Tinsley's Magazine* (Frazier, *George Moore*, pp.84-5).

[31] G. B. Shaw, *The Matter with Ireland* (London, 1902), p.10.

those giants of Victorian literature, Dickens and Thackeray. Their popularity was just as marked in Ireland and through them this whole process was given renewed force, as their books once again brought London to life, intensifying its romantic appeal, especially when, as in *Pendennis*, the portrait included that very world of bohemian 'literary London' - complete with Irish inhabitants - which was such a powerful lure.

These literary associations, remote and recent, made London almost irresistible for those of a literary bent. The poet and songwriter F.A. Fahy, for example, may have come there in 1873 to work for the civil service, but coupled with this was a "great...eagerness to see the world-city of my readings and my dreams." For him, London was half-known even before he arrived:

> My readings of histories and novels had familiarised me with the London both of imagination and of reality – Westminster Palace, the Abbey, the Tower...the Inns of Court. I already knew their position and appearance, and most of my early years in London were spent in roaming about its streets and parks, visiting...the churches and showplaces, and filling them with memories of historic or fictitious characters from the works of Ainsworth, Thackeray, Dickens and others.[33]

T.P. O'Connor, the journalist and Parnellite MP, had a similarly acute sense of London's literary tradition. Migrating there in 1870, his ambition was to be a writer, not a politician. "As he rested by the fountains in Trafalgar Square, he had been reminded of a scene in Thackeray's Esmond", says his biographer Hamilton Fyfe. "While he tramped Fleet Street, he remembered Pendennis and Warrington." Residing in London not only allowed you to frequent the haunts of past writers or fictional heroes but also held out the chance of actually glimpsing a living author. Edmund Downey, who made his mark as a humorous writer as well as a publisher, recalled seeing Wilkie Collins one day in the early 1880s: "That's old Wilkie Collins", said Mr Tinsley...I was thrilled with excitement at beholding the author of *The Woman in White*. Mr Tinsley guffawed when I revealed to him my awe-inspired feelings concerning Wilkie Collins."[34]

The figure that best illustrates the romantic attraction of 'literary London', though, is Justin McCarthy. As a young man in Cork, he was devoted to English literature, especially Dickens and Thackeray. His attachment to such works demonstrates clearly the strength of English cultural influence during the Union. Indeed, literary critics and post-colonial commentators like Ashis Nandy would see McCarthy as a classic example of the

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[32] F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939* (Oxford, 1982), pp.7-8.
[33] "Francis Fahy's 'Ireland in London – Reminiscences' (1921)", ed. Clare Hutton, in Wayne K. Chapman and Warwick Gould (eds.), *Yeats Annual, No.15: Yeats's Collaborations* (London, 2002), pp.238-9.
[34] Hamilton Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor* (London, 1934), p.12; Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, p.24.

'colonised' imagination, as someone whose 'state of mind' had been shaped by the Imperial power.[35] Recalling his Cork youth of the late 1840s, McCarthy said:

> We, the young Nationalists of Ireland in those days, were as ardent admirers of England's literature, ancient and modern, as the most enthusiastic Englishman could be. The shelves of our little libraries...held copies of Chaucer, Spenser, as well as Shakespeare, of Ben Jonson and Samuel Johnson, of Byron, of Macaulay, of Dickens and Thackeray. If a new novelist suddenly made a hit in London our immediate anxiety was to get a copy of the new novel, and to read the work and exchange our ideas about it.[36]

The cultural dominance of London, its magnetic power, is clear here. It is not surprising that this immersion in English literature led McCarthy to dream of seeing romantic 'literary London' for himself, and even becoming a part of it:

> London was to me a kind of fairyground, to which my love of English literature drew me with an almost romantic longing. I longed to become familiar with the London of Shakespeare, with the London of Prince Hal and Falstaff, of Addison's *Spectator*, of Byron, and Dickens and Thackeray...My brother and I used to rhapsodise to each other about London and a London literary life, and I used to pour out to my sister my dreams of the time when I should be settled in London.[37]

To McCarthy, London's literary appeal far outweighed economic considerations. The latter always took "second place." London was above all the "capital city" of that "realm of romance" which lay at the end of the "road of imagination."[38] During his first visit in 1852 he spent his time, like Fahy and O'Connor, wandering in "rapture" streets which were already familiar "by various associations drawn from English histories and biographies and novels." But this was not enough. His heart was set "on actually living in London, and making it my home."[39] When the chance came in 1853 to leave Cork, and his job on the *Cork Examiner*, and work on the *Northern Daily Times* in Liverpool, McCarthy did so because it was "a stepping-stone on my way to London." And so it proved. In 1860 he gained a job in London journalism and moved south. In the following years he finally started to live that 'literary life' of which he had dreamed. Like Downey, he glimpsed his favourite authors and, to "his unspeakable delight and pride", even made the acquaintance of the great Dickens.[40]

Although nationalists, aspiring Victorian Irish writers such as McCarthy and O'Connor thus felt London was the centre of their world, both economically and

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[35] Colonialism "cannot be identified only with economic gain and political power," says Nandy. Instead, the "first differentia of colonialism is a state of mind in the colonisers and the colonised, a colonial consciousness which includes the sometimes unrealisable wish to make economic and political profits from the colonies, but other elements too" (Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* (Delhi, 1983), pp.1-2).
[36] McCarthy, *Irish Recollections*, p.34.
[37] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, pp.56-8.
[38] O'Connor (ed.), *In the Days of My Youth*, p.149; McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.81.
[39] Justin McCarthy, *Reminiscences* (2 vols., London, 1899), pp.2-5; O'Connor (ed.), *In the Days of My Youth*, p.150.
[40] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.102; Justin McCarthy, *Portraits of the Sixties* (London, 1903), p.18.

culturally. It was, in McCarthy's view, "the central point of the universe." Not only did they yearn to live in London but once there they had little desire to move elsewhere. On his second day in London T.P. "made up his mind he would never leave it."[41] This was no doubt because he was painfully aware of what he had left behind. He drew on his own petit bourgeois background in Athlone when he spoke later of "the hopelessness of a youth born into the lower middle classes of an Irish country town" and the "ghastly loneliness" of such a place.[42] There was no comparison between such surroundings and a possible career in the Imperial capital and those who had the education to make the leap (T.P. himself went to the Queens College, Galway) invariably did so. Like Guinee and McCarthy, Irish journalism was not enough for O'Connor. Only by trying his hand in London would he be satisfied and so after three years in Dublin he made the switch. That London was at the heart of his life and world is reflected by his *Memoirs*, which start with his migration there in 1870, the implication being that it was only then that T.P.'s life really began.[43] Becoming a Londoner meant that, like McCarthy, O'Connor's later political campaigns took place mainly in Britain rather than Ireland. For McCarthy, politics could be a bind when they entailed the opposite. "How I rejoice in the prospect of being in London again", he wrote from Ireland during the 1885 election; a visit to Dublin in 1887 was described as 'dreary'.[44] London was his capital, as it was T.P.'s, and they could not imagine life away from it. "No I couldn't live out of London or Paris," says Maurice Tyrone, the Irish hero of McCarthy's 1873 novel, *A Fair Saxon*, when asked if he would return to Ireland in order to reduce his expenditure.[45] In the first half of this statement he spoke both the sentiments of his creator and those of the majority of Irish writers and journalists during the era of the Union.

By the 1880s the number of Irish literary figures plying their trade in London rather than Ireland had, for the reasons given, reached an almost unprecedented level. In 1889 F.A. Fahy and D.J. O'Donoghue (who was born in London of Cork parents) surveyed Irish

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[41] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.81; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.231.
[42] T.P. O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement* (London, 1886), p.100; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.108.
[43] L.W. Brady, *T.P. O'Connor and the Liverpool Irish* (London, 1983), pp.12-14; T.P. O'Connor, *Memoirs of an Old Parliamentarian* (2 vols., London, 1929).
[44] Justin McCarthy and Mrs Campbell Praed, *Our Book of Memories* (London, 1912), pp.27, 128. Trollope's Phineas Finn felt similarly afflicted when the end of the parliamentary session meant a return to Ireland: "There was something melancholy in his yearly journey to Ireland...a falling off in the manner of his life [and] that sort of society which he would have preferred" (II, pp.231-2).
[45] Justin McCarthy, *A Fair Saxon* (London, 1878), p.17. The novel was first published in 1873 in three volumes. This quote is taken from the one volume edition of 1878, as are all the other quotes in this study.

literary activity in London over the past two hundred years or so as part of a lengthy article entitled "Ireland in London."[46] Their title seemed particularly appropriate when it came to Irish literature, for at the time of writing Ireland was almost wholly 'in London' as far as literature was concerned. Firstly, the Irish Party at Westminster boasted a good number of London journalists and writers during the 1880s. As well as Justin McCarthy, T.P. O'Connor and J.J. O'Kelly, who were Parnellite MPs throughout the decade, the party ranks also contained, in the early 1880s, J.L. Finigan, O'Donnell and McCarthy's son, Huntley McCarthy, whilst T.P. Gill joined the party in 1886.[47] They pushed the Home Rule cause inside and outside the walls of Westminster. In addition, there were Irish writers who, although not MPs, were still closely connected with the Home Rule campaign and likewise supported it with their pens, such as R. Barry O'Brien, the historian and journalist, and W.M. Crook. Outside of politics, some of the other Irish litterateurs in London in the 1880s have already been mentioned: W.B. Guinee, Downey, Dowling, Henry Dunphy, Fahy, O'Donoghue and the war correspondents, O'Shea, Power and O'Donovan. But there were many besides these. Richard Ashe King, the literary editor of *Truth* for forty years, Dr. John Todhunter, a friend of Yeats, A.P. Graves and Michael MacDonagh, all called London their home too. Yeats himself was just one of a number of future Irish literary luminaries who were part of this emigrant world in the 1880s and beyond, the others being Shaw, Bram Stoker, George Moore and Oscar Wilde (Wilde's brother Willie and Moore's brother Augustus, who actually lived on Fleet Street, were also London journalists). Moreover, there was no sign of this literary flow abating as the decade wore on: T.W. Rolleston, W.P. Ryan and the Moran brothers, D.P. and Joseph, were among those who crossed over from Ireland during the second half of the 1880s.[48] The high Irish literary presence in London ensured that when the famous Rhymers Club was formed in 1890 several Irishmen made-up this poetic group. Yeats, Rolleston and Todhunter were all members, whilst Oscar Wilde sometimes dropped by.[49]

However, a more striking index than the Rhymers Club of London-Irish literary strength at this time was the emergence within the Irish literary community of their own, specifically Irish, societies and clubs. In 1883 F.A. Fahy was the main force behind the

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[46] See note 5.

[47] Alan O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism, Parnellite Involvement in British Politics, 1880-86* (Dublin, 1977), p.20. There were other journalists in the Irish Party at this time, such as William O'Brien and Timothy Harrington, but their connections were with the Irish press, not Fleet Street.

[48] Richard Ellman, *Oscar Wilde* (London, 1988), p.244; Davis Coakley, *Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Irish* (Dublin, 1994), pp.97-8, 192-5; Frazier, *George Moore*, pp.68, 77; Patrick Maume, *D.P. Moran* (Dundalk, 1995), p.7.

creation of the Southwark Irish Literary Club and when this waned later in the decade it was succeeded by the Irish Literary Society, which was set afloat in the winter of 1891-2 by Yeats and the remnants of the Southwark Club.[50] The development of such groups is, on one level, a vivid illustration of the way that Irish literary emigration to London appeared to reach a high point in the 1880s. Yet, they are also the sign of something far more significant, for each society sought to foster interest in Irish culture and art, and work towards a new Irish national literature. Their target in both aims was the Irish audience in Britain and Ireland, not the English reading public. It marks a crucial shift in the London-Irish literary world. Hitherto, the defection of Irish litterateurs to London had, in most cases, resulted in their apparent absorption within English culture and society. Even where Ireland was taken as a subject, the work was mainly directed at English readers, which had seemingly reduced the chances of a distinctively Irish voice coming through.[51] But this was now changing. The two societies began a process which, over the next decade and a half (and especially following the foundation of the London Gaelic League in 1896), saw many of those involved vigorously assert their cultural separateness and reject the assimilation which, to them, had so far typified Irish literary migration to London. And, ultimately, they would take this ideal to its logical end and return to Ireland.

It means that the 1880s and 1890s are critical years for London-Irish literary life, just as they are for Irish history as a whole, since the changes in London were of course connected with similar developments in Ireland as the cultural revival gathered pace and the 'de-Anglicisation' project got underway. These two decades are the juncture at which two opposing forces met in the London-Irish literary world. The deep-seated trend of emigration and integration that appeared to reach its peak in the 1880s was followed by a reaction, a move in the opposite direction, first culturally and then literally. It was almost as if reaching that peak had brought a questioning of what had gone before. Further, and this is vital, at the heart of these conflicting tendencies, of this shift in outlook, was a division between two generations of Irish literary emigrants: one, long resident in London and becoming increasingly entrenched in British life, the other, recently arrived and soon to reject the cultural compromises of their elders. Accordingly, it is the crucial years of

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[49] Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life, I*, pp.107-8.
[50] See Chapter Six below for more on these two societies.
[51] Beckett, "The Irish Writer and his Public in the Nineteenth Century", pp.107-9, 112-13. Writing in 1829, Gerald Griffin said of 'fashionable society': "They are the people whom one writes to please, and it is well to know what pleases them" (p.107).

the 1880s and 1890s, and the split between generations that they witnessed, which will form the basis of this study.

First to be explored are the older litterateurs, those men who exemplify the dominant pattern of emigration and adaptation. This is the 'Home Rule' generation, made-up of educated men from the Catholic middle classes, such as T.P. O'Connor, Justin McCarthy and R. Barry O'Brien. Born in the 1830s and 1840s, they settled in London between 1860 and 1870. They would spend the rest of their lives there.[52] As we have seen, English literature captivated them and 'literary London' was their cultural focal point. It was to the English public that the writings of these men, whether fictional, political or historical, were directed. Nationalism was their most obvious political passion, but living in London during the 1860s and 1870s led to all three being strongly influenced, politically and intellectually, by British Liberalism and, in particular, by the two men under whose aegis a coherent and energetic Liberal party had emerged in the late 1860s: John Bright and William Gladstone. As a result, Liberalism was also an important and enduring part of this generation's identity. They were drawn towards its journalistic, political and social world in London and McCarthy, having arrived first, begun to infiltrate its upper levels in the 1860s and 1870s. For the other two, it was Gladstone's adoption of Home Rule in 1886 which led to them doing the same, as the Liberal need for Irish political talent saw their careers advance markedly. All three had a prominent part in the Liberal Home Rule campaign of 1886-93. By the 1890s they were well established in London, enjoying fruitful literary, journalistic and political careers and, through the 'British' elements to their political and cultural identities, they showed how emigration could shape the Irish litterateur. Much of this study, then, will involve tracking their London progress and the growth of these 'mixed' outlooks. It is, in a sense, a group biography, focusing on the evolution and expression of identity through journalism and literature rather than Parliament, although, as two of them were MPs, this figures in some measure, whilst the beliefs of these men are necessarily assessed in relation to contemporary political events. In order to demonstrate the lasting nature of their 'mixed', or 'dual', identities the years leading up to the Great War will also be touched on. Finally, despite this group approach

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[52] O'Connor was born in 1848 in Athlone, his father being a shopkeeper and billiard saloon owner (Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.4-5). O'Brien was born in 1847 in Kilrush, Co. Clare, the son of a steamboat agent on the Shannon. Like O'Connor, he enjoyed higher education, attending the Catholic University in Dublin in the 1860s (The *Observer*, 24 Mar. 1918). McCarthy was born in 1830 and his father was chief clerk to the Cork city magistrates. Unlike the other two, he did not go to University. He also eventually left London, moving to Westgate-on-Sea in Kent in 1897 and staying there until his death in 1912. But it was a move enforced by ill health (Eugene J. Doyle, *Justin McCarthy* (Dundalk, 1996), pp.7, 58).

the men in question did not see themselves as such. There was no 'group consciousness' and, inevitably, there were differences as well as similarities.

Just as the Home Rule generation were achieving success and embedding themselves more firmly still in London, a new set of Irish writers arrived whose focus, in contrast, was to become Ireland and the goal of a distinct Irish 'civilisation'. This was the 'Revival' generation. Consisting of figures like W.P. Ryan and D.P. Moran, they were born in the late 1860s, twenty years after the Home Rule group, and so reached London in the 1880s, with Ryan emigrating in 1886 and Moran in 1887. Initially, therefore, they too felt the Imperial capital's magnetism, though it was mainly in economic terms. Like the Home Rule men, they were Catholic and educated, but, whilst Moran's background was middle class, Ryan came from a lower social stratum, more peasant than bourgeois.[53] Once in London they were influenced by the Irish revival rather than British Liberalism, becoming heavily involved in the Southwark Club, the Irish Literary Society and, later, the Gaelic League. To them, the vital essence of Irish identity was not political, as the Home Rule group appeared to believe, but cultural. By the late 1890s their ideal was an 'Irish-Ireland', an Ireland free from British ways and instead cultivating its own Gaelic customs and language and building up its own national literature and even industry.[54] At the same time they had become disenchanted with the materialism and decadence of London life, dismissing the historic image of 'literary London' as a 'mirage'. This dislike of English life both stimulated their revival activities and was in turn fuelled by them.

But their revival vision was something that the Home Rule writers had not seemingly embraced and so, unsurprisingly, the Revival group were to view their forerunners, with their mixed identities and their focus on the British audience, as Irishmen who had compromised their Irishness, who were, in effect, Anglicised. With O'Connor this line was especially strong, as his later move into gossip weeklies fuelled an image of 'corruption' by English commercialism and immorality. This was the fate that the younger set sought to avoid and this led not only to an assertion of their separateness but, significantly, to an eventual return to Ireland and the opportunity of aiding the cultural revival directly. An attempt was thus made to break the century long pattern of literary

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[53] Maume, *D.P. Moran*, pp.1-7; Martin J.Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement" (Connecticut Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1970), pp.1-9. Moran was born in 1869, Ryan in 1867. Ryan moved to London because he was unable to get a place on the Irish provincial press. For their social background, see too Martin J. Waters, "Peasants and Emigrants: Considerations of the Gaelic League as a social movement", in Daniel J. Casey & Robert E. Rhodes (eds.), *Views of the Irish Peasantry* (Connecticut, 1977).

[54] At this point Ryan and Moran believed this national literature had to be in Irish, but this had not always been the case, especially with Ryan, as will be seen in Chapter Six below.

emigration with its concomitant threat of absorption. The lure of 'literary London' was to end. Like Yeats and other revivalists, Ryan and Moran wanted the Irish 'intellectual capital' to be in Ireland, not London, and this meant Irish writers staying at home (Stephen Gwynn's creation of a publishing firm in Dublin was part of this project[55]). It is this second generation that the later parts of this study will examine, looking at their participation in revival activities in London and the areas where they collided directly with the Home Rule group, such as 1890s Fleet Street and the Irish Literary Society. Emigration had affected them in the opposite way to their predecessors. Rather than a dual identity, they had gained a reinforced (and redefined) sense of Irishness. For the Home Rule men, the 'road of imagination' had pointed to London and London only, but for the Revival generation it turned out to be circular, leading them back again to Ireland.

In the years after independence the Ryan-Moran depiction of past emigrant writers as 'un-Irish' remained intact, for it was the kind of Gaelic-Catholic conception of Irishness which they and others had sponsored at the turn of the century that held sway. Nationalist commentators of the 1930s like Daniel Corkey omitted the emigrant litterateurs from the Irish canon because they did not fit an exclusivist version of Irish identity. To Corkery, the fact that Irish writers in London had looked to the British rather than the Irish audience prevented their work being truly 'national', since it ignored the three vital forces of Irish life: the religious consciousness of the people (i.e. Catholicism), the fight to regain the land and Irish nationalism.[56] Instead, to please the British reading public they either avoided Ireland in their work, as in the case of Wilde or Shaw (who "cut away their own land"[57]) or, if writing about it, as Griffin and Charles Lever had done, they did so in a way that pandered to metropolitan taste and prejudice. (McCarthy's novels would doubtless have been guilty of both crimes[58]). Consequently, Corkery was unable to take this 'Anglo-Irish' work seriously, for "measured against [Irish] life itself...it has not begun to be."[59] More recently, however, this marginalising of the Irish emigrant writers of

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[55] In several ways Gwynn would appear to be part of the 'Revival' group, for he was of that generation, having been born in 1864, and his foundation of Maunsel & Co came after eight years in London (from 1896 to 1904), where he too had been closely involved in the Irish Literary Society (see pp.245-7 below). However, as an Irish Party MP from 1906 to 1918 (and a Protestant), he did not share their antipathy towards the 'Anglicised' Home Rule generation which the party represented, so he cannot be properly included within the Revival group, although his return to Dublin underlines the shift in Irish attitudes towards literary emigration that was taking place.

[56] Daniel Corkery, *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature* (Cork, 1931), pp.19-23.

[57] Ibid, p.5.

[58] See p.254 below.

[59] Corkery, *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature*, p.22.

the nineteenth century has been reversed. They have become a renewed area of interest and even, in some cases, been readmitted to the national canon. One of the most striking examples of this change is Declan Kiberd's *Inventing Ireland*, which, drawing on the work of post-colonial critics like Nandy, opens its study of the 'literature of the modern nation' with the very writers who cast Ireland aside in Corkery's view: Wilde and Shaw. This is because Kiberd's definition of Irishness does not rest, like Corkery's, on writing about specific features of Irish life, but can be expressed in more subtle and oblique ways. Hence, in his opinion the Irishness of Wilde and Shaw was demonstrated through their dismantling of the stereotyping and antithetical thinking which characterised Victorian analyses of the Anglo-Irish relationship.[60]

But it is not only literary critics who have returned to the emigrant writers of the Union era. Historians have also begun to find them a worthy topic. R.F. Foster, for instance, has drawn attention to these men because he is interested in how the Union, with its coupling of Ireland and England, facilitated the development, both in Irishmen and Englishmen, of the type of mixed identities possessed by the Home Rule group: "throughout the nineteenth century an enduringly interesting question concerns the English aspect of Irishness and the Irish aspect of certain Englishnesses, inseparable from the fact of Union."[61] Whereas nationalist critics like Corkery have seen the former state as 'not-Irish', Foster views it as part of a more flexible, open, Irishness. As with Kiberd, such an approach helps reinsert the emigrant writers of the Victorian period into the debate on Ireland's cultural past. Other historians, meanwhile, have reached these men and their mixed identities by a different path. Alan O'Day, for example, in *The English Face of Irish Nationalism* (1977), has focused on the political dimension. Challenging the view that the Parnellite Party's gaze was fixed solely on Ireland, he has revealed the extent to which its political interests and ideas were shaped by British as well as Irish factors. He deals largely with the Parliamentary arena and tackles the party's first six years (1880-86), the time when its independence was supposedly greatest. As a result, he points out the Liberal affinities and London residency of those Home Rule writers who were also MPs, like O'Connor and McCarthy.

More generally, though, the emigrant litterateurs have come under the microscope because of shifts in the historiography of the Irish Diaspora. In a sense, the wheel has come full circle. Nineteenth century Irish assessments of emigration tended to stress not

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[60] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland, The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London, 1996), pp.5, 29-63.
[61] R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, p.283.

only the migrants' fidelity to Faith and Fatherland but also their economic, social and cultural advance in their new homes. O'Donoghue and Fahy's record of Irish achievement in London, literary and otherwise, is in this vein.[62] As this shows, and as we have seen, the emigrant writers were certainly visible to their contemporaries. Yet in the twentieth century the concern of Diaspora historiography, especially in the United States, became the Irish 'community' and the idea of 'history from below', so that the 'internal' dynamics of emigration were examined rather than the external criteria. Initiated by Oscar Handlin in the 1950s, this approach replaced the positive tone with the claim that Irish Catholic emigrants to America in the nineteenth century were traumatised by their social and psychological displacement. Hamstrung by such feelings and confronted with native hostility, they did not adapt to their host society and socio-economic success eluded them. The 'internal' model reached its climax in the 1980s with Kerby Miller. To the Irish, he says, emigration was 'exile' and this led to a measure of alienation from American society, whilst the 'fatalistic' nature of Gaelic-Catholic culture retarded Irish economic progress. Similar pictures of Irish 'apartness' were drawn by historians of the Irish in Britain, most notably by Lynn H. Lees in her 1979 study of the Irish in London.[63] Interest centred on the large Irish populations (or 'ghettos') in the major British cities and the problems, including anti-Irish prejudice, they faced. It meant that those Irishmen who entered the mainstream of British society and made something of themselves, like the litterateurs, fell from sight.

However, in the last ten years or so the pendulum has swung back again, at least within the historiography of the Irish in Britain. Irish emigration to Victorian Britain is now considered a more varied process than before. Recent work has questioned the 'ghetto' image and revealed how widely dispersed Irish settlement was. Socio-economic achievement and upward mobility have been delineated as well as hardship, and the British response to the Irish influx evidently varied greatly from place to place. The consensus is that most Irish emigrants were assimilated comparatively quickly by their

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[62] After reviewing Irish success in various professional and public fields, they conclude: "[the Irish] have succeeded in every capacity, and have filled all exalted positions...There be no reasonable limit to their ambition or their success" ("Ireland in London", p.12). Other works in what Alan O'Day has called the 'patriotic' tradition include J.F. Maguire's *The Irish in America* (1868), J.F. Hogan's *The Irish in Australia* (1887) and John Denvir's *A History of the Irish in Britain* (1892). See Alan O'Day, "Revising the Diaspora", in D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds.), *The Making of Modern Irish History, Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy* (London, 1996), pp.199-200.

[63] Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston, 1951); Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York and Oxford, 1985); Lynn Hollen Lees, *Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London* (Manchester, 1979); O'Day, "Revising the Diaspora", in Boyce and O'Day (eds.), *The Making of Modern Irish History*, pp.201-10.

new environment rather than segregated or left isolated.[64] It is this emphasis on diversity and integration which has helped bring the emigrant writers back into view, since it has involved highlighting those middle class Irishmen who adapted swiftly and profitably to British society and figures like the Home Rule writers are clear examples of this. Thus, R.F. Foster notes the many Irish journalists who permeated Victorian Britain in order to show that Irish emigration was not simply "proletarian and involuntary" but also included middle-class types for whom it was a positive choice and a marked success.[65]

Naturally, the present study seeks to extend this process of returning the emigrant litterateurs to the foreground of Irish history. In so doing, it will build on and develop some of the various themes sketched above. Most obviously, it will flesh out the 'alternative' side to the emigration picture even more fully. The careers of the Home Rule generation of writers will show how middle-class Catholic Irishmen could indeed make their way in literature, society and politics in nineteenth century Britain. For them, emigration was certainly more voluntary than forced, as McCarthy and O'Connor willingly forsook journalistic jobs at home to seek a greater future in Britain ("Did landlordism drive Mr O'Connor out of Ireland?" asked Moran in 1900).[66] The exploration of this group – with their submission to the London magnetism caused by the Union and subsequent development of composite identities – will also illustrate vividly Foster's concept of cultural exchange under the Union. At the same time, it provides a considerable extension of O'Day's line of political enquiry. By focusing on the Home Rule writers (rather than the Irish party), expanding the time span involved and, crucially, by switching attention from Parliament to journalism, it will disclose just how fully an Irish nationalist could make his nationalism part of a dual political identity alongside Liberalism. Accordingly, the old image of nationalism which O'Day has modified – that of simple, pious opposition to oppressive British political forces – will be qualified

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[64] For this shift from 'outcastness' to diversity, compare the first volume edited by Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, *The Irish in the Victorian City* (London, 1985), with their next two, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939* (London, 1989) and *The Irish in Victorian Britain, The Local Dimension* (Dublin, 1999). See too, Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1914* (Dublin, 1991), especially pp.51-82. For a slight modification of the 'assimilationist' view, see Steven Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939* (Buckingham, 1993). Interestingly, the assimilation view was held at the time by Moran, who, drawing on his own spell in London, concluded that most Irish emigrants were swiftly absorbed by their host societies. For more on Moran's attitude towards emigration, see p.284 below.

[65] Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, p.288; R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1989), p.367. See O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism* (p.117) for an earlier reference to this theme.

[66] The *Leader*, 1 Sept. 1900. As John Augustus O'Shea said in 1892 in reply to a comment by *United Ireland* that he and his fellow London-Irish litterateurs had been forced to emigrate: "When you say [we] had to leave because [we] were forced to, I must exclude myself...Even were Ireland as prosperous as I wish it to be, I should have left it. I sailed away because I chose" (*United Ireland*, 9 April 1892).

further, leading to a more complex picture. In addition, their readiness to forge these dual identities will also qualify the claim that the Irish were forcibly 'incorporated' into Victorian society by a combination of the British government and the Catholic Church.[67]

Where a clear departure is made, and a critical one, is the way that writers like O'Connor are juxtaposed with the next generation of Irish literary emigrants. The Home Rule group are important not only for what they did themselves but for the fact they came to represent a kind of cultural 'warning' and it is of course through the disapproving eyes of the Revivalists that this wider dimension emerges. The modern biographies of O'Connor and McCarthy, by L.W. Brady and Eugene F. Doyle respectively, largely ignore their cultural significance, especially this aspect of it, since they are political biographies and so concentrate on their role as nationalist MPs, not writers.[68] Rather, it is understandably revival historians who have noted how the younger men reacted against the cultural emasculation of their elders. John Hutchinson, for example, has discussed how at the heart of the Gaelic revival movement that Ryan and Moran embraced was a rejection of the 'assimilationist' political nationalism of the Irish Party, with its debt to British secular liberal values. As journalists, they then helped mobilise a new generation of lower middle class Catholics - who felt excluded by the state and the Irish Party - in support of the Gaelic project. Hutchinson has extended this analysis to the revival in London, examining how the Catholic 'lower intelligentsia' of the Gaelic League and Irish National Society tried in the early 1900s to mould the London-Irish into a 'self assured cohesive community' based on native values and free from Irish Party dictation.[69] Tom Garvin has similarly drawn attention to the part played by generational conflict in his exploration of Gaelic-nationalist revolutionaries, and other historians interested in the shifting notions of Irish identity which accompanied the revival, such as Foster and

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[67] This has been made by Mary J. Hickman in *Religion, Class and Identity: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain* (Aldershot, 1995). See too her essay, "Alternative Historiographies of the Irish in Britain: a critique of the segregation/assimilation model", in Swift and Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Victorian Britain, The Local Dimension*, pp.236-53.

[68] L.W. Brady, *T.P. O'Connor and the Liverpool Irish* (London, 1983); Eugene F. Doyle, *Justin McCarthy* (Dundalk, 1996). As his title indicates, rather than locating O'Connor within the Irish emigrant litterateur tradition, Brady views him through the lens of his Liverpool-Irish constituents, a somewhat odd approach given T.P.'s London-centric outlook and his well-known neglect of his constituency.

[69] John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism, The Gaelic Revival and the Making of the Irish Nation State* (London, 1987); Hutchinson and O'Day, "The Gaelic Revival in London, 1900-22: Limits of Ethnic Identity", in Swift and Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Victorian Britain, The Local Dimension*, pp.254-76.

Patrick Maume, have also pointed out the stigmatising of Irish Party men like O'Connor as Anglicised and the generation divide that lay behind it.[70]

But, although such work obviously corresponds with the thrust of this study, it is not always emphasised in relation to the Irish Party just how direct the generation clash was and how close and immediate the cultural 'warning' could be. Hence, the importance of examining the emigrant literary world, for here the two generations came face to face. Thus, whilst, as Hutchinson says, Ryan and Moran's adhesion to the Gaelic League in the late 1890s reflected a general revulsion against English commercialism, it also reflected their personal exposure to O'Connor, an Irishman who had seemingly succumbed to that commercialism.[71] Both men had worked under O'Connor's editorship, with Ryan's experience of T.P. particularly acute. That O'Connor served as a danger signal in this personal fashion is clear from how they repeatedly cited his fallen state in their Irish-Ireland writings ("A Horrible Example" is what Ryan called him in 1910[72]). Moreover, the case of Ryan underlines this sense of two generations colliding head-on, for joining the Gaelic League was also a response to conflict with another Home Rule writer, R. Barry O'Brien. This conflict, which took place in the Irish Literary Society, reveals the long-standing nature of Ryan's commitment to the Irish revival, thereby questioning Hutchinson's picture of him as 'converted' to Gaelicism following near absorption by English society.[73]

One feature of the revival that has been frequently noted is that many of the Gaelic zealots and political separatists operating in Ireland in the early 1900s were returned emigrants, especially from London. Historians concerned with the social make-up of the Gaelic-nationalist revolution, such as Hutchinson, Tom Garvin and M.J. Waters, have all stressed this. Emigration is considered to have sharpened the Irishness of many and provided them with both a keener insight into Irish ills and the grit to defeat the vested interests responsible.[74] This aspect of the revival is necessarily underlined here by writers

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[70] Tom Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland, 1858-1928* (Oxford, 1987), and "Great Hatred, Little Room: Social Background and Political Sentiment among Revolutionary Activists in Ireland, 1890-1922", in D.G. Boyce (ed.), *The Revolution in Ireland, 1879-1923* (London, 1988), pp.91-114; Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, pp.291-9; Patrick Maume, *D.P. Moran* (Dundalk, 1995), pp.15, 28, and *The Long Gestation, Irish Nationalist Life, 1891-1918* (Dublin, 1999), pp.9-10, 46.

[71] Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, pp.239-42.

[72] W.P. Ryan, *The Plough and the Cross* (Dublin, 1910), p.47.

[73] Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, pp.239-42.

[74] Ibid, p.168; Hutchinson and O'Day, "The Gaelic Revival in London, 1900-22: Limits of Ethnic Identity", p.259, 270; Tom Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics* (New York, 1981), pp.100-1; Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland, 1858-1928*, pp.54-5; Martin J. Waters, "Peasants and Emigrants:

like Ryan and Moran, whose sense of national identity was certainly heightened by their time in London, although the sequel - the energy and purpose they subsequently brought to the movement in Ireland – is outside this work. Nevertheless, one point can be made. A core part of the revival from Douglas Hyde's 1892 'de-Anglicising' speech onwards was resistance to the perceived debasing influence of English popular culture and materialism. As Tom Garvin has shown, Catholic clerical writers like Canon Sheehan, being keen to protect Ireland from English 'paganism', were key figures here as well as Anglo-Irish revivalists like Hyde.[75] Whilst he includes Moran's role in this crusade, Garvin does not relate it to his emigrant background despite his [Garvin's] awareness elsewhere of the impact of emigration. Yet, it was first hand experience of English culture that helped fuel Moran's hostility to it. The same was true of Ryan. As will be seen, therefore, the depiction of England as a decadent society, corrupted by commercialism, also owed something to the return of emigrant writers like them in the early 1900s.

The main concern of this study is obviously the nature of Irish literary identity and the different ways emigration to London could affect that identity and as such it is part of the continuing discussion of the revival period and the changing conceptions of Irishness it contained. But in the process it seeks to illuminate aspects of Irish and British history which, although important, have not received full scholarly attention. For example, it offers the first proper account of the birth and development of the Irish literary revival in London through its examination of the Southwark Irish Literary Club and the Irish Literary Society. Significantly, this is conducted from a non-Yeatsian perspective. Existing treatment of this topic, especially in the case of the Irish Literary Society, is relatively limited and assumes Yeats was a dominant figure throughout, which has led to some erroneous interpretations.[76] A necessary corrective is applied here. Investigating the Southwark Club also illustrates that, whilst later Gaelic revivalism defined itself against the shortcomings of parliamentary nationalism, the Irish cultural renaissance arguably

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Considerations of the Gaelic League as a social movement", in Casey & Rhodes (eds.), *Views of the Irish Peasantry*. See too Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, pp.299-300 and *Modern Ireland*, p.448.

[75] Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland, 1858-1928*, pp.57-77; "Great Hatred, Little Room: Social Background and Political Sentiment among Revolutionary Activists in Ireland, 1890-1922", in Boyce (ed.), *The Revolution in Ireland, 1879-1923*, pp.91-114. For the Anglo-Irish contribution to this theme, see, for example, D.G. Boyce, "'One Last Burial': Culture, Counter-revolution and Revolution in Ireland, 1886-1916", in Boyce (ed.), *The Revolution in Ireland, 1879-1923*, pp.115-136.

[76] See, for example, Peter Van de Kamp, "Whose Revival? Yeats and the Southwark Irish Literary Club", in Peter Van de Kamp and Peter Liebregts (eds.), *Tumult of Images, Essays on W.B. Yeats and Politics* (Amsterdam-Atlanta, 1995), pp.154-81. See p.215 below for more on this essay.

began as a response to their success in the early 1880s, not their disintegration in the 1890s, as is often believed.

As a result of charting the mixed identities of the Home Rule writers, previously neglected areas of late Victorian political history, both nationalist and Liberal, will come to the fore. Firstly, exploring the activities of O'Connor and McCarthy during the Land War of 1879-82 discloses that the 'British' side to that struggle was greater than has been acknowledged, as the efforts of London-Irish MPs like them to secure British Radical and working class support for the Land League were both more extensive and, in some respects, more successful than is usually recognised. Work in this area has understandably concentrated on the conflict in Ireland, the Fenian input, the strategies of Parnell and Davitt and the actions of the Liberal government.[77] Secondly, focusing on the role of O'Connor and O'Brien in the Liberal Home Rule campaign of 1886-93 will provide the first comprehensive assessment of the 'literary' side of that campaign, particularly how it developed in the London press. This will show the beneficial effect that the Liberal adoption of Home Rule had on the Fleet Street position of Catholic-nationalist Irish journalists on the political press. It will also reveal the ambitious and important journalistic project hatched by O'Connor - who used his Fleet Street platform to try and force a major re-shaping of Liberal policy - along with the response this elicited from the Liberal press itself. Although T.P.'s project has been noted in studies of the press and London politics, historians of late Victorian Liberalism have passed over not only his challenge to the front bench but the Home Rule press offensive as a whole.[78] Irish historiography is likewise remiss, having paid little attention to the role of London-Irish journalists in the Liberal Home Rule struggle. Brady is also unsatisfactory on this episode of T.P.'s career.[79]

As with O'Connor, the prominent part taken by O'Brien in the Liberal 'literary' campaign has not received its due accord. Yet, as well as assisting the Irish cause in Fleet

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[77] Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1968); T.W. Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution, 1846-82* (Oxford, 1981); Paul Bew, *Land and the National Question, 1858-82* (Dublin, 1978); Margaret O'Callaghan, *British High Politics and a Nationalist Ireland* (Cork, 1994).

[78] The first volume of Stephen Koss's *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain* and Paul Thompson's *Socialists, Liberals and Labour, The Struggle for London, 1885-1914* (London, 1967) carry details of O'Connor's press project of 1888-90, whereas Liberal Party histories like D.A Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery* (Oxford, 1972), Michael Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism, the Reconstruction of Liberal Policy in Britain, 1885-94* (Brighton, 1975), and T.W. Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism, The Case of Ireland, 1874-95* (Illinois, 1974), do not.

[79] Alan O'Day's *Irish Home Rule, 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998) is more concerned with the Unionist response to Home Rule than the Gladstonian campaign, whilst although James Loughlin's stimulating

Street, he was a key component of Gladstone's 'historical' crusade for Home Rule, both through his own writings and his impact on Gladstone's historical thinking. Gladstone's use of Irish history has been illuminated in some degree, but O'Brien's influence has not been properly evaluated.[80] Indeed, apart from his biography of Parnell, his career has gone unnoticed hitherto. Not being an MP, he has eluded Irish political historians and, being a historian, literary scholars overlook him. But he was an important and well-known member of Irish and Liberal circles in London and this study is the first sustained assessment of his political and literary career. Consequently, it fundamentally alters existing perceptions of O'Brien, which are based on his biography of Parnell. This concentration on the role of journalists and historians like O'Brien, O'Connor and McCarthy naturally reflects shifts in the historiography of Victorian politics, which over the last fifteen years or so has moved away from the 'high politics' model in which politicians jockey for position according to the dictates of self-interest.[81] Instead, it has reasserted the significance of political ideology and doctrine, seeing them as factors that affected the political behaviour of both statesmen and the populace and also helped bridge the gap between them. Ideological influences are considered especially relevant to the Home Rule debate of the 1880s.[82] Understandably, the work of those who propagated this ideology - publicists, journalists and intellectuals – has acquired an enhanced value, and interest has been renewed in their connection to the political process. Rather than seeing

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work, *Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question, 1883-93* (Dublin, 1986), ranges beyond Westminster, it does not take in Fleet Street.

[80] For Gladstone's historical crusade, see R. Cosgrove, "The Relevance of Irish History: the Gladstone-Dicey debate about Home Rule, 1886-7", *Eire-Ireland*, xiii (1978), no.4; H.C.G. Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98* (Oxford, 1997), Richard Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister, 1865-98* (London, 1999) and Loughlin, *Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question*. The latter provides the most detailed discussion of the subject, but does not mention O'Brien's role at all.

[81] The 'high politics' approach is most closely associated with John Vincent and A.B. Cooke, *The Governing Passion, Cabinet Government and Party Politics in Britain, 1885-6* (Brighton, 1974) and Maurice Cowling, *Disraeli, Gladstone and Revolution: the passing of the Second Reform Bill* (Cambridge, 1967). D.A. Hamer, in *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery*, also discounts the value of ideology in bringing the Liberal party together, whilst Christopher Harvie delineates the role of the academic liberals in Victorian politics in *The Lights of Liberalism, University Liberals and the Challenge of Democracy, 1860-86* (London, 1976), but claims their ideology had limited impact on either Westminster or wider opinion.

[82] Christopher Harvie, "Ideology and Home Rule: James Bryce, A.V. Dicey and Ireland, 1880-7, *English Historical Review*, xci (1976); Christopher Harvie, "Ireland and the Intellectuals, 1848-1922, *New Edinburgh Review*, 38-39 (1977); T. Dunne, "Les trahison des clercs: British Intellectuals and the first home rule crisis", *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii (1982-3); J. Parry, *Democracy and Religion, Gladstone and the Liberal Party, 1867-75* (Cambridge, 1986); T.A. Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party, 1874-86* (Oxford, 1988); E.F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform, Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860-86* (Cambridge, 1992); E.F. Biagini, *Gladstone* (London, 2000); H.C.G. Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*; Alan O'Day, "Home Rule and the Historians", in Boyce and O'Day (eds.), *The Making of Modern Irish History*; Gary Peatling, *British Opinion and Irish self-government, 1865-1925: From Unionism to Liberal Commonwealth* (Dublin, 2001).

Westminster as a self-enclosed world, oblivious to outside forces, as the 'high politics' model does, the input of intellectuals and journalists is now traced. A similar conviction that such figures, and the ideas they circulated, 'mattered' is necessarily the foundation here for the study of O'Connor, O'Brien and McCarthy, and in particular their contribution to the Liberal Home Rule campaign of 1886-93. That recent work in Victorian Liberal politics utilising the 'ideological' approach largely stops at 1886 (or earlier) helps explains why the Liberal press initiatives have been neglected thus far.

Another subject on which the London careers of the Home Rule writers provide useful commentary is the question of English attitudes towards the Irish. Anti-Irish feeling in Victorian England is well documented. It has even led to the claim, by L.P. Curtis, that among the middle classes such hostility was at bottom 'anti-Celtic' racism, with the 'simianised' images of Irishmen in *Punch* and elsewhere disclosing the English belief that the Irish were racially inferior.[83] This view has been strongly challenged by other historians, most notably R.F. Foster and Sheridan Gilley. They see the creation of the Irish 'national stereotype' as a more complex process involving positive as well as negative elements and, says Gilley, owing something to how Irishmen saw themselves. Instead of race, he cites political extremism and Catholicism as the vital factors in generating bad feeling towards the Irish, whilst Foster argues that Victorian middle class hostility towards Irish immigrants reflected a dislike of the lower classes, not racial beliefs, and instances the way bourgeois Irishmen were able to climb the British political ladder. Both note the fact that English and Irish intermarriage was never tabooed.[84]

In this discussion the Home Rule litterateurs have a notable place. Their success in London life constitutes another objection to Curtis's argument, since, like Foster's political adventurers, their admission to the higher reaches of literary, political and journalistic life hardly suggests anti-Celtic racism flourished in middle and upper class England.[85] Rather, it again points to class prejudice being the main cause of anti-Irish feeling, as their bourgeois backgrounds made them palatable to English 'society'. They

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[83] L.P. Curtis Jnr, *Anglo-Saxons and Celts; a study of Anti-Irish prejudice in Victorian England* (London, 1968), and *Apes and Angels: Irishmen in Victorian Caricature*, 2nd edn (Washington and London, 1997).

[84] Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, pp. 171-94, 286-91; Sheridan Gilley, "English Attitudes towards the Irish, 1789-1900", in Colin Holmes (ed.), *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society* (London, 1978), pp.81-110.

[85] In the latest edition (1997) of *Apes and Angels*, Curtis responds to the arguments of Gilley and Foster, but this question of Irish literary-political success in Britain is left untouched. In the case of Foster, Curtis's main target (pp.116-20) is the claim that a racial reading is wrong because the treatment of working class Irishmen in Victorian periodicals did not differ substantially from their treatment of working class Englishmen.

came from a recognisable environment. (The career of someone like Charles Russell buttresses this conclusion). Moreover, if they overcame any difficulties caused by their nationality, then they also showed that being a nationalist or a Catholic were not insurmountable obstacles for an Irishman making his way in Britain. Indeed, far from being the target of racial discrimination, Irishness, and even nationalism, could actually be of benefit. It was these qualities which, following the Liberal acceptance of Home Rule in 1886, helped elevate the London journalistic careers of O'Brien and O'Connor to a new level, though this is not to deny that they were aided by the 'British' elements to their outlooks.

And the latter brings us to the final point: the Empire. One area where the 'British' side of the Home Rule writers' dual identities would certainly display itself was in their attitude to the Empire. In 1914 O'Connor and O'Brien fully agreed with the decision by John Redmond, the Irish Party leader, that, with Home Rule on the statute book, Ireland would support Britain in the coming European war, thereby demonstrating, like him, their overarching sense of Imperial allegiance. But this allegiance was nothing new. Rather, as will be seen, their recognition of the Imperial framework dated back to the 1880s. For over thirty years they consistently upheld the idea of an Empire of self-governing parts in which a Home Rule Ireland would play a positive, loyal, role, just as other 'white' colonies, like Canada and Australia, did. Their nationalism was compatible with Imperial progress and unity, not inimical to it. This Gladstonian vision was shared by McCarthy, whose acceptance of Ireland's place in the Empire dated back even further, to the 1850s. Thus, instead of being forged in the crucible of World War One, O'Brien and O'Connor's support for Britain in 1914 reflected a long-standing commitment to the Empire. It set the seal on their dual identities as a whole, and in wider terms corroborated what has been suggested elsewhere: that the Irish Party's Imperial loyalty was not simply an early Buttite manifestation and a late, First World War, flourish but something which, firmly embedded in the culture of Home Rule nationalism, persisted throughout the party's political life.[86]

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[86] O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp.162-4.

2

Liberal Titans: W.E. Gladstone and John Bright

"The three most remarkable politicians I have met," wrote Richard Barry O'Brien in 1910, "were Parnell, Gladstone and Bright."[1] With qualification, it is a judgement which Justin McCarthy and T.P. O'Connor might well have echoed. That Parnell should occupy a central place in their political firmament is no surprise. The case of McCarthy and T.P. is well known: as Home Rule MPs they worked alongside the Irish parliamentary leader for the best part of a decade and were amongst his principal lieutenants. McCarthy was vice-chairman of the Irish Party. O'Brien, on the other hand, whilst never an MP, was to emerge as one of Parnell's staunchest supporters during the 1890-1 split ("he is necessary to my country", he told T. Wemyss Reid at this time) and went on to publish a seminal two-volume biography of the 'uncrowned king' in 1898.[2] This work, with its Boswellian approach, remains O'Brien's greatest achievement. Certainly, it is what he is remembered for. Like McCarthy and O'Connor, it is his association with the magnetic name of Parnell that has hitherto secured O'Brien's place in Irish history.

But, as the opening statement indicates, there were other portraits in their political gallery besides the Irish leader. Well before the advent of Parnellism, they became firm admirers of the oratorical and political powers of William Gladstone and John Bright, developing a regard for the two Liberal statesmen that, despite political conflict, persisted throughout their lives.[3] Naturally, each case is different. For McCarthy this process began in the 1850s, for T.P. it was largely rooted in the 1870s, whilst for O'Brien it was related to the triumph, under Gladstone and Bright, of popular Liberalism in 1865-70 following the Palmerstonian ascendancy. Like many other Irishmen, he responded positively to their advocacy of Irish reforms. Which of the two statesmen exercised the greater fascination also varied. O'Brien, for example, leaned more towards Bright than Gladstone in his early years, whereas O'Connor drew greater inspiration from the G.O.M. than the Tribune. The way that Gladstone and Bright affected them differed as well. O'Brien's attachment to the

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[1] R. Barry O'Brien, *John Bright, A Monograph* (London, 1910), pp.14-15.

[2] NLI, O'Leary Papers, MS 5927: R. Barry O'Brien to John O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891; R. Barry O'Brien, *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell* (2 vols., London, 1898).

[3] The major exception here was O'Connor and John Bright. The Parnellite-Liberal battles of the early 1880s provoked hostile clashes between them (see below pp.54-5). The classical education McCarthy and T.P. received in Ireland (Doyle, *Justin McCarthy*, p.7; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.256) doubtless helped them appreciate Bright and Gladstone's polished oratory.

two Liberals was basically due to their views on Irish politics and expressed itself through his intellectual liberalism, but for O'Connor and McCarthy the political appeal of Bright and Gladstone ranged beyond Ireland and led to their identification with Liberal-Radical causes during the 1860s and 1870s.

Whatever the variations, between 1850 and 1880 all three acquired a regard for Bright or Gladstone, or both, that was the basis of their lifelong affinity with British Liberalism. Emigration to Britain was obviously a vital factor, for it meant increased opportunities to hear the two statesmen speak and so more direct exposure to their influence. In terms of Bright, this was especially important, since the 1850s and 1860s constituted his political prime.[4] They sought to establish personal contact with their Liberal heroes when the chance arose, frequently sending Gladstone and Bright their political and historical work. Of the three, McCarthy was to enjoy the closest relations with the two Liberals. These personal communications reflected their admiration and in many instances stemmed from their desire to push the nationalist cause. But there was also the question of self-interest and self-promotion. Bringing themselves to the attention of illustrious figures like Bright and Gladstone was a way for the Home Rule writers to advance their literary and political careers, to improve their standing. That their regard survived subsequent political friction raises such considerations too. Later, this unstinting reverence for two British politicians attracted criticism from more 'advanced' nationalists and helped generate the Irish-Ireland charge of 'collaboration' and loss of Irishness.

The case of Barry O'Brien is particularly interesting. Not only is he almost entirely bound up with Parnell but frequently with Parnell at his most combative. D. George Boyce, for example, asks: "O'Brien created Parnell; did he also create Parnellism?" This is because O'Brien's 1898 biography was the first to emphasise what are often considered the hallmarks of Parnell's political style: his hatred of England, the strength of his personality and his ability to unite all Irishmen in a solid phalanx against the Saxon. In contrast to T.P. O'Connor's earlier work, says Boyce, O'Brien made no attempt to play down the aggressive side of Parnell's politics. Similarly, it is what he calls the 'Fenian elements' in O'Brien's treatment of Parnell that John Kelly draws attention to. He notes how the picture of Parnell which O'Brien conveyed to Lady Gregory and her circle in the late 1890s - that of a powerful, anti-English leader, who disliked agrarianism and could

[4] G.M. Trevelyan, *The Life of John Bright* (London, 1913), pp.1-4.

command men - helped facilitate the Ascendancy re-evaluation of 'the Chief.' He now appeared in retrospect to be the type of strong figure that they as a class lacked (Yeats, for instance, felt O'Brien's book gave "one a great sense of his [Parnell's] iron force").[5]

Yet, whilst this is how O'Brien saw Parnell, it perhaps obscures our perception of O'Brien himself, for he tends to be cast in the role of zealous Parnellite, spreading a somewhat confrontational gospel. Owing to the biography (and his stance during the split) his political image is that of an ardent, unqualified supporter of the 'chief'. One of the primary aims of this study is to alter this impression, to modify the uncompromising picture created by his *Life Of Parnell*, and bring into focus the neglected Liberal side of his political and cultural identity. For much of Parnell's reign as Irish leader, O'Brien would be more closely associated with the Liberal party than Parnell or Parnellism. The trail begins with John Bright. O'Brien's admiration for Bright had its roots at home in Ireland. "Had a stranger entered my father's house in the west of Ireland forty years ago," he wrote in 1910, "the first object which would have met his eye was a bust of John Bright." When Bright's speeches were published in 1868, they became O'Brien's "constant companion." In the mind of the budding nationalist they "breathed...a spirit of revolt against English injustice in Ireland, and defiantly demanded that the wrongs of the people should be redressed." It was Bright rather than Gladstone whom the young Irishman wished to catch sight of after moving to London in 1869. The Liberal leader "held a secondary place" in his thoughts. The "one English celebrity whom I felt most anxious to see was John Bright", said O'Brien.[6]

The reasons behind this fascination are not hard to find. Ever since the early 1840s Bright had been a staunch advocate of Irish reform. Disestablishment of the Irish Church, extension of the franchise and land reform was his panacea for Ireland's ills and for twenty-five years he consistently defended Irish claims at Westminster.[7] As O'Brien

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[5] D. George Boyce, "The Portrait of the King is king: the biographers of Parnell", John Kelly, "Parnell in Irish Literature", both in D. George Boyce & Alan O'Day (eds.), *Parnell in Perspective* (London, 1991), pp.242-309; *CL*, ii, 299; See pp.198-200 below for further discussion of O'Brien's *Parnell*.

[6] O'Brien, *John Bright*, pp.1, 4. O'Brien was to include John Bright's speeches when he complied his list of the 'Best Hundred Irish Books' in 1886 (see below pp.213-14).

[7] The influx of Irish famine emigrants into his native Lancashire in the 1840s had made Bright only too aware of the Irish question. During his first election campaign (Durham in 1843) he denounced both the Irish Church and the land system. At first his ideas on Irish land centred on encouraging capital investment by 'freeing' the land from aristocratic ownership, but after visiting Ireland in 1849 he realised the most urgent needs were compensation for improvements and security of tenure and so came out in support of tenant right. However, he disliked the call for 'fair rents', seeing it as interference with free competition. By the mid-1860s he was advocating the development of a peasant proprietorship. (*Speeches by John Bright, M.P.*, ed. J.E. Thorold Rogers (2 vols., London, 1868), I, pp.295-437; Trevelyan, *The Life of John Bright*, pp.159-69, 347-50, 392-3; Keith Robbins, *John Bright* (London, 1979), pp. 82-95, 186-208).

wrote in 1883: "Though Ireland owes little to English parties between the years 1841 and 1868, she owes much to one great Englishman – Mr Bright."[8] In his view only Bright upheld the policy of conciliation and integration begun by the Melbourne administration of 1835-41. It was a stance that brought political obloquy, but Bright was never deterred by personal considerations. "Alone among English statesmen at that time," said O'Brien, "Bright fearlessly identified himself with the Irish popular cause."[9] In the end he had the satisfaction of seeing all three of his Irish proposals carried into law.[10] It is no wonder, given such long service to Ireland, that the young O'Brien, already an eager nationalist, should have looked for John Bright above all others when he arrived in London. Whilst Gladstone had only recently come to the cause of Ireland, Bright had been fighting her corner for a quarter of a century.

His first glimpse of Bright was during the Irish Church debates of 1869: "Immediately on the left of Gladstone...was John Bright. His splendid leonine head was, I thought, the noblest object in the House of Commons that night. He was stately and dignified."[11] O'Brien did not see Bright in the flesh again until 1876 and it was not until 1884 that they met personally. By then O'Brien had made himself known to Bright by sending him copies of his books on the Irish land issue. The reason for the meeting was that O'Brien wished to consult certain papers and felt that Bright could help him gain Home Office permission, although the chance to make personal contact with Bright was surely uppermost in his mind. It was a juncture when, for the first time, Bright was estranged from the Irish MPs, having publicly backed Forster's 1881 Coercion Bill. This change of front sparked some bitter exchanges, with the Irish MPs angered by what they saw as Bright's hypocrisy. For his part, Bright deplored their obstructive tactics, denounced the violence of the Land League agitation and believed their true aim was separation ('rebels' became his label for them).[12] O'Brien had tried to prevent such antagonism by urging Parnell to spare Bright excessive retaliation on account of his past work for Ireland: "Bright ought to be answered. But he should not be treated as an enemy. His past services to Ireland ought not to be forgotten. He is as much our friend now as ever, though he is

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[8] R. Barry O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland* (2 vols., London, 1883, 1885), II, p.423.
[9] O'Brien, *John Bright*, p.1.
[10] The Church of Ireland was disestablished in 1869, whilst the 'Bright clauses' of the 1870 Land Act signalled the start of a purchasing process which, culminating with Wyndham's Land Act of 1903, would lead to the creation of a peasant proprietary. Lastly, the Franchise Act of 1884 brought household suffrage (counties as well as boroughs) to both Ireland and Britain.
[11] O'Brien, *John Bright*, p.6.
[12] Trevelyan, *Bright*, p.429; Robbins, *John Bright*, pp.240-3; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.63; J.L. Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation*, 2nd edn (London, 1964), pp.206-14, 241.

wrong on this question."[13] The accuracy of this judgement was seemingly underlined at their 1884 meeting in London, for Bright showed "no bitterness in talking about Irish affairs."[14] Indeed, if anything he regretted the distance that had sprung up between him and the Irish MPs. This conciliatory tone no doubt helped O'Brien justify his continued attachment to a Bright now sullied in many Irish eyes by his support for coercion.

Even their conflict of opinion over Home Rule failed to dim O'Brien's admiration or lessen his estimate of Bright's past achievements. In an account first published in 1892 O'Brien describes how, prompted by rumours that Bright was favourable to Gladstone's Home Rule Bill (the debate on the second reading was in progress), he sought the Liberal statesman out at the Reform Club in May 1886. Unfortunately, Bright revealed that he planned to vote against both Home Rule and the Land Bill by which it was accompanied, preferring to work "on the old lines, but work more consistently and more vigorously."[15] O'Brien, the Home Ruler, naturally took a different line, but this profound division did not shake his feelings of gratitude and respect towards Bright:

> His opposition to the Bill did not weaken the affectionate regard in which I...held him, nor do I cherish his memory the less now because he was not on the Irish side in the [Home Rule] struggle. If he went wrong then, I cannot forget that for the best part of his public life Ireland had no stauncher friend in this country.[16]

Such a stance was probably aided by the reasons Bright gave O'Brien for rejecting Home Rule. To him, it was a question of the 'halting' Bill being unworkable rather than the Irish being incapable of self-government. If self-government was to be granted, it was better to give the fullest amount consistent with retaining the link between the two countries. Notably, there was little in his talk with O'Brien of the profound contempt for the 'rebel' Parnellite MPs and the fears for 'loyal' Ulster which usually punctuated his remarks on the subject and which also lay behind his opposition to Home Rule.[17]

The 1886 interview had an important sequel, as it proved to be the catalyst for a meeting between O'Brien and Bright's eldest daughter, Mrs Helen Clark. The agent in

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[13] O'Brien, *The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell* (London, 1910), p.212. This reference and all succeeding ones are taken from the single volume edition of 1910. The bad feeling caused by the disputes of the early 1880s was lasting. Justin Huntly McCarthy, for example, devoted a whole chapter of his 1887 work, *Ireland Since the Union*, to contrasting Bright's current antipathy towards Irish claims with his earlier sympathy for Ireland so as to expose the supposed insincerity of the latter (pp.156-68).

[14] O'Brien, *John Bright*, p.12.

[15] *The Speaker*, 20 Feb. 1892. This interview was reproduced not only in his biography of Bright (pp.83-90) but also in his *Parnell* (pp.397-402).

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid; Trevelyan, *Bright*, pp.443-61; Robbins, *John Bright*, pp.239-63. When the Liberal MP Atherley-Jones asked Bright behind the Speaker's Chair why he did not support Home Rule, Bright "with a contemptuous gesture towards the Nationalist benches, exclaimed, 'Would it be possible to entrust the government of Ireland to such men as these?'" (L.A. Atherley-Jones, *Looking Back* (London, 1925), pp.32-3).

this conjunction was W.M. Crook, an Irish Methodist and fellow London journalist who had many Liberal and Nonconformist connections. One of these was Mrs Clark and her family.[18] The month after the Bright interview was published Crook informed O'Brien that his article had been warmly received by Mrs Clark and voiced the possibility of a meeting between the two of them. In reply, O'Brien wrote on 25 March 1892:

> I am indeed pleased that Mrs Clark liked the interview in the *Speaker*. I had a strong affection for Bright. I could never forget that he fought the battles of Ireland in England when English opinion was against us. And to the day of his death Ireland had no more sincere friend among English statesmen. That he could not agree with me about Home Rule did not...affect my feeling towards him. I often think of him even now and of his many fights for Ireland. I hope you will convey to Mrs Clark the pleasure which her approval of what I have written has given me. I should indeed like to meet Mrs Clark and to talk with her about Bright.[19]

Just over two weeks later Mrs Clark wrote to Crook: "We should quite enjoy visiting your gloomy garret as you call it & meeting Mr Barry O'Brien."[20] Although without any immediate issue, this meeting (the precise date of which is unclear) became significant in later years when O'Brien wrote a biography of Bright, for in the production of this work he had the assistance of Mrs Clark (another two of Bright's children, Mrs Bernard Roth and John Albert Bright, helped him as well). Besides its value as history, this 1910 work constitutes a fitting testament to O'Brien's enduring regard for Bright. Originating in Ireland in the 1860s, his respect had survived the vicissitudes of subsequent political conflict. Late in his life O'Brien could still summon in vivid colours an image of Bright first forged over four decades before: "I have heard him speak, and his speeches have been my companions for many years; and as I read them I think I can see him standing at the table in the House of Commons, calm, dignified, titanic – a pillar of strength."[21]

This affection for Bright was matched by a similarly strong attachment to Gladstone. Yet, because Gladstone's Irish record prior to his adoption of 'Irish ideas' in 1866-9 was not one to attract nationalists, it took emigration to London for O'Brien to realise the full extent of his political force. The revelation came on the same night as O'Brien first saw Bright. He was so impressed by Gladstone's defence of his Irish Church Disestablishment

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[18] Crook first met the Clark family in late 1886. He stayed with them whilst lecturing on Home Rule in Somerset (Crook Papers, MS.Eng.hist.d.368, fol.98: William P. Clark to Crook, 15 Dec. 1886). He also came to know Bright's son-in-law, Bernard Roth, and so may have helped introduce O'Brien to Roth's wife (Crook Papers, MS.Eng.hist.d.369, fol.123: Bernard Roth to Crook, 8 June 1887). At the time of their correspondence over Bright, Crook and O'Brien were both involved in founding the Irish Literary Society. For more details of this, see Chapter Six below.

[19] Crook Papers, MS.Eng.hist.d.373, fol.92-4: R. Barry O'Brien to Crook, 25 Mar. 1892.

[20] Crook Papers, MS.Eng.hist d.373, fol.23-5: H.P.B. Clark to Crook, 10 April 1892.

[21] O'Brien, *John Bright,* p.76.

Bill that he "warmly applauded...at the end of the speech, and for this breach of decorum was threatened by the attendant with expulsion."[22] Many years later O'Brien wrote:

> Gladstone began in words, and with voice and gesture, which I shall never forget. [Gathorne] Hardy had said hard things of Ireland, and I wished to see this Tory enemy annihilated, but I never dreamt that the work of destruction would be so rapid and so complete. In six sentences, Hardy was laid low.[23]

Gladstone's acceptance of Home Rule in 1885-6 naturally increased O'Brien's admiration still further ("the greatest statesman that England has produced since the days of Pitt," he said in 1886[24]) and, as will be seen, he was brought into closer, more personal, contact with Gladstone in these years. Even the rancour of the Parnell split of 1890-1, in which O'Brien found himself in opposition to Gladstone, did not diminish his respect. Instead, his anger was aimed at the Irish MPs who deserted their leader following Gladstone's ultimatum. An element of self-preservation might be perceived here, since by then O'Brien was an established figure in Liberal London and perhaps did not want to jeopardise this by attacking Gladstone, especially when that position was already at risk due to his support for Parnell. However, as will become clear later, this seems unlikely.

Appropriately, the strongest indication of O'Brien's attachment to Gladstone came in 1898, the year the G.O.M. died, with the publication of his *Life of Parnell*. This book frequently pays tribute to Gladstone's political gifts. The Liberal conversion to Home Rule in 1886, for example, was "entirely due to the genius and character of one man – Mr Gladstone." At the close only Gladstone is weighty enough to provide an assessment of Parnell: "I shall not attempt to give an estimate of Parnell's character. I prefer to let the only Englishman who was worthy of his steel bear witness to his greatness." To secure this testament from Gladstone, O'Brien initially obtained his views by letter in 1895 and then, two years later, interviewed him in London. Describing this meeting, his regard for his host is clear: "The face was lighted up by brilliant flashes of thought; the expression was varied, bright, beautiful; he spoke with energy...and with an intonation which showed that his voice still retained something of its old charm." Perhaps the most telling recognition of Gladstone's pre-eminence, however, comes in relation to Parnell's position in the Commons. "Parnell became the greatest figure in it, in his day," writes O'Brien,

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[22] Michael MacDonagh, O'Brien obituary, *The Times*, 19 Mar. 1918.
[23] O'Brien, *John Bright*, p.7. Gladstone's power at this time was attested to by the Irish MP, John Blake Dillon, who told his wife after a debate in 1866: "I was sitting nearly opposite him, and he spoke fairly at me...I suppose he saw that I was drinking in every word he said. He is certainly a great man – far greater than I had supposed...He is fearfully persuasive" (Emmet Larkin, *The Consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1860-70* (Dublin, 1987), pp.372-3.
[24] O'Brien, *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies* (London, 1887), p.186.

"with a single exception." That exception was of course Gladstone and one only has to consider how O'Brien champions Parnell to realise the value of that concession.[25]

If the impact of Bright and Gladstone on O'Brien is unequivocal, then how did this influence manifest itself in his political identity? The answer is supplied by his friend, John S. Crone: "Barry used to tell how he came to London a young law student of two and twenty imbued with the physical force ideas of the men of '67 and how, listening to the speeches of John Bright and Gladstone, he became converted to constitutional doctrines."[26] Writing O'Brien's obituary, Michael MacDonagh recounted a similar tale. O'Brien, he said, had been a devotee of Fenianism whilst a young student at the Catholic University in Dublin in the late 1860s. But after arriving in London he was exposed to the "generous sympathies" of Bright and Gladstone, an experience which "softened his sentiments towards England, and led him to the belief that the grievances of Ireland could be remedied by constitutional agitation."[27] This was because Bright and Gladstone, as they intended, showed Irishmen like O'Brien that within British political life there were men ready to listen to Ireland's appeals. Through them Liberalism appeared a potential vehicle for nationalist aspirations and Fenianism seemed unnecessary (for O'Brien, John Stuart Mill was probably important here too[28]). They also illustrated, by their oratorical gifts, how parliamentary methods could win people to the Irish cause. As MacDonagh and Crone state, emigration was crucial to this process, especially in bringing O'Brien into contact with the power of Gladstone. As for Bright, although O'Brien had read his speeches in Ireland, gaining his first sight of the man doubtless reinforced their effect.

Under the influence of the two Liberals, O'Brien thus swapped physical force ideas for constitutional methods, joining Isaac Butt's nascent Home Rule movement in 1871. He came to know Butt well in the ensuing years and attended the 1873 conference in

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[25] O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.404, 552, 555, 145; BL, Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 56, 449, fol.131-133: O'Brien to Gladstone, 2, 10 Dec. 1895. O'Brien's *A Hundred Years of Irish History* (London, 1902) also contains a fine tribute to Gladstone: "Few Irishmen ever threw themselves into the Irish cause with more earnestness ...and more determination...than did this magnificent old man...Let that fact never be forgotten" (p.132).

[26] *Irish Book Lover*, April / May 1918, p.106.

[27] *The Times*, 19 Mar. 1918. O'Brien's son wrote to MacDonagh the next day: "We were all (my dear Mother particularly) charmed with your tribute in Tuesday's Times. It was such a true & accurate resume of our Father's life's work." NLI, Michael MacDonagh Papers, MS 11, 444 (1): R. Barry O'Brien to Michael MacDonagh, 20 Mar. 1918.

[28] Certainly, O'Brien was a lifelong admirer of Mill's controversial 1868 pamphlet, *England and Ireland* (which called for government intervention to secure a permanent Irish land settlement by granting the tenants fixity of tenure at a fair rent), including it in his 1886 list of the "Best Hundred Irish Books" (see pp.213-14 below) and referring to it as late as 1912 in an essay entitled "The Government of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century" (in John H. Morgan (ed.), *The New Irish Constitution* (London, 1912), p.335).

Dublin at which the Home Rule League was created.[29] He had chosen to work within the recognised parameters of British political life. Henceforth, he would exhibit the liberal concern with rationality and exposition. He would seek to advance the nationalist cause by argument and force of logic.[30] The preface to *The Home Ruler's Manual* (1890) illustrates perfectly the liberal rationalist mode that O'Brien adopted: "The object of this little book is to place some facts...before English readers and to do so in a spirit of fair play. Whatever side we take in this great controversy, let us at least observe the golden rule: inquire and tolerate." This recognition of the British political framework might be regarded as placing O'Brien within the kind of colonising process charted by Ashis Nandy in India, where nationalists adopted "models of 'official' dissent" by resisting British power in a manner the British deemed 'proper'.[31] Whilst O'Brien had effectively done this, any comparison between the Irish and Indian experiences is problematic as it implies they both occupied the same rung of the Imperial ladder when, as argued earlier, the London careers of figures like O'Brien in fact show that the Irish were not treated as an inferior race in the way Indians and Africans were. Indeed, Nandy's analysis itself illustrates Irish 'superiority', as 'official' dissent for an Indian – physical force – was not acceptable from an Irishman. More important here is that O'Brien's commitment to liberal rationalism became the principal, and most visible, 'British' element in his mixed identity, to be cited later by revivalists like W.P. Ryan as evidence of his 'un-Irish' mindset. But, as will be seen, O'Brien himself acknowledged the 'collaborative' nature of his nationalism (in contrast to the unconscious process delineated by Nandy). For him, the 'true' nationalists remained the Fenians, describing them in 1898 as "the real nationalist force". Like Butt, he retained respect for the men whose methods he had rejected.[32]

The basis of O'Brien's new rationalist approach would be history. As a law student and barrister in London in the 1870s he occupied much of his time with the study of Irish history, for he practised only briefly after being called to the Bar in 1875.[33] The fruits of his labour were then seen in 1880-1, when the Irish Land War gave him the opportunity to employ his new knowledge on behalf of the Irish tenants. His first work, *The Irish Land Question and English Public Opinion*, was published in January 1880 (it was

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[29] Michael MacDonagh, O'Brien obituary, *The Observer*, 24 Mar. 1918; Michael MacDonagh, *The Home Rule Movement* (London, 1920), p.28; NLI, Butt Papers, MS 8695 (31): R.B. O'Brien to Butt, 17 Oct. 1873; O'Brien, *Parnell*, p.63.
[30] Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, p.489.
[31] O'Brien, *The Home Ruler's Manual* (London, 1890); Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*, p.xiii.
[32] O'Brien, *Parnell*, p.540. See pp.54-5, 121-2 for further evidence of O'Brien's respect for the Fenians.

reissued with a supplement in 1881) and this was followed in November by *The Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question, 1829-69*. Together, these two works initiated a strategy that became O'Brien's hallmark. The intended target is the British public and the chosen method of conversion is history. In *The Irish Land Question* he seeks to provide a historical account of the Irish landlord system in order to illustrate its iniquities and consequently the need for its replacement by a peasant proprietary. He does this by exploring such matters as the system's origins (i.e. successive confiscations), the almost despotic rule existing on some estates, and the realities of arbitrary eviction. It is to these factors, O'Brien argues, that one must look for explanations of Irish agrarian crime, not racial weakness. To him, the importance of this approach lay in the fact that even as late as 1880 both British politicians and the general public lacked the necessary historical information regarding Irish land: "The same inattention to history, the same ignorance of facts…is observable now, though happily with diminishing effect, as in days gone by."[34] To correct these faults, to remedy the errors of the English press when dealing with Ireland, is O'Brien's aim. Given the sensationalism often used in reporting the Land War, it must have seemed a vital counterbalancing act.

His second, and longer, work, *The Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question*, has a different focus. Whereas *The Irish Land Question* discussed the landlord system as it exhibited itself in Irish history, its companion piece instead examines the unsuccessful attempts by the Imperial Parliament, over a period of forty years, to rectify the defects of that system. The book tells the sorry tale of how various measures designed to provide Irish tenants with certain safeguards (e.g. compensation for disturbance, fixity of tenure) all failed to negotiate the hostility of a landowning Parliament. By showing in detail the past neglect of Irish tenants by British statesmen he hopes to convince the English public of the need to do something now. Those laws must be passed which previous generations either failed to introduce or did not force onto the statute book. The "more tardy has been justice to the Irish tenant in the past", writes O'Brien, "the more prompt and complete it ought to be in the present and future."[35] In his view, justice to the Irish peasant should, at the very least, include extension of the Ulster Custom ('free sale' and 'fixity of tenure') to

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[33] The fact that he practised only briefly suggests that O'Brien's family were able to offer him strong financial support in these years.
[34] R. Barry O'Brien, *The Irish Land Question and English Public Opinion* (London, 1881), p.1.
[35] R. Barry O'Brien, *The Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question* (London, 1880), p.52.

the rest of Ireland, the establishment of a rent tribunal for the fixing of 'fair rents' and the introduction of improved measures for creating a peasant proprietary.[36]

O'Brien's method is clear: the past is used to support present political considerations. Such a method was scarcely novel either in Britain or Ireland - with history utilised in politics and politics often driving historical writing - but was especially true of nationalist Ireland, which, by the 1880s, had a firm tradition, both at popular and elite levels, of using history to underpin political arguments and sustain a sense of national identity.[37] O'Connell had done it and so had Butt, the latter possibly helping to prod O'Brien in this direction.[38] Reflecting his rationalist ethic, though, O'Brien's work avoids the more emotive and partisan style of popular nationalist historiography. As his second title suggests, he often took recent parliamentary history as his subject rather than the bloodier eras of the past. The tone of his work is dispassionate and sober. He "gave the impression of being wholly unbiased," said Michael MacDonagh. He wished to be as accurate as possible (he had "great fairness and a love of truth," wrote MacDonagh) and for this reason based his writing, as far as he could, on original material.[39] Accordingly, O'Brien's model amongst the Irish historians of his day was W.E.H. Lecky rather than the fiery separatist John Mitchel.[40] A leading Irish liberal and chronicler of the rise of European rationalism, Lecky was renowned for his impartial and objective approach to history, for his commitment to truth. He also demonstrated, in the Irish chapters of his acclaimed *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, the necessity of drawing upon manuscript material when writing Irish history, as most published sources were 'partisan' or 'imperfect'. Further, he believed the study of history was valuable in politics because of the long-term trends (as opposed to ready-made solutions) it identified.[41] O'Brien clearly tried to absorb these lessons in his discussion of Irish land, so that despite his nationalist motives there existed a desire to be recognised as a liberal historian. But, if he

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[36] Ibid, p.201.

[37] R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, pp.1-20, 78-9. For how politics could inform British historiography, see J.M. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent, Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge, 1981).

[38] In the case of Butt, see his June 1874 Home Rule speech (*Hansard*, 3rd series, 1874, ccxx, 700-717).

[39] *The Observer*, 24 Mar. 1918.

[40] When O'Brien compiled his list of the "Best Hundred Irish Books" in 1886, John O'Leary, the old Fenian and a friend of O'Brien's, complained about the omission of Mitchel's *Jail Journal* (1854). Lecky's work, in contrast, was accorded first place. For more on this book list, O'Brien's admiration of Lecky, and O'Brien's views on Irish historiography, see Chapter Six below.

[41] Donal McCartney, *W.E.H. Lecky, Historian and Politician, 1838-1903* (Dublin, 1994), pp. 50-56, 70-7, 85, 143-4, 188. Lecky's *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* was published in two volumes in 1865, whilst his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* was issued in eight volumes between 1878 and 1890. In 1892 the Irish chapters were separated and published (in five volumes) as the *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*.

admired Lecky, and acknowledged his pre-eminence within Irish historiography, he did not hesitate to cross swords with his hero when Lecky entered the Unionist lists in 1886.

O'Brien's treatment of history naturally aligned him not only with Lecky but with liberal intellectuals and historians in Britain, especially the group of Oxbridge academics who, as Christopher Harvie has shown, came to the fore in Liberal politics during the Reform struggle of the 1860s. Like Lecky, these men - James Bryce, A.V. Dicey, Henry Sidgwick and Goldwin Smith among others - upheld secular, rationalist ideals. They also approached history in an impartial spirit, seeing it as the establishment of facts, and to achieve the latter similarly sought out original sources. And they too considered history a valuable tool in 'statecraft' because of the broad patterns that emerged once these facts had been 'accumulated' (both they and Lecky drew on Comtean positivism here).[42] Other influences included the Cambridge historian John Seeley. He stressed the political lessons of history even more forcefully (for Britain, this meant Imperial Federation), spelling out the interdependence of present politics and history in a fashion that appealed to O'Brien.[43] The latter probably echoed Seeley's view (shared by E.A. Freeman) that history was simply 'past politics'.[44] O'Brien's work thus bears their imprint too. Intellectually, he was part of this British liberal milieu. So was Lecky, but O'Brien was in some respects closer to contemporary British historical studies than Lecky, for, as will be seen, whereas Lecky feared the 'tyranny of the document', O'Brien followed British historians in their increasing emphasis on the importance of original material (the so-called 'scientific' method).[45] In the early 1880s his links with intellectual and academic liberalism were given concrete shape when he became a friend of Bryce. During the Home Rule debate of 1886-93 he entered more fully into this world, as he and Bryce took on Unionist opponents like Dicey and Goldwin Smith. By engaging with, and drawing on, secular liberal intellectuals in this way – not to mention his regard for the 'anti-clerical' Lecky – O'Brien was moving in very different circles to the Irish Catholicism of his background and education.[46] Once again, the effects of emigration are thrown into relief.

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[42] Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, pp.42-4, 100-1, 214-16.

[43] Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, pp.294-6. The following quote from Seeley, for example, forms the epigraph to O'Brien's *A Hundred Years of Irish History*: "Politics are vulgar when they are not liberalised by history, and history fades into mere literature when it loses sight of its relation to practical politics."

[44] McCartney, *Lecky*, pp.38; Burrow, *A Liberal Descent*, pp.163-4.

[45] McCartney, *Lecky*, pp.38, 51-6, 75-6. To Lecky, history was always more about literature than science. Unlike Seeley, therefore, the idea of history as literature was not something to be deprecated. Nor did Lecky subscribe to the Seeley-Freeman view that history was only 'past politics'. To him, its sweep was broader, incorporating social, economic and intellectual factors.

[46] Lecky was viewed as 'anti-clerical' by the Irish Catholic hierarchy because of his identification with European rationalism and because in the final chapter ('Clerical Influences') of the 1861 edition of *Irish*

Another point that must not be forgotten is whom O'Brien was writing for. If his desire to emulate Lecky and British liberal historians precluded nationalist excesses in his work, then, because of his audience, it was also a way to advance his political aims. On a general level, the fact that his readers were mainly British (and middle class) must have encouraged him to adopt a balanced, dispassionate tone, to match prevailing standards of scholarship, as this approach was presumably better suited to swaying British opinion than a crudely nationalist one. When it is considered that the particular target of his books was Liberal opinion, the utility of emulating liberal historiography becomes clearer still. And, where a stronger tone does arise, such as in his moral censure of Irish landlordism and his pleas for justice, it is Liberal values that O'Brien is appealing to. Nor was all this simply a case of serving nationalist goals, for meeting his audience's expectations and tastes when it came to history obviously facilitated his career as a historian too. Those who eschewed his politics could still enjoy the history. It was this notion of Irish writers tailoring their work for British readers that Ryan later rejected. For now, the British context in which O'Brien wrote had - via its intellectual currents, rationalist political framework and the British audience through which his professional and nationalist ambitions were filtered - ensured his books avoided overt nationalist partisanship.

The principal factor, though, remained the two Liberal statesmen without whose influence O'Brien's books would never have appeared. But it is not just through their existence that these books testify to the impact of Gladstone and Bright. For a start, both Liberals are a recurring presence within the text. *The Irish Land Question*, for example, is littered with references to them, especially Bright. He is quoted on such topics as the link between eviction and agrarian crime and Westminster's neglect of Irish appeals.[47] The same pattern occurs in *The Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question*. Bright is not only frequently cited but, in regard to the Tenant Right campaign of the early 1850s, he is described as the "great champion" who had arisen in England to "do battle for the Irish peasantry." Gladstone, as author of the 1870 Land Act, is lauded for his "great stride in advance."[48] Although O'Brien's purpose in using such weighty political authorities is to underpin his own arguments, their employment illustrates their influence upon him.

Leaders of Public Opinion he attacked the sectarian nature of Irish politics. He was also a well-known opponent of denominational education (McCartney, *Lecky*, pp.19-20, 82-3).

[47] O'Brien, *The Irish Land Question and English Public Opinion*, pp.37, 40, 42. For Bright, see also pp. 5, 11, 18-26, 43, 52, 71-81, and for Gladstone, see pp. 25, 43, 52.

[48] O'Brien, *The Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question*, pp.86, 120. For Bright, see also pp. 10, 37, 87, 90, 114, 186, 202-3.

Understandably, O'Brien's concern with Bright and Gladstone is not limited to the past. His eye is also fixed on them in the present, so that whilst he is aiming at Liberal opinion as a whole, it is the two statesmen that he specifically has in mind. This becomes clear at the end of each volume. In *The Irish Land Question* he appeals to the government of Gladstone and Bright to replace landlordism with peasant ownership:

> The development of a peasant proprietary...will not present insurmountable obstacles in Ireland. Mr Gladstone and Mr Bright have already done much to redeem the past and if they resume the unfinished work of redress, and carry it firmly to the end, they will make Ireland in the future the strength and not the weakness of the Empire.[49]

Similarly, at the close of his second book O'Brien urges the Liberals to govern Ireland using 'Irish ideas', as they had in 1869-70, and to emulate the Ulster tenant champions of the past: "The pains which were taken by Chichester and Davis must on a far larger scale, and for nobler purposes, be taken by Mr Gladstone, Mr Bright, Mr Forster, and Lord Hartington, to root not the landlords, but the tenants in the soil of Ireland."[50] That O'Brien should appeal directly to Gladstone and Bright was logical given the fact that no contemporary English politician had done more for the Irish tenants than them. Moreover, as they were the government of the day, they were the ones that counted. Yet, by closing his books in this fashion O'Brien underlines the impact of the two Liberals on his own personal politics. They had inspired him to adopt their assumptions about political life, so it was only natural that on his first literary foray he should aim his forceful arguments at Gladstone and Bright in particular. After all, he could be confident that with them at least his strategy of rationalist persuasion through history would be at its most effective.

Accordingly, O'Brien took the step of forwarding copies of the two books to both statesmen. Their reactions did not disappoint. With regard to *The Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question* (which O'Brien also sent to Herbert Gladstone), Bright wrote from the Reform Club in November 1880: "I thank you for the gift of your little book. I have read it through carefully, and have found it very interesting." Six days later Bright publicly praised the volume during a speech at Birmingham, which illustrates how sending his work to these men could benefit O'Brien's literary career as well as the nationalist cause.[51] To judge from the mark it made on his memory, Gladstone was even more impressed by the book. On 5 November 1880 he wrote to O'Brien:

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[49] O'Brien, *The Irish Land Question*, pp.82-3.
[50] O'Brien, *The Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question*, p.204.
[51] O'Brien, *John Bright*, p.10; BL, Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 46,048, fol.222: O'Brien to Herbert Gladstone, 29 Nov. 1880. It is not entirely clear whether Gladstone received *The Irish Land Question* in 1880, when the pamphlet was originally published, or in 1881, when it was reissued with a supplement (see *The Gladstone Diaries*, ed. M.R.D. Foot and H.C.G. Matthew (14 vols., Oxford, 1968-94),

I thank you for kindly sending me your work and I hope that the sad and discreditable story you have told so well in your narrative of the Irish Land Question may be useful at a period when we have more than ever of reason to desire that it should be thoroughly understood.[52]

Then, in 1883, Gladstone was sent a copy of the first volume of O'Brien's *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*. In reply, he said: "I have not forgotten your striking History of the Land Question of Ireland and I shall consequently read with much interest the work on the Half Century of Concessions." Finally, ten years after that, in October 1893, the book was still in Gladstone's mind when he received a copy of O'Brien's edition of Wolfe Tone's *Autobiography*: "You I think first gave me a true exposition of that most significant history of the Irish Land Question," he wrote.[53] If Gladstone's effect on O'Brien had been dramatic, then O'Brien had likewise left his mark on the Liberal leader.

The consequences of this, both for Gladstone and O'Brien, will become clear later. In the short term the fact that his books were well received did not have as swift a result as O'Brien might have hoped. An answer to his historical appeals came with the 1881 Land Act, but only after Ireland had been given a fresh dose of coercion. Nevertheless, O'Brien's place as an informed nationalist commentator on Irish affairs was confirmed.[54] Up to the end of 1881 his work was preoccupied with the Irish land issue. After Parnell's release from prison in May 1882 and the foundation of the National League in October that year, the pendulum swung away from the Land War and back towards Home Rule. O'Brien was happy to accept the new, more moderate, course. Given his Liberal-Buttite influences, this is not surprising. The persuasive historical style honed over the land question would now be used to advocate Irish self-government. "I only wish to place John Bull before the Bar of history," he wrote in Actonian fashion to Bryce in 1907, "let Justice, pure & simple, be executed on him." A more striking and succinct description of the literary method developed by O'Brien in the early 1880s would be hard to find.[55]

Vol. IX, Jan 1875-Dec 1880 (Oxford, 1986), p.474, *Vol. X, Jan 1881-June 1883* (Oxford, 1990), p.64). Bright certainly received the pamphlet first time around (O'Brien, *John Bright*, p.9).

[52] *The Gladstone Diaries*, *Vol. IX*, ed. Matthew, p.609.

[53] Ibid, *Vol. XI, July 1883-Dec 1886*, ed. Matthew (Oxford, 1990), p.38; Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44,549, p.283: Gladstone to O'Brien, 12 Oct. 1893. Gladstone's copy of O'Brien's *The Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question* (housed in St Deiniols Library, Hawarden) bears witness to the impression it made on him, being littered with the Liberal leader's annotations. Hammond notes the effect of O'Brien's book on Gladstone in *Gladstone and the Irish Nation* (p.190).

[54] This was underlined by the fact that coercion led O'Brien to write two pamphlets, 'Coercion or Redress' and 'Thomas Drummond: A Political Sketch.' Each dealt with the Melbourne government of 1835-41, during which the celebrated Drummond was Irish Undersecretary. They aimed to show how the ameliorative measures of the Melbourne government and Drummond were more effective in allaying discontent than repression. For these two essays, see O'Brien, *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies* (London, 1887), and for Drummond, see pp.182-4 below.

[55] Bodleian Library, Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 112, fol.41-2: O'Brien to Bryce, 22 Mar. 1907; McCartney, *Lecky*, p.147. For more on Lord Acton's influence on O'Brien's historical work, see pp.212-13 below.

Although Justin McCarthy moved to England in 1853, sixteen years before O'Brien, interesting parallels (and contrasts) with the latter can be traced in McCarthy's career and his relationships with Bright and Gladstone. Firstly, like O'Brien, he briefly supported physical force nationalism during his early years. In his case it was the '49 Movement', an offshoot of the abortive Young Ireland rising of 1848, which won his adherence as a young man in Cork, although it too failed abjectly.[56] In the light of this, and probably under the influence of his friend J.F. Maguire, the editor of the *Cork Examiner* and later an Irish MP, he turned away from such methods and, again like O'Brien, decided that change would be best advanced by rationalist, constitutional means.[57] "From that time", wrote McCarthy of the early 1850s, "I became more and more convinced that the task of righting Ireland's wrongs was to be accomplished by earnest and incessant appeal to the conscience, the reason, and the manly feeling of England's best citizens."[58] He and his friends hatched various plans (such as a 'Young Ireland pilgrimage' to England) in line with this belief. As well as the lack of self-government, which McCarthy was content to define as legislative independence, Irish 'wrongs' included religious inequality and an unjust land system.[59] He wrote later that their faith in the English people was partly a result of their love for English literature, as this helped persuade them "that England's ill-treatment of Ireland was the work mainly of England's privileged and ruling classes, and not...of the English people as a whole." Another obvious reason for this view was the restricted nature of the franchise at that time, whilst McCarthy may even have drawn on Chartist sympathies for Irish nationalism, which persisted up to 1850.[60]

The next stage in his political evolution was his move to England, which led to his increasing exposure to Gladstone and Bright and so to British Liberal influences. As with

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[56] Justin McCarthy, *Irish Recollections*, pp.123-4; Justin McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, pp.77-8; Doyle, *Justin McCarthy*, p.8. See too T.P. O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, pp.316-21.

[57] R.V. Comerford, *The Fenians in Context, Irish Politics and Society, 1848-52* (Dublin, 1985), pp.37, 74; McCarthy, *Irish Recollections*, pp.117-18, 146-8, 255-8. Maguire, says McCarthy, was "utterly opposed to any kind of secret conspiracy...for preparing an insurrection" (*Irish Recollections*, pp.257-8). McCarthy stayed in touch with Maguire after moving to England, seeing him both in Liverpool and London (NLI, McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 19 Feb. 1857 (MS 3679), 28 July 1858 (MS 3680), 20 July 1871 (MS 3691). His *A History of Our Own Times* (4 vols., London, 1878-80) contains a fine tribute to Maguire (IV, pp.240-2).

[58] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.78.

[59] Ibid, p.78; McCarthy, *Irish Recollections*, pp.76-7, 82-83. This too reflected Maguire's influence. He felt total separation was impossible owing to geography, but did advocate a domestic legislature for Ireland.

[60] McCarthy, *Irish Recollections*, pp.79-81; Foster, *Modern Ireland*, pp.365-6; Margot Finn, *After Chartism, Class and Nation in English Radical politics, 1848-74* (Cambridge, 1993), pp.123-4. McCarthy perhaps fits Nandy's model more closely than O'Brien, for, with his absorption in English literature, his 'collaboration' with British political values seems deeper and more unconscious than O'Brien's. However, the same reservations still apply to Irish-Indian parallels.

O'Brien, residency in England brought McCarthy a degree of contact with the two men which was impossible in Ireland. As a journalist on the Liberal *Northern Daily Times* in Liverpool from 1853 to 1860, he had many opportunities to hear Bright and Gladstone speak, both at political rallies in northern England and in Parliament, where he was once sent to report on a Gladstonian budget.[61] In the case of Bright, McCarthy's first experience of him in this period was at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester (Bright was a Manchester MP from 1847 to 1857) and he described it as an "intellectual treat." "Bright's speech," he wrote, "[was] a perfect combination of argument, eloquence and music of voice." Bright was "the greatest orator I have ever heard."[62] Consequently, McCarthy must have been excited when in 1859 he joined the *Morning Star* in London, for, although neither Bright nor Richard Cobden had money in the paper, they were both closely associated with it (Bright's brother-in-law, Samuel Lucas, was the editor) and it was their Radical principles that the *Star* advocated.

McCarthy moved south in 1860 and for the next eight years worked for the *Morning Star*. Initially, he was a parliamentary reporter, but in 1861 he became foreign editor and then, in 1865, he became editor-in-chief following Lucas's death. As editor, he found himself in intimate contact with Bright, who regularly visited the *Star* offices in order to pass on political news or give advice on how various subjects should be tackled.[63] "My association with the editorial department of the *Morning Star* brought me into close and frequent intercourse with John Bright," wrote McCarthy in 1904. By the end of the decade he had come to view Bright "as the most valuable...counsellor, as the most companionable of friends, and to feel honoured and delighted by his confidence."[64] Indeed, it was only his 'devotion' to Bright that enabled the *Morning Star* to retain McCarthy's services. When he realised in 1868 that Bright's likely appointment to the Cabinet would end his connection with the paper (the two roles were morally incompatible in Bright's view), McCarthy decided to gratify his long-standing desire to

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[61] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.113-15; McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 3 Apr. 1857 (MS 3679), 16 Oct. 1858 (MS 3680). The budget speech experience described by McCarthy in his *Story* was presumably either Gladstone's first, in 1853, or the Crimean War one of May 1854.

[62] McCarthy, *Portraits of the Sixties*, pp.108-10; McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, pp.113. Neither account gives the exact date of Bright's speech, but it probably occurred whilst he was a Manchester MP. January 1854 is a possibility, as that month Bright and Cobden spoke together in Manchester on Reform (Robbins, *John Bright*, p.102) and in his *Story* McCarthy notes hearing Cobden when he first heard Bright.

[63] In his *Reminiscences* (I, pp.91-5), for example, McCarthy reproduces letters from Bright on such topics as the formation of a trade union by Scottish labourers (31 Dec. 1865) and the Jamaica crisis (13 Nov., 6 Dec. 1865, 2 Jan. 1866).

[64] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, pp.121, 135.

visit America.[65] Thus, for McCarthy, as for O'Brien, it was Bright rather than Gladstone who loomed largest during the 1860s. However, whilst O'Brien was inspired mainly through Bright's oratory, McCarthy received his inspiration on a personal level.

What was the effect of such a close friendship? For O'Brien, Bright's appeal was as an advocate of Irish reform. With McCarthy, though, Bright's impact was felt on a wider level. By working with him on the *Morning Star*, McCarthy became directly involved in a range of Liberal concerns and issues, thereby intensifying a process that had begun on the *Northern Daily Times*. During his editorship McCarthy promoted what were then thought "extreme radical doctrines." These included a national education system, the secret ballot, franchise extension (Bright was a constant visitor during the Reform struggle of 1866) and a non-aggressive foreign policy.[66] This commitment to Radical politics extended beyond the *Star* office, bringing him into contact with popular Radicalism and its leaders, such as Charles Bradlaugh, the atheist and republican, and G.J. Holyoake, the secularist and champion of the co-operative movement.[67] Like O'Brien, emigration had carried McCarthy into worlds that were very different from his Catholic upbringing. But his faith persisted and home was by no means forgotten, as the influence of Bright and McCarthy naturally meant that the *Star* was more sympathetic towards nationalist Ireland than its contemporaries. Clemency was urged in the case of the Fenian prisoners and the *Star* strongly supported Church disestablishment and land reform.[68] As for Bright himself, he was regularly lauded by his editor, and never more so than when speaking on Ireland.[69]

McCarthy's nationalism found vent, therefore, on the *Morning Star*, but the most important aspect of these years was undoubtedly the development of his Radical politics, since it was something he never lost. After his return from the United States in 1871 he again became involved in popular Radicalism. In July 1871, for example, he attended a "working man's meeting on the Ballot." The next year he heard Joseph Arch, the President of the National Agricultural Labourers Union, speak on franchise reform and in 1875 he was at a woman's suffrage meeting. Such activities apparently brought him back

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[65] Ibid, p.135; McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, I, p.185.

[66] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.118; McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, I, pp.73, 163; *Morning Star*, 2 Apr., 17 Oct. 1866.

[67] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, II, pp.325-9; Finn, *After Chartism*, pp.269-71. McCarthy probably also had contact with Holyoake through the *Morning Star*, to which Holyoake contributed in the 1860s (G.J. Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitators Life* (2 vols., London, 1892), II, pp.120-1.

[68] *Morning Star*, 31 Oct., 1 Nov. 1866. Two of the letters from Bright (8 Nov., 18 Dec. 1867) that McCarthy includes in his *Reminiscences* (I, pp. 100-1) are on the subject of the Fenian prisoners. On one occasion Bright in fact scolded McCarthy for not defending them energetically enough (Ibid, I, p.81).

[69] Bright's speech at a Dublin banquet in his honour in 1866, for example, was described in a leader as not even being "surpassed by Grattan" (*Morning Star*, 1 Nov. 1866). See pp.63-4 below for more on this event.

into contact with Holyoake.[70] A fresh Radical link McCarthy made in this decade was Henry Labouchere. In 1868-9 Labouchere was among a group of investors who helped revive the Liberal *Daily News*, whilst McCarthy joined the paper as a leader writer in 1871. As a result, he made Labouchere's acquaintance through John Robinson, the *Daily News* manager.[71] It was a useful connection, for Labouchere (who became an MP in 1880) would be a firm ally of the Irish Party during the struggles of the early 1880s. McCarthy himself was elected as a Home Rule MP in 1879, but, as will be seen, Radicalism continued to be part of his political identity. Writing in 1899, he described himself as a "Radical, so far as English politics were concerned" and given his record over the previous forty years it would be hard to disagree.[72]

Fittingly, McCarthy's friendship with John Bright, the man who did so much to inspire his Radicalism, also continued. Once back in London, it was not long before McCarthy renewed the connection. By March 1872 they had resumed correspondence and in May 1873 McCarthy recorded enjoying a "long & very interesting conversation" with his old mentor. Following his election to Parliament, McCarthy paid tribute to Bright in his maiden speech and in return the latter welcomed him to the House with "sincere pleasure."[73] Unfortunately, the Irish debates of the next few years were to cast them as opponents rather than allies, as first coercion and then Home Rule divided them. In his autobiography, *The Story of an Irishman*, McCarthy glosses over his difficulties with Bright in the early 1880s, claiming that their friendship was an unbroken one.[74] Yet, contemporary sources paint a different picture. Writing to Rosa Praed in July 1885, he admitted that he and Bright had not "exchanged a word or even a salute in four years", although, said McCarthy, "it was his quarrel altogether – not mine."[75] The reason for this breach was presumably that Bright found it especially galling that a good friend like

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[70] McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 10 July 1871 (MS 3691), 12 Nov. 1872 (MS 3692), 29 May 1875 (MS 3695); McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, II, pp.325-7. McCarthy's support for female suffrage reflected the influence of J.S. Mill, who was a leading advocate of this cause. McCarthy came to know Mill in the 1860s (see p.66 below) and he was another important source of McCarthy's Radicalism. Like Barry O'Brien, McCarthy admired Mill's writings on the Irish land issue (see *Reminiscences*, I, pp.104-16).

[71] In his book, *British Political Leaders* (London, 1903, pp.109-10), McCarthy says he first met Labouchere at a Reform Club dinner given by Robinson and as his diary for 18 June 1873 (NLI, MS 3693) records such an event, it seems they met in that year.

[72] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, II, p.179. Suitably, McCarthy gives Maurice Tyrone in *A Fair Saxon* links with the Radicals (p.16), underlining the autobiographical nature of this character.

[73] McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 4, 16, 18 Mar. 1872 (MS 3692), 21 May 1873 (MS 3693); *Hansard*, 3rd Series, 1879 (2 May), ccxlv, 1637-48; H.W. Lucy, *A Diary of Two Parliaments* (2 vols., London, 1885, 1886), I, p.484. "I do not know", said McCarthy in 1903, "that I have ever experienced a higher sense of personal gratification" than when Bright "in the kindliest words offered his genial welcome to me" (*Portraits of the Sixties*, p.112).

[74] *The Story of an Irishman*, pp.121, 248.

McCarthy, with his Liberal associations, should have been in the front-rank of the 'rebel' Parnellites. Nevertheless, it was McCarthy who spoke on behalf of the Irish Party when Bright died in 1889. Rising in the Commons, he paid tribute to his "genius...noble character, and...public services." Even though Bright had opposed Home Rule, said McCarthy, "Ireland still claimed the right to lay her...funeral wreath on this great Englishman's grave." The next year McCarthy was on the 'Memorial Committee' charged with erecting a statue of Bright. "No memories of my life are more sacred to me than the recollections of my long intercourse with John Bright", he wrote in 1904.[76]

In comparison to his relationship with Bright, McCarthy's connection with Gladstone seems less dynamic. Certainly, there was no parallel to the *Morning Star* intimacy of the 1860s. However, this should not lead us to doubt McCarthy's admiration for the Liberal leader. Writing his *Reminiscences* in 1899, McCarthy opened his chapter on Gladstone by remarking that he took it "for granted that on all that relates to Mr Gladstone's greatness my readers and I are thoroughly in accord."[77] By then the G.O.M. had sealed his place in Irish hearts through his struggle for Home Rule. But, as noted earlier, it was hearing him speak during the 1850s which first stimulated McCarthy's regard.[78] Indeed, he was so impressed by Gladstone's address in favour of colonial self-government at Chester in 1855 that he asked for permission to issue it in pamphlet form. After some difficulties, McCarthy sent Gladstone twenty-five copies of the work in December that year: "I hope that the general getting-up and publication of the pamphlet meets your approval."[79] There was clearly a degree of personal ambition involved in bringing himself to Gladstone's attention in this direct way. Even so, McCarthy's admiration was genuine and the effects of the Chester speech - which was the fullest disclosure of Gladstone's colonial views to date - would be seen later in his own ideas on the Empire and Ireland's relation to it.[80]

Unlike O'Brien, therefore, McCarthy's regard for Gladstone pre-dated his Irish reforms of 1869-70. Of course, he firmly supported Gladstone in these endeavours and

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[75] Justin McCarthy and Mrs Campbell Praed, *Our Book of Memories*, pp.18-19.

[76] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, pp.135, 325-6; McCarthy and Campbell Praed, *Our Book of Memories*, pp. 179-80, 216; T.M. Healy, *Letter and Leaders of My Day* (2 vols., London, 1928), I, p.320.

[77] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, II, p.442. McCarthy actually wrote a biography of Gladstone, *The Story of Gladstone's Life* (London, 1898), but in *Our Book of Memories* (p.411) he admits that it was "a mere pot-boiler", for by this time McCarthy was in some financial difficulty.

[78] See note 61 above. In his *Reminiscences* (II, pp.442-3), McCarthy says that his first experience of Gladstone the orator came in October 1853 at the unveiling of a statue to Sir Robert Peel in Manchester.

[79] Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44,384, fol.270: McCarthy to Gladstone, 17 Dec. 1855. Twelve years later, McCarthy, whilst responding to a complaint by Gladstone about the *Morning Star*, took the chance to revive a "slight and passing acquaintanceship" by reminding Gladstone of the publication of the 1855 pamphlet (Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44,412, fol. 72: McCarthy to Gladstone, 16 Feb. 1867).

they can only have increased his attachment to the Liberal leader. In the midst of the 1868 election McCarthy wrote to Gladstone from New York to describe how he had met John Mitchel, the Irish rebel of 1848. Mitchel fervently opposed Irish Church disestablishment, said McCarthy, because he felt that by erasing injustice Gladstone would remove the grounds for rebellion in Ireland. McCarthy's object in relating the story was to provide Gladstone with "an argument in favour of your policy with regard to the Irish Church."[81] The letter was thus striking confirmation of how he had jettisoned the physical force methods of his youth and instead embraced the constitutional path of reconciliation and reform. For McCarthy, rebellion belonged to the past. Confident in English sympathy for Ireland - of which Gladstone's 1868 triumph gave proof - he felt it had no place in the present. "Your Fenianism is an anachronism", Tyrone tells the Irish-American Macan in *A Fair Saxon*. "I believe in my soul...the English people...want to be our true friends."[82]

Given his growing respect for Gladstone, it was appropriate that McCarthy should have joined the *Daily News* on his return to London, for it was widely recognised as the leading organ of Gladstonian Liberalism.[83] In 1876 he became an enthusiastic supporter of Gladstone's crusade against Ottoman oppression in Bulgaria, attending the National Conference on the Eastern Question held in St James's Hall on 8 December. There, said McCarthy, Gladstone delivered "one of the most powerful and...convincing speeches, I have ever heard even from his lips."[84] Just over two years later he furnished clear proof of his regard by sending the Liberal chief the first two volumes of his *A History of Our Own Times*. "I hope you will do me the favour to accept the books," he wrote in January 1879, "...as the only tribute of admiration and respect which it is in my power to offer you."[85]

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[80] Biagini, *Gladstone*, pp.25-6. See below pp.296-7 for McCarthy's views on the Empire.
[81] Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44,416, fol.215: McCarthy to Gladstone, 21 Nov. 1868.
[82] McCarthy, *The Fair Saxon*, pp.136-7, 280. Another reason McCarthy disavowed rebellion in the present was that he felt it was doomed to failure, as Fenianism seemed to show. But he retained a romantic respect for it as the "tradition of the centuries" (Ibid, p.136-7) and never regretted his own foray into physical force. Late in his life he wrote a novel, *Mononia* (1901), about Young Ireland and in *A History of Our Own Times* defends the character of the '49' men and, as he had done at the time, the Fenian leaders (IV, pp.122-52). See J. H. Murphy, "Between Drawing–Room & Barricade: The Autobiographies & Nationalist Fictions of Justin McCarthy", in Bruce Stewart (ed.), *Hearts and Minds: Irish Culture and Society Under the Act of Union* (Gerrards Cross, 2002), pp.111-19, for a fuller analysis of his attitude towards nationalist rebellion.
[83] "It has done more", wrote H.W. Massingham in 1892, "than any other paper to commend his personality and political teaching to the English people...'I believe in Mr Gladstone' is, in the main, the shibboleth of ...Bouverie Street" (H.W. Massingham, *The London Daily Press* (London, 1892), pp.42-3).
[84] McCarthy, *The Story of Gladstone's Life*, p.299; McCarthy Papers, Diary: 8 Dec. 1876 (MS 3696); Richard Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister, 1865-1898* (London, 1999), pp.191-3
[85] Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44,459, fol.9: McCarthy to Gladstone, 3 Jan. 1879. He also sent Gladstone the third and fourth volumes after their publication in 1880 (Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 466, fol.100: McCarthy to Gladstone, 21 Sept. 1880).

The regard was not all on McCarthy's side, however, as an episode later that year showed. Writing to Gladstone in November 1879, James Knowles, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, said he wished to obtain an article on the "common-sense of Home Rule" (presumably because of the approaching general election). By February 1880 he had persuaded McCarthy to be its author and the essay duly appeared the following month. Although McCarthy and Knowles were friends, the selection of the former was, significantly, also due to the recommendation of Gladstone, who (along with Bright and Lord Ripon) told Knowles "that there could hardly be a better man for the purpose."[86] This was because not only did McCarthy, as a nationalist MP, have the credentials to write on Home Rule but he was also a familiar figure in Liberal political and journalistic circles and was well-known to the public as a writer. Both *A History of Our Own Times* and his 1875 novel, *Dear Lady Disdain*, had been hugely successful.[87] As a result, McCarthy's name carried weight and acceptability, thereby suggesting that the article would receive a fair hearing. As he said himself: "while I was, and always had been a strong Nationalist in Irish politics, I should not be regarded...as a man madly anxious to injure the British Empire."[88] Although its effect may have been slight, McCarthy's article does provide an intriguing precedent. Six years later Gladstone and Knowles would again seek to initiate a Home Rule discussion in the *Nineteenth Century* and once more they turned to an Irishman who was both knowledgeable and moderate, someone unlikely to prejudice the articles in the eyes of the English public.

More immediately, McCarthy's article led to him making further contributions that year to the *Nineteenth Century*, all on Irish politics.[89] Less congenial was the fact that his relations with Gladstone now came under strain within the Parliamentary arena. Due to the coercion battles of 1881-2 he found himself in collision with one of his heroes. E.W. Hamilton, for example, one of Gladstone's secretaries, noted in January 1881 how his chief had come "down to the House...and made a slashing speech on McCarthy's 'truly

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[86] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 231, fols.298, 309: James Knowles to Gladstone, 26 Nov. 1879 and 16 Feb. 1880. For McCarthy's connection with Knowles during the 1870s, see McCarthy's Diaries: 12, 23 Aug. 1873 (MS 3693), 28 July 1875 (MS 3695), 12 July 1876 (MS 3696) and 11 Aug. 1877 (MS 3697).

[87] T.P. O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, pp.324-5; MacDonagh, *The Home Rule Movement*, p.133; McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 4, 13, 18 Dec. 1875 (MS 3695) and 1, 8, 20, 24 Jan. 1876 (MS 3696).

[88] McCarthy, *The Story of Gladstone's Life*, p.324. In his account of the episode in the above book (pp.323-5), McCarthy claims that the initiative for the Home Rule article(s) was Gladstone's, but Knowles's letters to the latter suggest that it was in fact the *Nineteenth Century* editor who was responsible for the idea.

[89] McCarthy's *Nineteenth Century* articles at this time were: "The Common Sense of Home Rule" (March 1880); "The Common Sense of Home Rule II, A Rejoinder" (April 1880); "The Landowners Panic" (August 1880); "Ireland in '48 and Ireland Now" (December 1880); "Home Rule II" (June 1882).

extraordinary' amendment as he called it."[90] According to McCarthy, Gladstone was 'particularly disappointed' with his involvement in the Parnellite obstruction campaign, for, unlike many of the Irish MPs, the Liberal leader knew something of him, had read his work, and was aware of his Liberal links. Gladstone also had reason to believe, he said, that he [McCarthy] was conscious of his desire to advance Irish reforms.[91] Furthermore, as the Knowles episode suggested, Gladstone saw McCarthy as a reasonable rather than extreme figure when it came to Irish politics. Consequently, the Liberal chief was no doubt somewhat surprised (and pained) to find him among the Parnellites. Yet, in contrast to Bright, this did not upset their relations unduly, as Gladstone was still "very kind and courteous to" McCarthy and often complimented the Irishmen on his speeches.[92] Indeed, McCarthy's election to Parliament probably enabled him to become more familiar with Gladstone as it increased the opportunities for contact.

With the conclusion of the Home Rule alliance in 1886, the difficulties of the early 1880s disappeared and over the next few years McCarthy's ties with Gladstone grew stronger, both politically (Gladstone would pass advice to McCarthy) and personally (the latter was occasionally invited to dinner). McCarthy also continued to send the G.O.M. many of his books.[93] Gladstone's regard for McCarthy was underlined during the Parnell divorce crisis of 1890 when he made him the bearer of his [Gladstone's] views to Parnell prior to the Irish Party meeting of 25 November (the other messenger was John Morley), although this move also stemmed from McCarthy's position as vice-chairman. In turn, McCarthy's decision to abandon Parnell in favour of the Liberal alliance can be seen as, in part, a reflection of his attachment to Gladstone (and, it must be said, to his position in Liberal London). His subsequent election as anti-Parnellite chairman further increased his contact with Gladstone, for besides still seeing him socially, McCarthy, as party leader, had to frequently meet Gladstone for formal political talks (following the split he required

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[90] *The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton, 1880-1885*, ed. D.W.R. Bahlman (2 vols., Oxford, 1972), I, pp.99-100 (20 Jan. 1881).

[91] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, II, pp.451-2. Certainly, in "The Landowners Panic" McCarthy had credited Gladstone "with an honest purpose to serve the Irish tenantry" (p.305). Two years later, in "Home Rule II", he interpreted (correctly) Gladstone's challenge to the Irish MPs to produce a Home Rule plan as a sign that his mind was "open to a consideration of the question" (p.860).

[92] Ibid, II, p.450. This contrast between Bright and Gladstone held true not just for McCarthy but the Irish Party as a whole. Whilst Bright fell out with the Parnellites, Gladstone, retaining their respect, enjoyed better relations (Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation*, pp.213-4).

[93] For political interaction between McCarthy and Gladstone, see, for example, *Our Book of Memories* (p.147) and Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 502, fol.219: McCarthy to Gladstone, 20 Dec. 1887; for dinner invitations, see Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 500, fol.267: McCarthy to Gladstone, 28 Apr. 1887, Gladstone Papers, Dinner Books, ADD MS 44, 788, fol.162 and *Our Book of Memories* (p.101); for

assurances over the new Home Rule Bill).[94] Whilst the two men continued to correspond, the last time they met was in March 1894, just after Gladstone's resignation. McCarthy was considerably affected. He left Gladstone that day "as if I had been leaving some being [from] a higher order...and felt as I had been looking on at the fall of a dynasty."[95]

McCarthy's enduring admiration for Gladstone strengthened the Liberal affiliations initiated by Bright. Having pre-dated his first Irish reforms, Gladstone's political appeal, like Bright's, went beyond Ireland. It once again drew McCarthy directly into Liberal concerns, most obviously in the case of the Bulgarian agitation of 1876 (Gladstone later sent him a copy of his pamphlet on the Eastern Question[96]). Moreover, by then McCarthy was not only an established figure in Liberal politics but had made his mark in Liberal social circles too. He was a member of several Liberal clubs, such as the New Liberal, the Devonshire, the Cobden and the Reform, at which he mixed with Liberal journalists and politicians.[97] In the 1860s and 1870s he was a popular guest of Liberal hostesses like Lady Waldegrave, Lady Stanley of Alderley and the Countess Russell. He was also a favourite of Mrs Jeune, who ran an important and eclectic salon, and was even a guest of the Conservative Lady Dorothy Nevill.[98] As noted elsewhere, McCarthy's social rise had its fictional parallel in Phineas Finn. Like Trollope's hero, McCarthy shows how by the late 1860s middle class Irish Catholics were achieving the type of social success in England previously enjoyed by more elevated Irish Protestants such as Chichester Fortescue (the husband of Lady Waldegrave) and William Gregory.[99]

McCarthy sending books to Gladstone, see *Our Book of Memories* (p.204) and Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 503, fol.96: McCarthy to Gladstone, 17 Mar. 1888.

[94] For social interaction, see, for example, *Our Book of Memories* (pp.286-9) and Gladstone Papers, Dinner Books, ADD MS 44, 789, fol.69; for political interaction between December 1890 and July 1893, see *Our Book of Memories*, pp.289, 311, 325, 348-9, 365 and Gladstone Papers: McCarthy to Gladstone, 27 Nov. 1890 (ADD MS 56, 448, fol.191), 29 Nov., 30 Nov. 1890 (ADD MS 56, 449, fols.7, 27-9) 25 Jan. 1891 (ADD MS, 44, 512, fol.61), 13 Mar. 1893 (ADD MS 44, 517, fol.67).

[95] McCarthy, *The Story of Gladstone's Life*, p.356-7; McCarthy and Praed, *Our Book of Memories*, p.376. For their post-March 1894 correspondence see Gladstone Papers: McCarthy to Gladstone 29 Aug. 1894 (ADD MS 44, 519, fol.35), 30 April 1895 (ADD MS 44, 520, fol.169) and Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 044, fol.105: McCarthy to Herbert Gladstone, 8 June 1896.

[96] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 466, fol.100: McCarthy to Gladstone, 21 Sept. 1880.

[97] For McCarthy's membership of Liberal clubs, see his Diaries: Reform Club (11 Nov. 1873, MS 3693); Cobden Club (18 June 1871, MS 3691); New Liberal Club (20 July 1874, MS 3694); Devonshire Club (2 Jan., 9, 26 Mar. 1875 (MS 3695).

[98] Lady St Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years* (London, 1909), pp.90, 214-15; McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, I, p.365-6; Doyle, *Justin McCarthy*, p.20; H.M. Hyndman, *The Record of an Adventurous Life* (London, 1911), p.379; H.W. Lucy, *The Diary of a Journalist* (3 vols., London, 1920, 1922, 1923), III, p.114.

[99] O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, p.117; R.F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, pp.290-1. William Gregory, for example, was, like McCarthy, a friend of Lady Waldegrave (*Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. James Pethica (Gerrards Cross, 1996), p.46) and Lady Dorothy Nevill (*CL*, ii, 202).

Given all this, it is not surprising that many English observers shared Gladstone and Bright's sense of puzzlement at McCarthy's accession to the Parnellite party. They had difficulty in reconciling the McCarthy they knew – the Liberal journalist and popular writer – with the nationalist obstructionist he would soon become. The Liberal benches were considered his more likely home. Mrs Jeune, for example, felt that McCarthy was "entirely unfitted to be a member of the Home Rule party", an opinion in which William Tinsley broadly concurred. His friend and literary collaborator, Rosa Praed, recorded how "it was the way in certain circles to express poignant regret that Mr Justin McCarthy should have sacrificed a splendid literary career to become the political champion of an unpopular cause."[100] Even some of his Irish Party colleagues felt that his political focus lay outside Irish nationalism. Typically, F.H. O'Donnell was the most strident here. "The dominating influence of [McCarthy's] political creed was Gladstonian Liberalism," said O'Donnell, whilst T.P. O'Connor, a more sympathetic observer, admitted that McCarthy would "doubtless...have been an acceptable candidate for the Liberal Party."[101]

But the fact remains it was a Parnellite MP that he became in 1880-1, not a Liberal one (or even a 'nominal' Home Ruler), and this restores a sense of balance. McCarthy obviously had strong Liberal identifications and espoused many of the causes dearest to the Radical heart. His Liberal streak ran deeper than O'Brien's. Yet his primary political faith remained nationalism. As he once said to Rosa Praed: "people would be unable to understand how much this National Cause has been the religion of my life."[102] Just as his youthful nationalism had found expression on the *Morning Star* in the 1860s, so it found an outlet in the 1870s through the Home Rule cause. Having rejected physical force methods, and being sure of English sympathy for Ireland, McCarthy was naturally attracted to the Home Rule movement, believing that its reliance on British public opinion offered the best hope of success.[103] He attended Home Rule meetings in London and in 1877 joined the Home Rule Council in London. He was also on personal terms with many Irish MPs, including Butt and Parnell.[104] Far from being inexplicable, his absorption into

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[100] Lady St Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, p.215; William Tinsley, *Random Recollections of an Old Publisher*, p.308; McCarthy and Praed, *Our Book of Memories*, p.2.

[101] O'Donnell, *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, I, p.295; T.P. O'Connor, *Memoirs of an Old Parliamentarian*, II, p.70. See too William O'Brien, *Recollections* (London, 1905), p.254.

[102] McCarthy and Praed, *Our Book of Memories*, p.372.

[103] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, I, p.330; McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, pp.179-80, 252.

[104] McCarthy Papers, Diaries: Home Rule meetings, 23 Apr., 18 July 1873 (MS 3963), 27 Mar., 9, 26 April, 16, 21 Aug. 1877 (MS 3697); Home Rule Council appointment, 24 Mar. 1877 (MS 3697); Butt, 9 Apr. 1877 (MS 3697); Parnell, 16 Apr., 22 June, 3, 17 July, 1878 (MS 3698). See *Reminiscences*, II, pp.90-1, and *The Story of an Irishman*, pp.192-3, for details of McCarthy's connection with Parnell in the 1870s.

the Parnellite ranks was indicative of his most cherished political beliefs. But, as his rationalist plea for 'the common-sense of Home Rule' exemplified, McCarthy, like O'Brien, encased this cherished nationalism inside an unequivocally liberal framework.[105]

Compared to McCarthy and O'Brien, T.P. O'Connor was not captivated by John Bright in his youth. From an early stage it was Gladstone who fired his political imagination. Even so, Bright's influence should not be discounted completely. As a reporter for *Saunder's Newsletter* in Dublin, O'Connor was sent in July 1868 to cover a speech by Bright in Limerick. It had a considerable impact on the young journalist, who was not expecting such deep sympathy for Irish grievances from an Englishman. In 1883 T.P. wrote of how "the speech will always remain in my memory...[it] was as generous in spirit as it was splendid in style."[106] That he did retain his recollection of the occasion is clear from his *Memoirs*. "I do not know that there was any voice I ever heard so beautiful," he wrote. O'Connor even claimed that the speech helped stimulate his own budding nationalism. Certainly, as will be seen, the political ideas behind Bright's Limerick address would resurface later in O'Connor's own politics.[107] And, if Bright greatly impressed O'Connor, then Bright himself was struck by T.P.'s first appearance in the Commons in 1880. According to McCarthy, O'Connor's maiden speech elicited the "warmest admiration" from Bright, "who...knew nothing whatever about him, and Bright expressed to me his strong desire that he should be made personally acquainted with T.P." McCarthy duly obliged and O'Connor and the Liberal minister were brought together.[108]

However, the relations between the two men did not endure. In July 1882 Bright resigned from the Cabinet over the bombardment of Alexandria and O'Connor used it as an opportunity to attack him. Writing in the *New York Sun*, he said: "And so John Bright disappears from Ministerial life, envenomed in heart...discredited, despised, a political bankrupt, living on the shadows of past glories." This hostility to Bright was part of the general Parnellite anger at his acquiescence in coercion. But other factors were at work

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[105] As if to emphasise the rationalist approach, McCarthy deliberately takes what he calls the 'lower ground' in this article (see note 89 above) and argues for Home Rule on a practical level, i.e. as a remedy for an overburdened Imperial Parliament. Only at the end does he cite the 'higher ground' of national sentiment.
[106] T.P. O'Connor, *Gladstone's House of Commons* (London, 1885), p.340.
[107] O'Connor, *Memoirs* I, pp.255-6. The phrase of Bright's which struck O'Connor in a nationalist sense was: "I am one of those who admit – as every sensible man must admit – that an Act which the Parliament of the United Kingdom has passed, the Parliament of the United Kingdom can repeal." Bright preferred, though, to atone for the 'fraudulent' Act of Union by 'deeds of generosity and justice' at Westminster (*The Public Addresses of John Bright*, ed. J.E.T. Rogers (London, 1879), p.512). For more on the context of this speech and Bright's political influence on O'Connor see pp.63-8 below.
[108] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, II, p.397.

too. Among them was that until 1881 O'Connor's politics had been as much Radical as nationalist and so his disenchantment with Bright also reflected the disgust of a recent young Radical at the apparent decline of an older, more established one (not just over coercion but over Egypt as well, where he criticised Bright for not resigning earlier, i.e. when the fleet set sail).[109] Matters deteriorated further in June 1883 when Bright, speaking at Birmingham, accused T.P. of being a 'rebel' because he had not distanced himself from certain resolutions at a nationalist convention in Chicago in late 1881. In his Commons reply O'Connor caused uproar amongst the Liberals by saying of Bright: "a mean and vain old age had followed the splendid manhood."[110] He was to regret this remark, but it sealed the rupture between the two men. In private, Bright was still complaining bitterly about T.P. almost three years later.[111]

The heated Parnellite-Liberal politics of the early 1880s thus proved too much for O'Connor's fledgling relationship with Bright. Whilst this echoes McCarthy's breach with Bright at this time, it offers a contrast to the way that Barry O'Brien's regard for Bright survived the conflicts of these years. What this shows is that O'Brien's attachment to Bright, as well as being more deep-seated than O'Connor's, benefited from the fact that he was not an MP. Distanced from the political fray, O'Brien was able, unlike McCarthy and O'Connor, to escape some of its effects. Furthermore, the Catholic nationalist O'Brien did not have the same concern for Bright's status as a Radical leader as O'Connor had. The difference in their attitude towards Bright comes through clearly in their books, as T.P's 1886 study, *The Parnell Movement*, eschews the kind of frequent references to the Liberal statesman which litter O'Brien's work.

Fortunately, O'Connor's admiration for Gladstone fared better in this period than his relations with Bright, a sign of how the G.O.M. had dominated his political sympathies in the previous decade. According to Fyfe, it was Gladstone, the reformer of Irish Church and land, whom T.P. most wished to see when he came to London in 1870: "The figure for which he searches most intently is Gladstone...For Gladstone young O'Connor had at

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[109] O'Connor, *Gladstone's House of Commons*, p.240. See p.100 below for the full context of this 1882 attack on Bright.

[110] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.257. T.P. followed up his Commons riposte by penning another strong attack on Bright for the *Freemans Journal*, saying he had become a "narrow, petty, and spiteful smoke-room cynic"(*Gladstone's House of Commons*, p.342). What evoked T.P.'s anger was being called a 'rebel' for advocating Home Rule when Bright had admitted this was a legitimate object in his 1868 Limerick speech (see note 107 above). E.W. Hamilton noted the Bright-O'Connor spat in his diary (II, p.450, 19 June 1883).

[111] Wilfrid Blunt, for example, dined with Bright in March 1886 and recorded how "he spoke with special bitterness of T.P. O'Connor, who had contradicted him flatly, called him names and jeered at him when he spoke" (W.S. Blunt, *The Land War in Ireland*, (London, 1912), pp.36-7).

this time a passionate admiration; he never quite lost it."[112] Whether T.P. was such an enthusiastic Gladstonian at this early date is not certain (his *Memoirs* do not paint this picture). That he was by the end of the 1870s, though, is clear. The cause was the Bulgarian agitation of 1876, in which T.P., like McCarthy, pitched his tent in Gladstone's camp. "I was then, as I have been ever since," he said later, "filled with a passionate desire to rescue the Christians of the East from the yoke of Turkey." Attending Gladstonian rallies, he felt that: "while Disraeli represented all that was evil, in his mind and character as well as in politics, Mr Gladstone [was] the noblest of human figures."[113]

It was this belief which fuelled O'Connor's subsequent biography of Disraeli.[114] The book constituted a sustained indictment of the then premier, highlighting the self-seeking, unscrupulous impulses that, in T.P.'s opinion, characterised Disraeli's political odyssey. Particular condemnation was reserved for Beaconsfield's pro-Turkish Eastern policy, a subject that of course allowed O'Connor to pay homage to Gladstone. Having detailed his hero's shining record of political reform, T.P. declares that these achievements sank "into insignificance...before his work on the Eastern question." "His single voice has...shaken a foul...tyranny to atoms" and that feat alone "entitles him to a place among the...greatest benefactors of the human race."[115] Like O'Brien and McCarthy, O'Connor had an eye to his own literary prospects and so sent Gladstone a copy of the 1879 edition of the book. In fact, such was his desire for Gladstone to see the work before Parliament met in February 1879 that he forwarded the proofs as well.[116]

As a Parnellite MP in the early 1880s, T.P.'s Gladstonian affinities were inevitably somewhat diluted. Yet, political opposition to his policy of coercion was still mixed with and tempered by personal affection. In his *Memoirs*, O'Connor claimed that even "when I was most indignant with Mr Gladstone, I could not help feeling...a certain sympathy with the splendid old warrior." Nor was this simply a retrospective view. Whilst the American audience of the *New York Sun* gave T.P. the freedom to deprecate Bright, he did not use it to attack Gladstone. For example, in July 1882 he described Gladstone as "perhaps the

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[112] Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.45-6.
[113] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.8.
[114] The book was first published serially in 1876 (McCarthy noted in his diary on 13 Dec. 1876 (MS 3696): "At night we had a visit from O'Connor, author of Life of Lord Beaconsfield"). It was published in book form, but still anonymously, in 1878 and finally published as a book under O'Connor's name in 1879.
[115] O'Connor, *Lord Beaconsfield, A Biography* (London, 1879), p.647. All further references are taken from the 1879 edition.
[116] Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44, 459, fol.102: O'Connor to Gladstone, 11 Feb. 1879. Gladstone's copy of the 1879 edition of *Lord Beaconsfield, A Biography* (complete with signed inscription by O'Connor) is housed in St Deiniols Library, Hawarden.

greatest member that ever sat in an English Parliament."[117] It was also notable that when O'Connor selected extracts from his journalism of the 1880-5 Parliament for re-publication as a book, the title he chose was *Gladstone's House of Commons*. Although this was partly a commercial move (using the Liberal chief's name would attract attention), it also reflected his attachment to Gladstone. "The justification of the title," he wrote in the 1885 preface, "is the commanding position held in the last Parliament by the overwhelming personality of Mr Gladstone."[118]

Having emerged from the buffeting of Parnellite-Liberal antagonism largely unscathed, O'Connor's Gladstonian sympathies were enthusiastically renewed by the Home Rule alliance. Immediately after Gladstone's 1886 Bill had been defeated in the Commons, T.P. rose from his seat and demanded "three cheers for the Grand Old Man" (much to the disgust of William O'Brien).[119] Then, in the September 1889 number of the *Contemporary Review*, T.P. set out to defend the Liberal leader from the charges of political inconsistency and dishonesty which were repeatedly levelled against him. Intending to be impartial, he still admits that this "paper is written by one who has come to the conclusion...that Mr Gladstone is...one of the...greatest figures of our history." The defence of his idol complete, O'Connor writes: "the sight of this great old warrior fighting his last battle ...will be regarded by all generations of Englishmen to come as one of the...most inspiring spectacles in all their history."[120] Gladstone appreciated such support, writing to O'Connor shortly afterwards to thank him for "taking up the cudgels on my behalf and wielding them with such singular ability." T.P. also continued to send the Liberal leader his books during this period, including *The Parnell Movement*.[121]

His enduring regard for Gladstone received perhaps its most sustained and eloquent demonstration during the 1893 Home Rule Bill debates. Gladstone, now in his early eighties, argued his case in remarkable fashion and T.P.'s parliamentary sketches for his *Weekly Sun* did full justice to the Liberal leader's magnificent displays. "Something about the figure of Mr Gladstone," he wrote, "compels the concentration of attention upon him

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[117] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.171; O'Connor, *Gladstone's House of Commons*, pp.238-9.
[118] O'Connor, *Gladstone's House of Commons*, p. v.
[119] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, p.42; William O'Brien, *Evening Memories* (London, 1920), p.133.
[120] O'Connor, "The Candour of Mr Gladstone", *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1889, pp.363-69. In May 1888 Elizabeth O'Connor told G.B. Shaw that she was "anxious for T.P. to undertake a life of Gladstone, this is just the time for it", but the *Contemporary Review* piece was seemingly the only outcome of this idea (Shaw Papers, British Library, ADD MS 50, 512, fol.36: Elizabeth O'Connor to G.B. Shaw, 21 May 1888).
[121] Gladstone quoted in Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.150; Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44,499, fol.294: O'Connor to Gladstone, 28 Dec. 1886 (*The Parnell Movement*); Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 513, fol.220: O'Connor to Gladstone, 15 Oct. 1891 (*Charles Stewart Parnell, A Memory*).

at all times...he seems the soul, the inspiration, the genius of the House of Commons." Certainly no one who read *Sketches in the House* (as the collected articles were called) could doubt the veracity of this statement as far as O'Connor himself was concerned. From beginning to end the praises of the G.O.M. are constantly sung. He is the "Nestor-patriot of his country" and "not only the greatest man in the House of Commons, but also the handsomest." Even at his advanced age and with decades of speech making behind him, Gladstone was still capable of producing (in March 1893) "one of the most extraordinary manifestations it [the House of Commons] has ever heard during its centuries of existence." At one point T.P. even asks his readers not to be "exasperated or bored" by his continual discussion of the Liberal leader.[122]

Unsurprisingly, given such fervent eulogies, O'Connor started to become a target for more 'advanced' nationalists, who derided his own nationalist status. Arthur Lynch, for example, who was Parnellite candidate for Galway in 1892 and had Fenian links in the 1890s, wrote sarcastically in 1896: "To call T.P. an English radical is not quite apt; he is rather an Irish Gladstonian. T.P. is a hero-worshipper."[123] Such criticism was a foretaste of what was to come from Sinn Fein. But it is hard to dispute Lynch's description. The longevity of T.P.'s attachment to Gladstone is clear and at times – most notably 1876-9 and 1892-4 – it came close to the level suggested by Lynch. Like McCarthy and O'Brien, O'Connor's admiration never really wavered. It survived the differences of the early 1880s and was then gloriously re-affirmed by the Home Rule crusade. His other political guides, Bright and Parnell, did not enjoy such constancy. As with McCarthy, T.P.'s anti-Parnellism of 1890-1 can be seen as partly reflecting his regard for Gladstone (and, like McCarthy, his concern for his position in Liberal London, as Parnellite critics were quick to argue[124]). Unlike the others, the G.O.M. was one of the fixed points of his political life. Indeed, in professional terms he had virtually lived off Gladstone for, as he told Mary Drew after her father's resignation in March 1894, he had written a newspaper sketch of Gladstone "nearly every day" for fourteen years. Needless to say, Gladstone's resignation affected T.P. deeply. "I cannot go to bed tonight," he told Mary Drew in the same letter,

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[122] T.P. O'Connor, *Sketches In The House* (London, 1893), pp. 81, 114, 14, 206, 106, 102.

[123] Arthur Lynch, *Human Documents: Character Sketches of Representative Men and Women of our Time* (London, 1896), p.172; W.M. Crook, "Colonel Arthur Lynch, Some Personal Reminiscences" (see p.5, note 12 above); Mark Ryan, *Fenian Memories*, pp.171-5, 191. Lynch was involved in various Fenian sponsored 'open' organisations during the 1890s, such as the Amnesty Association on behalf of the remaining Fenian prisoners and the 1895 O'Donovan Rossa Reception Committee, for an account of whose 'reception' night see the Crook essay.

[124] See pp.254-5 below for more on Parnellite attacks on T.P. during the split. As will be seen, by 1890 T.P. was deeply committed to an Irish-Radical political project which also dictated an anti-Parnellite stance.

"without dropping you a line to express something of the feeling of profound sorrow – of personal bereavement – by which my heart is clouded tonight."[125] Writing the next day in his own paper, *The Sun*, he said: "The sun has set, and...its going down is worthy of all the splendour with which it has filled the broad and vast expanse of sky, but it is the setting of the sun all the same."[126]

Tracing O'Connor's attachment to the G.O.M. has taken us into the 1890s, but we must return to the 1870s to gauge its effect on him. As it had for McCarthy, Gladstone's political appeal extended beyond Ireland for T.P. and led to his involvement with Liberal issues in the form of the Bulgarian agitation of 1876. It was a crucial event, for it marked the onset of his growing contact with, and commitment to, Radicalism (he attended the pro-Gladstone rally of March 1878 at which Bradlaugh presided[127]). In the years after 1876 he was increasingly drawn into London Radical circles and often addressed political meetings and working men's clubs. At one such gathering he met L.A. Atherley-Jones, son of Ernest Jones, the Chartist, and a future Liberal MP. The extent of this process is illustrated by the fact O'Connor was vice-president of the Lambeth Radical Association by 1880 and, according to Michael MacDonagh, this was "easily the most advanced and aggressive body of the kind." Through it, he met Henry Labouchere, who became an important political and journalistic contact in the ensuing years. Prior to the 1880 election the Association asked Labouchere to stand as a Radical in Lambeth and T.P. was among those who negotiated with him, but Labouchere chose Northampton instead.[128]

T.P. also had dealings with the Southwark Radical Association at this time. In the winter of 1879-80 the Association put forward a labour candidate for the Southwark by-election and O'Connor, who was sympathetic to the idea of labour representation, lent his support. As a result, he met F.W. Soutter, a working class Radical who was secretary of the Association and an ardent labour activist. Soutter, a lifelong friend, was to be a close colleague over the next few years. If Gladstone was one of the catalysts for O'Connor's

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[125] BL, Mary Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 251 fol.293: O'Connor to Mary Drew, 1 Mar. 1894; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.16.

[126] *The Sun*, 2 Mar.1894. That O'Connor's affection for Gladstone remained strong until the close of his life is shown by a letter of 1923 to Mary Drew in which, after hearing from her, he writes of his delight at being "once more...brought into association with one who...belongs to my long past youth and to the family of the man whom, above all others in British politics, I love and revere" (Mary Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 253, fol.330: O'Connor to Mary Drew, 6 Nov. 1923).

[127] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.8; Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, II, p.190. It was following this March 1878 meeting that Gladstone's windows in Harley Street were broken by a Jingoistic mob.

[128] F.W. Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer* (London, 1923), p.7; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.16; L.A. Atherley-Jones, *Looking Back*, p.125; MacDonagh, *The Home Rule Movement*, pp.137-8; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, p.79.

Radicalism, then Soutter undoubtedly helped consolidate this development (O'Connor described him as one of the "best influences of my life"). Another factor behind T.P.'s Radicalism was the hardship he suffered in the 1870s. After leaving the *New York Herald* in 1873 he went nearly seven years without regular employment. The poverty that he both witnessed and experienced personally served to fuel his desire for change and later, when his political and journalistic clout had grown, it found in him a resolute opponent.[129]

The most important event of these years, though, was the appearance of his book on Disraeli. The combination of its partisan nature and the political polarisation of the late 1870s meant that it attracted widespread attention and proved a considerable success.[130] It was also aided by the revised format in which it was issued in 1879. The first version of 1878 had been a more scholarly affair and was originally designed to be a two-volume work. "It was calculated," wrote O'Connor, "to make the work valuable to the politician and the journalist rather than popular with the general public."[131] The second version adopted a different approach. It was a single volume work from the start, it was shorter, its style was livelier and many of the quotations which had littered the original text became footnotes. In addition, it now pursued Disraeli's career into the present so as to treat the current Eastern controversy. These alterations boosted the work's general appeal, but, more specifically, they reflected a desire to bring the book closer to the working class Radicals with whom O'Connor had become increasingly linked, for the 1879 version had a different publisher, Bennett Brothers, and one half of this firm was Samuel Bennett, a fellow member of the Lambeth Radical Association. To further this aim a cheap edition of the new version was issued in 1880 (this was advertised as the 'People's Edition' by the Radical press).[132] In both political and literary terms T.P. was addressing a more popular audience than either McCarthy or O'Brien.

The significance of *Lord Beaconsfield* lies in several directions. To us, it is a valuable indication of O'Connor's Liberal sympathies during this period. Nor is it only through its denunciation of Disraeli and praise of Gladstone that the book reveals these. The very way it is written is illuminating, for the style is almost that of one Englishman to another. Certainly, T.P.'s invocation of the English tradition of representative government is clear. Speaking of Disraeli's dismissal of Parliament in 1878, he says:

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[129] Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, pp.7-10; L.W. Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.15. T.P.'s comments on Soutter and details of his involvement in the Southwark election come during the short introduction he wrote for Soutter's book.
[130] Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.57-8; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.11.
[131] O'Connor, *Lord Beaconsfield,* p. iii.

> Thus, came a new phase in our history, that we who had independent Parliaments, when no other country in Europe had dreamt of representative institutions...we, who for centuries had been the pattern of popular liberty with all the world through our Parliamentary institutions, - we, under the spell of our Oriental dictator, were taught to trample our representative institutions under foot.[133]

England is here the historic home of freedom rather than the ancient oppressor of Ireland, whilst O'Connor, the Irish author, aligns himself with this tradition at the expense of the London-born, but 'oriental', Disraeli. Such positioning contrasts with *The Parnell Movement*, where T.P. is the Irish nationalist instructing an unenlightened English public on the failure of the very Parliament he pays homage to above. It is also a clear example of that identification with the English audience which the Irish-Irelanders would deplore.

As for O'Connor himself, the book's success lifted him out of obscurity and helped improve his finances. It would not be the last time he capitalised on heightened political circumstances by a timely publication.[134] More dramatically, it raised the possibility of him standing for Parliament in 1880. Although eventually elected as a Parnellite, T.P. originally looked to stand as a Radical and this is clear proof that Liberalism rather than nationalism had been his primary political allegiance in the late 1870s. (It shows that of the three men under consideration, O'Connor was the one whose early Liberal affiliations were the strongest.) Unsurprisingly, the book had raised his profile markedly in Liberal circles. Many Liberal candidates employed his powerful barbs during the election. As he had done with Gladstone, T.P. sent a proof copy of his biography to Sir Charles Dilke in February 1879, a fact which underlines his Radical proclivities. He then hoped, through the assistance of MPs like Dilke and A.J. Mundella, to stand for Dewsbury in the coming election as a Radical. However, this plan collapsed and instead he was given the chance to run as a Liberal in Derry City. In each case he tried to secure the nationalist vote and this brought him to the notice of both F.H. O'Donnell, the secretary of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, and Parnell. But Parnell would only agree to back T.P. if he stood as a Home Ruler in Galway City (his old university town). To this he assented, for Galway was a safer seat than anything the Liberals could offer.[135]

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[132] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, pp.9-11; *The Popular Dod*, 5th edn (London, 1880); *The Radical*, 4 Dec. 1880.
[133] O'Connor, *Lord Beaconsfield,* p.662.
[134] T.M. Healy, for example, referred to T.P. as 'Lord Beaconsfield's biographer' in October 1879 (*Letters and Leaders of My Day*, I, p.76) and McCarthy made a similar remark in his diary for 13 Dec. 1876 (see note 114 above). O'Connor eye for a sharp literary move can be seen most clearly with his *C.S. Parnell, A Life*, which appeared shortly after Parnell's death in October 1891.
[135] Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.57-8, 64-6; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.19-20; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.11; BL, Dilke Papers, ADD MSS 43, 910 fol. 252: O'Connor to Dilke, 12 Feb. 1879; MacDonagh, *The Home Rule Movement*, pp.137-8; O'Donnell, *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, I, pp.392-4; Healy, *Letters and Leaders*, I, p.76.

Moreover, Home Rule was far from uncongenial to O'Connor, since he had often advocated the idea at political meetings in the late 1870s (hence his attempts to gain the nationalist vote). By 1880 he knew Home Rule MPs like McCarthy and O'Donnell (he shared lodgings with the latter in the early 1870s) and had also met future Parnellites such as T.M. Healy.[136] His election as a Home Ruler was therefore not entirely lacking in foundation. Nevertheless, it was the outcome of a chain of events that began with hopes of a Radical nomination. In contrast, McCarthy's route to Parliament was unequivocally nationalist. T.P.'s Irish contemporaries were well aware of his Radical politics. Healy, for example, who was no lover of Radicalism, informed his brother Maurice in August 1880 that O'Connor was "more of an English Radical and only stood for an Irish constituency because he could not get elected for an English one." Similarly, O'Donnell, when asked about T.P. before the election, claims to have told Parnell: "I lost sight of O'Connor for some years, he seems to have grown an extreme Radical," a comment which reflects the way that O'Connor's Radicalism was a post-1876 development.[137]

Thus, like McCarthy and Barry O'Brien, T.P. entered the 1880s with considerable Liberal associations. With the two MPs this had meant a commitment to Liberal politics, an enthusiasm for Liberal causes. With O'Brien it had entailed the substitution of liberal rationalism for Fenianism. In all three cases the catalyst had been emigration to England, which, by increasing their political contact with Gladstone and Bright, had produced this strong Liberal strain to their identity. This would become important in 1886 when, after five years of chequered relations, the Home Rule alliance again brought nationalists and Liberals together. As London residents with Liberal links, these men, especially O'Brien and O'Connor, were well placed to benefit from the new conditions. These links helped make them suitable political partners in the eyes of the Gladstonians. In turn, co-operation with the Liberals must have possessed a natural appeal for the Irishmen. First, though, it is necessary to see how they fared in the chequered years between 1880 and 1885.

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[136] Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, p.7; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, pp.13-14, 70; McCarthy Papers, Diaries, 1 Nov., 13 Dec. 1876 (MS 3696), 22 Mar., 1 Aug. 1877 (MS 3697); Healy, *Letters and Leaders*, I, p.76.

[137] Healy, *Letters and Leaders*, I, p.98; Frank Callanan, *T.M. Healy* (Cork, 1996), p.115; O'Donnell, *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, I, p.393. See too William O'Brien, *Recollections* (pp.244-5).

3

"Against the Grain": responses to the Liberal-Parnellite divide of 1880-5

Between the granting of Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and the advent of the Home Rule party in 1874 the majority of Irish MPs tended to be supporters of the Whig/Liberal party, as they were normally more receptive towards Catholic demands than the Tories.[1] During the second half of the 1830s, for instance, Daniel O'Connell had suspended his campaign for repeal in order to pursue a raft of Irish reforms in tandem with the Whig government under Melbourne. It was a belated attempt to make the Union work. In the early 1850s relations with the Whigs broke down owing to Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill of 1851, the anti-Catholic bent of which alienated his Irish Whig followers. Along with the newly formed Tenant League, this resulted in the emergence of an Independent Irish Party at the 1852 election, pledged to a measure of tenant right and the principle of independent opposition. Yet the League and the Independents still forged links with the liberal ranks in the shape of the Radical section of Cobden and Bright. From 1849 to 1852 Irish issues were high on Bright's agenda and he urged co-operation between the Radicals and the Irish MPs on tenant right and Irish Church disestablishment.[2] By the late 1850s the Independents were reduced to a rump and the Whig-Tory divide again predominated in Ireland. In 1859 the Tories narrowly won the most Irish seats, but by the mid-1860s the Liberal hegemony in Ireland had been restored and it was confirmed in emphatic fashion in 1868 as Gladstone swept to power dedicated to Irish reform.

The Irish-Liberal alliance of the second half of the 1860s is worth exploring in a little more detail because of the way that it foreshadows the developments of the 1880s, especially the activities of O'Connor. The early stages of its formation - 1865-6 – are particularly interesting in this respect. The key figures were Bright and John Blake Dillon. Together, they sought to construct an anti-aristocratic reform alliance between popular Radicalism, as led by Bright, and Irish nationalists and Liberals, as led by Dillon. The two men encouraged the Irish to join the Radical campaign for franchise reform on the basis that a Parliament in which British popular opinion was properly represented

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[1] O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp.51-2.

[2] Robbins, *John Bright*, pp.82-5, 94-5; Trevelyan, *Bright*, pp.164-9. Bright's involvement in Irish affairs was curtailed by the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 and then in 1856 he suffered his first breakdown.

would make 'justice to Ireland' - on the church and land questions - one of its priorities after years of aristocratic misgovernment.[3] For Bright, it was the climax of his long-standing desire to enfranchise the working classes and a successful revival of his project of 1849-52. For Dillon, who became an MP in 1865, it was a return to Irish politics following his involvement with Young Ireland in the 1840s.

The initial move came in December 1865 when Dillon persuaded a conference of twenty-one Irish MPs to adopt a resolution in favour of co-operating with the 'advanced' section of the Liberal party so as to forward their 'common interests', including measures beneficial to Ireland. During the 1866 session Dillon made contact with Bright and the other Radicals, whose numbers had increased at the 1865 election, and then, at his behest, all but three of the Irish Liberal-nationalist MPs backed the second reading of the Liberal government's Reform Bill on 27 April. This marked the start of the Irish-Radical alliance (and the formal end of the Independent Party of 1852) and, albeit briefly, saved the Bill and its sponsors. Matters were sealed in October when Bright, fresh from marshalling the working class agitation for reform in Britain, was guest of honour at a banquet in Dublin. Unfortunately, Dillon had died suddenly the previous month, leaving Bright to press on without him. To cement Irish backing for the alliance, Bright stressed at the banquet, and throughout his visit, how Irish church and land measures depended upon reform.[4] Once reform was obtained in 1867 Bright strove to implement the next part of the alliance by pressing the case for Irish reform, both inside and outside Westminster, over the next two years, and especially during the run-up to the 1868 election. It was in this context that O'Connor saw him at Limerick in July 1868, where Bright's aim was to maximise Irish support for church disestablishment. By then the Irish cause seemed set for success owing to the adhesion of Gladstone, whose Irish Church resolutions of March 1868 Bright had helped frame.[5]

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[3] *Speeches by John Bright MP*, ed. Thorold Rogers, I, pp.361-91; *Morning Star*, 17 Oct. 1866; Emmet Larkin, *The Consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland*, pp.379-80.

[4] *Speeches by John Bright MP*, ed. Thorold Rogers, I, pp.361-91; *Morning Star*, 31 Oct. 1866; Robbins, *John Bright*, pp.186-7, 199; Brendan O'Cathaoir, *John Blake Dillon, Young Irelander* (Blackrock, 1990), pp.158-175; Larkin, *The Consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland*, pp.369-91; Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, pp.104-9, 139-60. An Irish Reform League was formed in 1867-8 (Bright was a vice-president) but it never operated on the same scale as its English or Scottish counterparts.

[5] *The Public Addresses of John Bright*, ed. Thorold Rogers, pp.69-138, 508-26; *Speeches by John Bright MP*, ed. Thorold Rogers, I, pp.393-437; Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, pp.146-7, 175; Robbins, *John Bright*, pp.199-207; Trevelyan, *Bright*, pp.393-5. Bright also pressed the Irish cause on Gladstone in private. Robbins (p.199) is wrong to portray Bright's Irish campaign of 1867-9 as only being pursued because the reform issue was exhausted. Rather, as argued here, it was part of the wider strategy conceived by him and Dillon in 1865-6 and was thus the inevitable next step for Bright, not a topic with which to fill the political void.

Bright and Dillon promoted their mutual reform project as a new and better kind of Union, being based on the popular feeling and democratic opinion of the two nations. It would be a Union of the two peoples in which acts of 'freedom' and 'justice' replaced the class legislation of the past. Appealing to the members of the Dublin Mechanics' Institute to join the alliance in 1866, Bright said: "I do not ask you to join hands with supremacy and oppression, whether in your island or ours. What I ask you is, to open your heart of hearts, and join hands for a real and thorough working union for freedom with the people of Great Britain."[6] At the heart of their plan was obviously a faith in the Irish sympathies of the British working classes, who, having been denied the franchise hitherto, were seen as untainted by previous British misrule. At Glasgow in October 1866 Bright said:

> I should like to tell the Irish people...there is no disposition on the part of the people of Great Britain...to do them injustice. The injustice they have suffered has been from the governing classes in England and...in Ireland. It has not been from the people of the United Kingdom, and the more rapidly and the more entirely the nation of the three kingdoms is admitted to its fair share of Parliamentary power, the more rapidly and completely will justice be done to Ireland...and for the whole people of the United Kingdom.[7]

Similarly, in August that year, during what proved to be his final speech in Parliament, Dillon declared his belief in the English people and the 'new' Union:

> I trust – not whig or tory – but the English people. I believe their instincts are sound and generous; I believe their cause is our cause; I believe they would do us justice if they could. The speeches delivered by their trusted leaders in this house...have sunk into the heart of Ireland, and awakened there a hope to which it had long been a stranger – the hope that Irish freedom is not incompatible with British connexion.[8]

Such faith was to seem justified: working class Radicals responded enthusiastically to the Bright-Gladstone Irish Church campaign of spring 1868 and at the general election that November the newly enfranchised voters gave Gladstone's proposed Irish reforms a comprehensive endorsement.[9]

A notable supporter of the Irish-Radical alliance was John Stuart Mill. With its belief in the goodwill of the British democracy towards Ireland and its aim of creating a Union of consent rather than force, the Bright-Dillon initiative corresponded closely with Mill's views. He felt that the British democracy would not tolerate a Union based on perpetual coercion. An MP in 1865-8, Mill, like Bright, became friends with Dillon during the 1866 session and was also invited to Ireland that autumn, but could not go. In 1868 he briefly,

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[6] *Speeches by John Bright MP*, ed. Thorold Rogers, I, p.385; Robbins, *John Bright*, pp.186-7. Later Bright wrote that it was probably the first time for years that "anyone could have spoken in favour of the union" at "an open meeting" in Dublin. He voiced similar feelings about a 'new' union during his Limerick speech in 1868. The Bright-Dillon project buttresses Comerford's contention that Irish Church disestablishment was as much a new start for the Union as a portent of its doom (*The Fenians in Context*, pp.164-5). In this sense the Irish-Liberal alliance of the 1860s was the successor to O'Connell's 1830s compact with the Whigs.

[7] *Morning Star*, 17 Oct. 1866.

[8] Quoted in O'Cathaoir, *John Blake Dillon*, p.171.

[9] Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp.234-41.

and controversially, went much further even than Bright in his idea of the changes needed in the Irish land system to secure the 'new' union.[10] Among the Irish backers of the alliance were The O'Donoghue, an old Independent Party leader, Sir John Gray, a prominent Irish Liberal, and J.F. Maguire. Another important participant was Justin McCarthy. With contacts on both sides, he helped knit the alliance together. A friend of Bright and Maguire, he also came to know Mill and Dillon in the 1860s, the latter frequently visiting him at the *Morning Star* office to discuss his plan.[11] He of course shared the confidence of these men in the Irish sympathies of the British democracy and his role was to promote the alliance in the *Morning Star*, where he duly emphasised the "inseparable connection" between franchise reform and "justice for Ireland." For McCarthy, it was a "most desirable political project". Certainly, it allowed him to eloquently express his own dual political identity.[12]

Once in office Gladstone tried to give legislative effect to the Irish part of the alliance. Rather inevitably, this is where the difficulties began. Whilst his first measure, the 1869 Irish Church Disestablishment Bill, was well received, his second instalment of 'justice to Ireland', the 1870 Land Act, did not meet Irish hopes, which had been shrewdly inflated by Isaac Butt.[13] Along with the national sentiment generated by the Amnesty issue (and the Protestant reaction to disestablishment), this agrarian setback gave Butt the impetus to launch the Home Rule movement in May 1870. By then the alliance had also been sapped by an illness to Bright (now a Cabinet minister) which forced him out of politics for three years.[14] The final blow came in 1873 when the Irish MPs voted down Gladstone's third Irish reform, his University Bill, because it failed to meet Catholic demands. The Irish-Liberal combination had reached a sour end and this was confirmed at the 1874 election by the emergence of the Home Rule party. Even so, when the Liberals returned to power in 1880 there were still grounds for believing a *modus vivendi* could be reached between them and the Irish MPs. Despite continuing problems over education, six years of shared

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[10] Mill, *England and Ireland*, pp.20-6, 41-4; *Morning Star*, 31 Oct. 1866; O'Cathaoir, *John Blake Dillon*, p.166; Larkin, *The Consolidation of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland*, pp.372-3. Mill wanted the government to give tenants 'possession' of their farms by granting them fixity of tenure at a fair rent. For a full discussion of this episode, see E.D. Steele, "J.S. Mill and the Irish Question": The Principles of Political Economy, 1848-65", *Historical Journal*, 13 (1970), pp.216-36, and "J.S. Mill and the Irish Question: Reform, and the Integrity of the Empire, 1865-70", *Historical Journal*, 21 (1970), pp.419-50.

[11] Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, pp.139-42; *Morning Star*, 31 Oct. 1866; McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, I, pp.104-16, II, pp.374-6.

[12] *Morning Star*, 1 Nov. 1866; McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, II, pp.374-6.

[13] Alvin Jackson, *Ireland, 1798-1998* (Oxford, 1999), p.107; Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, pp.179-80.

opposition had improved relations. Many of the Home Rulers in 1874-80 were essentially Liberals, having been elected as such before and a good number of those elected in 1880 (like O'Connor and McCarthy) again had strong Liberal-Radical links. The Liberals and Home Rulers were also pushed closer together during the election by Disraeli's anti-Irish manifesto, which forced the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain to instruct the Irish in Britain to vote against the Tories.[15] Finally, following his triumphant Midlothian campaign, Gladstone, Ireland's champion, was once again Prime Minister.[16]

But less than a year after taking office any optimism the Liberals had possessed had been shattered by the agrarian crisis in Ireland and the accompanying Land War. Instead of constructive relations between them and the Home Rulers there was mutual hostility. The Parnellites, mobilised by Irish distress and angered by the resort to coercion, were in a combative mood, whilst the Liberals, dismayed by agrarian violence and Parliamentary obstruction, and disturbed by Fenian involvement in the Land League, saw the Parnellites as the spearhead of revolutionary separatism. As the case of Bright shows, even those with known Irish sympathies could succumb to the prevailing bitterness. When the first signs of this reversal of past Liberal-Irish relations occurred in 1880 new Liberal MPs like James Bryce were taken aback. This was not what they had expected.[17] For nationalist Ireland, though, this conflict with their historical allies was evidence that their MPs were at last evolving into a truly independent party.[18]

The important issue here is how this situation impacted on O'Connor, McCarthy and O'Brien. They were Irishmen whose political identity was principally nationalist (or in O'Connor's case was becoming so), but who, to varying degrees, were also associated with Liberalism. Further, as London residents they were in the midst of the party strife. How, then, did they adjust to a situation in which the two parts of their political identities were suddenly at odds when they were accustomed to their compatibility? McCarthy and

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[14] Robbins, *John Bright*, pp.209-15. Bright left London shortly before the introduction of the Land Bill on 15 February 1870.

[15] O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp.52-3; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.39-50. Most Parnellite MPs in 1880 called themselves 'Liberals' in *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*, just as the bulk of Irish MPs under Butt had done (MacDonagh, *The Home Rule Movement*, p.146).

[16] Gladstone had blotted his reputation amongst Irish Catholics by his anti-Vatican tracts of 1874-5, but in 1877 he repaired the damage somewhat by making his first and only visit to Ireland (see John Vincent, *Gladstone and Ireland*, Proceedings of the British Academy, London, vol. lxiii (1977), pp.204-8).

[17] Writing in 1887, Bryce said: Full of our own good intentions, we thought it contrary to nature that Irish members should worry us, their friends, as they had worried Tories, their hereditary enemies" (James Bryce, "How We Became Home Rulers", in James Bryce (ed.) *Handbook of Home Rule* (London, 1887), p.29). The Irish Party were doubtless equally surprised to find a Gladstone-Bright ministry using coercion.

[18] "The nine weeks Coercion struggle made the Irish Party", wrote O'Connor in *The Parnell Movement* in 1886 (p.444).

O'Connor especially had strong social and political links with the Liberals and Radicals. Were these ties summarily ended or were they able to maintain a connection across the apparent divide? Of the three, O'Connor is explored in the most detail. This is because his political movements in this period were arguably the most interesting and dramatic. What he tried to achieve at the start of the decade looked forward to the Home Rule campaign of 1886-93 in an important way. In comparison, McCarthy and O'Brien's politics were more stable. In O'Brien's case, he had the advantage of not being an MP, which meant that he was less exposed to the political battle. Having no formal party links, he did not face the same difficulties in maintaining Liberal contacts.

In 1880 T.P. O'Connor was an active London Radical. By the close of 1885 he was the author of an explosive anti-Liberal manifesto exhorting the Irish in Britain to vote against those who had washed their hands in Irish and Egyptian blood. In literary terms, this shift is clear. The later chapters of his 1886 book, *The Parnell Movement*, constitute as strong an indictment of the Liberal ministry of 1880-5 as his *Lord Beaconsfield* does of Disraeli. Instead of penning an electoral tool for the Liberals, O'Connor was attempting to convert his English readers to Home Rule. For T.P., the salient feature of 1880-5 was seemingly a bold switch from Radicalism to nationalism. Ultimately, this was the case. After election as a Parnellite MP, he perhaps could not stay as close to the Radical movement as before. Yet, for his first two years in parliament this is exactly what O'Connor tried to do. During 1880 he continued to participate in Radical politics and towards its close his aim became to create a nationalist-Radical front that would force the Liberal government to meet the Irish agitation with extensive land reform, not coercion. Moreover, he stressed how they could then use an Irish land settlement as the springboard for securing drastic land reform in England. The 'feudal oligarchy' would be smashed in Britain as well as Ireland. Rather than choosing between the two sides of his identity, he tried to bring them together so as to benefit both. Like the Dewsbury episode, O'Connor excludes this Irish-Radical project from his *Memoirs*, but it loomed large in his thinking from late 1880 until mid-1881. In taking this approach, he was clearly reviving the Bright-Dillon idea of an Irish-Radical reform alliance against the aristocracy, an idea which, after all, he had seen in action at Limerick in 1868. That Bright this time played a destructive part helped fuel T.P.'s later attack upon the man whose precedent he had followed.

O'Connor's break with Radicalism, then, was not immediate. Although a Parnellite MP, his actions still reflected his London Radical background. Even the sight of Radical

MPs supporting the Liberal government's coercion policy in February 1881 did not lead him to sever his links with Radicalism as a whole. In fact, as Brady has said, it was not until 1882, and after his return from America, that a clear change can be seen.[19] By then O'Connor's identity was more firmly nationalist and his distance from the wider Radical movement, as well as the Liberal and Radical MPs, more pronounced. But, significantly, his Radical principles would not be wholly discarded. Many of the attacks on the Liberal government in *The Parnell Movement*, for instance, are made from a liberal or democratic standpoint.[20] Nor were his Liberal ties cut completely; some channels of communication were kept open. Whilst, therefore, the eventual outcome of this period was a change from Radicalism to nationalism, other important elements were also involved and these will be the focus here.

In April 1880 Samuel Bennett organised a dinner under the auspices of the Lambeth Radical Association to congratulate T.P. on his election to Parliament.[21] In the ensuing session O'Connor fully justified their confidence in him, as Radical concerns generally loomed larger for T.P. than pressing the government over Ireland. As he admitted later, he initially trusted a ministry led by Gladstone, his political god, and it took some time for him to accept that a more assertive attitude was required from the Parnellites.[22] The first display of his Radicalism came in May when he strongly supported Charles Bradlaugh's attempt to take his Commons seat even though Catholic opinion – and most of the Irish Party – bitterly opposed the atheist. He had been sent to Parliament on political grounds, T.P. declared, not as a "champion of the faith".[23] It was an early sign that involvement with Radical politics had undermined his Catholicism and the vagueness of his religious beliefs would become increasingly apparent in future decades. Other Irish MPs to back Bradlaugh included Parnell, J.J. O'Kelly and, unsurprisingly, Justin McCarthy, who was defending an old Radical associate.[24] But Irish support for Bradlaugh not only stemmed

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[19] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.51.
[20] See below pp.102-3.
[21] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.48; NLI, MS 3460: five letters to Samuel Bennett (all April 1880) from various correspondents regarding Lambeth Radical Association dinner for O'Connor, fols.45-59.
[22] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, pp.77-8. In *Dod's Parliamentary Companion* that year, T.P. described himself as 'an advanced Radical' rather than an Irish nationalist (MacDonagh, *The Home Rule Movement*, p.146).
[23] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.48-9; Walter A. Arnstein, *The Bradlaugh Case* (London, 1965), pp.205-9; O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp.121-2. T.P.'s advocacy of Bradlaugh's claims led to him being denounced by a priest in his Galway constituency.
[24] O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, pp.49-50; O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, p.121.

from the Radicalism of MPs like O'Connor and McCarthy; it was also due to Bradlaugh's long-standing sympathy for Irish grievances.[25]

In July came the first blow to T.P.'s trust in the Liberal party with the 'revolt' of the Whigs over the government's Compensation for Disturbance Bill for evicted Irish tenants. By the end of August he was even starting to doubt Radical backing for the Irish cause.[26] Nevertheless, O'Connor continued to assert his own Radical credentials. On 26 August he declared his Radical faith in Parliament, having earlier that month tabled a motion in the Commons demanding the abolition of the Lords after they had overwhelmingly rejected the Compensation for Disturbance Bill. Bradlaugh aided the motion inside Parliament, whilst outside the London Radical Clubs mustered in support. Led by F.W. Soutter, who was honorary secretary of the organising committee, a body of Radical delegates met at Westminster on 23 August to urge that O'Connor's motion be pressed to a division. Their numbers were such they moved to the Westminster Palace Hotel, where T.P. spoke to an enthusiastic audience. The next stage in this campaign was a rally in Trafalgar Square in September. Here, O'Connor was aided by O'Kelly and John Barry. Designed to elicit both "radical and Irish support", it was an indication of things to come.[27] T.P.'s Radical priorities were also evident in a periodical article he wrote in June. Entitled "The Rule of the Purse", it criticised the fact that the 1867 Reform Act had not led to the expected growth in labour parliamentary representation and blamed the high cost of elections, which left the Commons full of unintelligent businessmen and landlords. T.P. mentions his own campaigning on behalf of working class candidates and also includes a sharp aside about the "Tamanay Ring which weighs upon the people of London." This shows that through his contact with London Radicalism he was fully aware of the unreformed

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[25] Bradlaugh's connection with Irish affairs went back to 1867 when, as a prominent Radical and known sympathiser with continental nationalism, he was approached by Fenian leaders in London in the hope that he would back their rising. He did not share their separatist aims, either then or later, but did defend the Fenian prisoners. He supported Irish Church disestablishment and land reform and expected the reformed Parliament to carry out the necessary changes in Ireland, but subsequent disappointment with Gladstone's Irish legislation of 1869-70 led him to declare his support for Home Rule in 1872. At the 1880 election he again pledged his commitment to Home Rule (Arnstein, *The Bradlaugh Case*, pp.17, 207; Fergus D'Arcy, "Charles Bradlaugh and the Irish Question: A Study in the Nature and Limits of British Radicalism, 1853-91", in Art Cosgrove and Donal McCartney (eds.), *Studies in Irish History presented to R. Dudley Edwards* (Dublin, 1979), pp.232-51).

[26] Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.149-51; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.52. During the debate on the Irish constabulary estimates that month T.P. expressed his disappointment at the lack of help for the Irish from the Radical benches, reminding them of the services he had rendered the Radical cause in the Bradlaugh struggle (*Hansard*, 3rd series, 1880, cclvi, 221-24).

[27] *Hansard*, 3rd series, 1880, cclvi, 221-24; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.48-52; Arnstein, *The Bradlaugh Case*, p.85; Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, pp.171-5; O'Donnell, *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, I, pp.483-4; O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, p.62.

nature of local government in the capital. Later in the decade, when his scope for effective action was immeasurably greater, he returned to this subject with zeal.[28]

For the moment, O'Connor's actions in 1880 showed two main things. Firstly, that F.H O'Donnell was right to identify him as a central link between the Parnellites and the parliamentary Radicals at this time.[29] Secondly, those Irish observers who had noted T.P.'s Radicalism at an early stage, like O'Donnell and Healy, had had their impressions emphatically confirmed. During his first year in Parliament O'Connor's Radical standing had not only been maintained but even strengthened, and his profile among the London Radical Clubs was now even higher. However, it was outside Westminster that he forged one of his most important Radical connections. This was John Morley. After becoming a Parnellite MP, O'Connor feared that due to the political nature of the late Victorian press the unpopularity of his new nationalist identity would destroy his journalistic chances. The "banging of the doors of every journal in his face" was the fate he expected. Initially, his anxieties were confirmed when the Conservative *Scotsman* released him, but soon afterwards he secured the desirable post of parliamentary sketch writer for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which had passed from Conservative to Liberal hands after the general election. Yates Thompson was the new proprietor and John Morley its prominent Liberal editor.[30]

The possible reasons behind O'Connor's appointment are worth considering. On one level he was simply a talented writer who, through his election to Parliament, was ideally placed to act as a parliamentary sketch writer. In this sense becoming a Parnellite MP was an advantage, not an obstacle. Politically, the reason might appear, at first sight, to be Morley's noted Irish sympathies.[31] Not sharing the prejudice towards nationalists of his fellow editors, Morley was not frightened by T.P.'s Parnellite tag. That it was a sensitive issue is suggested by O'Connor's claim that Morley withheld his name from the public.[32] Yet this reading agrees too much with T.P.'s image of Fleet Street hostility towards the Parnellites. It makes his appointment an exception to the rule owing to Morley's Irish opinions and this is a false picture, for, as seen earlier, other papers certainly employed

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[28] O'Connor, "The Rule of the Purse", *Contemporary Review*, June 1880, p.1002. *The Radical*, for example, a newspaper with which T.P. had links (see below pp.84-6), carried an article on "Home Rule for London" on 16 July 1881. See Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp.240-6 for the problems of the Labour Representation League in the 1870s.

[29] O'Donnell, *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, I, p.486.

[30] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, pp.35-50; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.69; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.50.

[31] F.W. Hirst, *The Early Life and Letters of John Morley* (2 vols., London, 1927), I, pp.121-31; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.35-45. In the late 1860s Morley had supported Gladstone's call for 'Irish ideas' to be the basis of Irish government and then, as editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, he repeated this prescription when Irish affairs returned to the forefront a decade later.

[32] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.50.

Parnellite MPs in these years.[33] Indeed, according to Healy, O'Connor was also working for the *Echo* and *Vanity Fair* in 1880 and said he was "making at the rate of £1,200 a year and that a few years ago he was starving."[34] T.P.'s contention, then, does not hold up. Becoming a Parnellite MP did not unduly harm one's Fleet Street career. Given this, the political dimensions of his *Pall Mall Gazette* appointment are perhaps best assessed from another angle. Here, the vital factor is O'Connor's Radicalism, not Morley's Irish politics. Through the Disraeli biography and his connection with Dilke, Morley was arguably fully aware of T.P.'s Radicalism, and so despite the Irishman's recently acquired Parnellism he knew O'Connor was well suited to a Liberal paper.[35] Whatever the truth, by introducing him to Morley, T.P.'s new post had increased his links with advanced Liberalism and he would soon try to turn these to account.

During the 1880 recess the Irish agrarian crisis escalated rapidly, with violent crime and boycotting both increasing sharply. Reflecting the concerns of moderate Liberals and Whigs, and even some middle class Radicals, W.E. Forster, the Irish Secretary, and Lord Cowper, the Viceroy, pressed in mid-November for a special session of Parliament in order to enact coercion. However, the Radicals within the Cabinet, Chamberlain and (his reversal yet to come) Bright, opposed this idea, as did Dilke from the outside. Dilke and Chamberlain would only agree to coercion if combined with an extensive Irish land bill. Gladstone was also unconvinced about suspending habeas corpus. At Birmingham on 16 November Bright and Chamberlain condemned coercion outright, with Bright declaring: "force is not a remedy." Their defiance paid off. On 25 November the Cabinet decided not to recall Parliament until January. By then coercion and land reform could, if desired, be tackled together. For now, Forster had to be content with the state prosecution for conspiracy he had begun against Parnell and the other Land League leaders in October.[36]

It was at this time, with rumours circulating of Forster's views and the resistance to them, that O'Connor launched his mutual reform alliance of Irish nationalists and British Radicals. Thus, at this stage he still had faith in Gladstone and the Cabinet Radicals, but was wary of the Whig majority in the ministry and, as a journalist, felt Fleet Street fuelled

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[33] See p.14 above. F.H. O'Donnell, for example, was working for the *Morning Post* at this time, whilst Justin McCarthy continued to work for the *Daily News*. See pp.111 below for more on the latter.
[34] Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day*, I, p.98.
[35] O'Connor's Radicalism had been made clear to Dilke in 1879-80 (p.61 above).
[36] Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, pp.416-30; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.54-60; Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.152, 180; J.L. Garvin and Julian Amery, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, (6 vols., London, 1932-69), I (1932), pp.319-32.

the clamour for coercion by printing exaggerated reports of the scale of 'outrages'.[37] He hoped the alliance would counter the threat of such forces - not to mention the indignant Tories - by ensuring its call for land reform outweighed their cry for coercion. By rallying Radical opinion he aimed to strengthen the hand of Gladstone and the Cabinet Radicals in their apparent opposition to repression. Before exploring the details of T.P.'s campaign a number of points have to be examined. Firstly, on what grounds could he hope to gain British Radical support for his alliance and what elements of Radicalism did he rely most upon? Secondly, how did his Irish nationalist contemporaries respond to his initiative? And, thirdly, how have Irish historians hitherto treated the subject of Irish-Radical co-operation during the Land War? The first of these requires the most extensive treatment as it helps further illuminate the way that emigration shaped O'Connor's outlook.

The most obvious reason for Radicals to support O'Connor's alliance was its call for English land reform, as this issue had a prominent place within the Radical agenda. The break up of the landed aristocracy in Britain was a mainstay of Radicalism, being seen as both a social necessity (restoring a 'yeomanry' to the soil would end the imbalance between town and country) and a political one (the system of power and influence which attended landed property needed dismantling). This struggle against the aristocracy was depicted as the final battle against 'feudalism'. It was a democratic crusade, the 'people' - which translated as the 'industrial orders' of employers and workers - versus 'privilege'.[38] As his 1860s alliance suggests, Bright was a central figure here. Ever since the Anti-Corn Law League agitation of the 1840s he had attacked the aristocratic land system and sought to unite the middle and working classes in an assault upon 'privilege'. He wanted to replace the aristocratic monopoly with 'free trade in land' so as to facilitate the desired 'yeomanry.' Latterly, the 'free land' cause had been taken up by Chamberlain.[39] In his advocacy of English land reform, therefore, T.P. was not only in line with his fellow

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[37] *The Radical*, 4 Dec. 1880 (speech by O'Connor at Birmingham, 30 Nov.); O'Connor, "The Land League and Its Work", *Contemporary Review*, Dec. 1880, pp.981-99. The reason for this 'misinformation' in the English press, said O'Connor, was that the Irish correspondents of the London press were all from landlord papers. He cites the example of the *Times*, whose Irish correspondent worked for the Dublin *Daily Express* (pp.995-6). O'Connor's concern at the Whigs in the Cabinet was of course heightened by the 'revolt' over the Compensation for Disturbance Bill.

[38] Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp.11-18, 50-60, 84-93, 184-91; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.15-16.

[39] Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp.12, 51-2, 184-91; Trevelyan, *Bright*, pp.16-17, 124-8, 141-2, 177-83, 267-73, 337, 365-8; Robbins, *John Bright*, pp.61-80; *The Public Addresses of John Bright*, ed. Thorold Rogers, pp.120-87; Garvin, *Joseph Chamberlain*, I, pp.147-69, 218-21, 245. To achieve 'free trade in land' (i.e. the cheap and easy transfer of land), Bright proposed to abolish primogeniture and the laws of settlement and entail. Chamberlain reiterated these demands from 1872-3 onwards and then, in the

Radicals but again following Bright's lead. His strategy was designed to exploit the fact that Radical action on the issue seemed imminent. The prevailing agricultural depression had stimulated Radical demands for English land reform and the Farmers Alliance, a Radical group, had been active at the 1880 election. The English land crisis was felt to be at hand, not just the Irish. Radical interest was further fuelled by the 1880 publication of what soon became the new land reform gospel, Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*.[40]

Whilst T.P.'s desire for English land reform was sincere, making it the ultimate aim was a way to solidify Radical backing for the immediate goal of Irish land reform. But even without this added inducement the chances of Radical backing for the latter seemed high, as Radical hostility towards British landlords naturally led to hostility towards their Irish counterparts, whose social, economic and political dominance appeared greater still. Accordingly, they were considered to represent 'feudalism' at its worst. To Radicals, the plight of the Irish tenants was a perfect example of how the landlord control of power and wealth had devastating consequences for the rest of the community. The 'horrors of Irish evictions' were depicted in Radical journals. It was this progression from antipathy towards aristocracy in Britain to revulsion at its extreme application in Ireland which lay at the root of Bright's call for Irish land reform. O'Connor would try to stoke the Radical dislike of Irish landlords by denouncing them in lurid terms. Also in his favour was the fact that Radicals saw land reform as their best point of contact with Irish nationalists because, unlike the education issue, it did not raise awkward religious questions.[41]

Radical ideology, then, was certainly well-disposed to the type of mutual land reform alliance T.P. wished to create, but was there any specific evidence of Radical backing for such an idea? Again, there were encouraging signs for O'Connor. In February 1880 the inaugural meeting of the Land Law Reform League took place in London and this Radical gathering seemed to presage exactly what he desired. Delegates from the London Trades Council, the Land Tenure Reform Association and various trade unions attended, along

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early 1880s, began to call for the compulsory purchase of land by future local authorities in order to create the 'yeomanry' smallholdings.

[40] Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp, 82-3, 143-4, 162-4; Pamela Horn, *Joseph Arch* (Kineton, 1971), pp.157-8; Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, pp.413-14; Henry Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party, 1880-1900*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1965), pp.9-10, 18-21, 36. George's work emphasised the injustice that accompanied the private ownership of land and proposed the remedy of a single land tax. This would allow the whole community to benefit from the land – which was its right – rather than just individuals. The book was first issued in a limited 'author's edition' in 1879, but it was only with the regular edition of 1880 that it began to make an impact. Its influence grew rapidly over the next few years, with George himself visiting Britain and Ireland to promote his ideas.

with Michael Davitt and Patrick Egan on behalf of the Land League. The outcome was a united assault on 'landlordism'. At the main conference a series of resolutions on English land reform were carried and then at a public meeting afterwards, where Davitt spoke, support was declared for Irish efforts to destroy "feudalism" in their "native land." A key figure behind this co-operative spirit was the chairman, Charles Bradlaugh, who had long favoured English and Irish 'democrats' combining to 'break-up' the great landed estates.[42]

However, despite such promising indications, both in practice and theory, O'Connor's confidence in Radicalism was by no means unqualified in late 1880. Essentially, he had reservations about the middle class, parliamentary wing of the movement. During 1879-80 there had been signs of support for Irish land reform from this quarter. At the 1880 election, for example, nearly all the Radicals MPs stressed Irish land reform in their manifesto, with Bradlaugh, the champion of Irish-Radical co-operation over land, among those returned. The year before John Morley had urged a Radical-nationalist alliance on Irish land reform in the *Fortnightly Review*.[43] Personal contact with Morley on the *Pall Mall Gazette* probably reinforced T.P.'s sense of middle class Radical sympathy towards Ireland, as did earlier connections like Atherley-Jones, who was an old friend of Irish nationalism.[44] Nevertheless, by the autumn of 1880 whatever faith he had possessed in parliamentary Radicalism had been undermined. Doubts had first surfaced in August and by the end of the session O'Connor had decided Radicalism in the Commons was not especially strong. At Birmingham on 30 November he dismissed the idea that the new Parliament was Radical as a "delusion", claiming "there were not twenty Radicals in the

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[41] Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp.53-58; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.18-19, 42-45; Horn, *Joseph Arch*, p.86; *The Public Addresses of John Bright*, ed. Thorold Rogers, pp.55, 130; Trevelyan, *Bright*, pp.164-5; Robbins, *John Bright*, p.83.

[42] *The Times*, 11 Feb. 1880; *Daily News*, 11 Feb. 1880; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.47-8; Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, p.366; D'Arcy, "Charles Bradlaugh and the Irish Question", pp.245-7. The conference resolutions show that Bright's 'free land' cry was still the main aim of Radical land reformers. An amendment in favour of land nationalisation was rejected and Bradlaugh's proposals – abolition of primogeniture, entail and the Game Laws, and the reclamation of wasteland – adopted instead. However, a graduated land tax was also endorsed and, owing to Henry George, schemes for taxing landed property or income became increasingly popular with Radicals in the 1880s.

[43] Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.39-50; D'Arcy, "Charles Bradlaugh and the Irish Question", pp.250-1; Garvin, *Joseph Chamberlain*, I, pp.273-4. Morley's public appeals followed private contact between Parnell and Chamberlain and Dilke in early 1879. The Radical leaders were looking to arrange an understanding between Radicals and nationalists in advance of the next election.

[44] Atherley-Jones, *Looking Back*, pp.10-27, 59. Jones inherited his sympathy for Irish nationalism from his Chartist father, Ernest Jones, a well-known supporter of Repeal. The younger Jones was an early adherent to Home Rule in the 1870s and his election as Liberal MP for Durham North-West in 1885 was aided by the fact that his Irish record (along with his father's reputation) won him the Irish vote despite the Parnellite anti-Liberal manifesto.

whole 650."[45] This illustrates, along with his distrust of the Cabinet Whigs, how the realities of the session had sapped his initial confidence in the Liberal party. The calls for coercion emanating from middle class Radicals, and certain sections of the Liberal press, were another reason for his disquiet.[46] As a result, notwithstanding his continuing belief in Gladstone and the Cabinet Radicals, T.P. was loath to rely solely on the parliamentary, middle class section of the movement.

Instead, he looked to galvanise the forces of popular Radicalism. His main objective was to win working class support. This concern became even greater after February 1881, for by then parliamentary Radicals had acquiesced in the government's coercion policy, fulfilling O'Connor's fears and leaving the working class activists as his only allies. Further, at this stage Parnell himself was talking of "widening the agitation...to include the English masses."[47] This emphasis on popular support reflected the fact that O'Connor's Radical links were still mainly with the working class clubs and associations. But, more significantly, it showed that, with Irish land reform the primary objective, he was another with belief in the Irish sympathies of the British democracy. He had a "large amount of confidence in the working classes", O'Connor said at Birmingham.[48] The vital question is how had he acquired this faith? In answering this, the understandably crucial role of emigration will become apparent. Two other points must be noted. Firstly, T.P. was not alone here. As will be seen, other Irish nationalist emigrants had undergone a similar process, not least McCarthy.[49] Secondly, O'Connor's faith in the British democracy not only lay behind his Irish-Radical alliance of 1880-1 but naturally underpinned his later Home Rule campaign too.

The clearest way emigration facilitated this faith in O'Connor was by drawing him into Liberal-Radical politics, which exposed him both to the belief in, and the reality of, working class goodwill towards Ireland. As seen above, the belief went back to the 1860s. It was part of the wider confidence in the political 'capacity' of the working class which fuelled Liberal support for reform, 'capacity' being defined as placing moral values and public needs before class interests. As an established advocate of reform, Bright had long

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[45] *The Radical*, 4 Dec. 1880. Interestingly, T.P.'s view of the non-Radical nature of the 1880 Parliament has been reasserted more recently by T.A. Jenkins (*Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.143-4).
[46] Writing in *The Radical* (4 Dec.) O'Connor said: "It even seemed possible some weeks ago that English Radicals would have committed the big blunder...of joining in the demand for coercive legislation." See pp.85-6 below for more on this article. For his complaints against the Liberal press, see his Birmingham speech (30 Nov.) and "The Land League and its Work", *Contemporary Review*, Dec. 1880, p.991-5.
[47] O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, pp.61-2. See pp.94-5 below for more on Parnell's declaration.
[48] *The Radical*, 4 Dec. 1880.
[49] With McCarthy, it was of course a case of emigration supplementing an existing belief. See p.107 below.

stressed the 'capacity' of the working men and treated them as part of the 'people', or 'nation', rather than as a class threat.[50] For Gladstone, and younger liberals like Bryce, A.V. Dicey and T.H. Green, it was in the 1860s that they adopted this view and declared their backing for franchise reform.[51] The campaign for 'justice to Ireland' induced faith in the masses as it conformed to this moral framework and such faith could be buttressed by emphasising, as Bright did, how they were not responsible for past mistreatment. It was then of course vindicated by Gladstone's 1868 election triumph. Gladstone, Morley and Bryce carried their belief in a 'virtuous' democracy into the 1880s (it had been reaffirmed by the popular support for Gladstone's Bulgarian crusade of the late 1870s and his subsequent election victory) and so with it the belief that that democracy was well-disposed towards Ireland, the latter being reasserted in the context of further franchise reform and the onset of Home Rule. In 1884 Bryce redrew Bright's contrast between the previous class rule of Ireland and the democratic present, in which the British people, with their "love of justice", wanted to "do right by Ireland."[52] For him and Morley, their opinion, like Mill, that a democracy would not coerce indefinitely was central to their eventual embrace of Home Rule, helping make it the only viable policy.[53]

O'Connor's confidence in the working classes over Ireland thus reflected an existing Liberal ideology in which such confidence fitted a 'moral' vision of democratic politics (though for many liberals in the 1880s the democratic ideals of the 1860s were coming

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[50] Trevelyan, *Bright*, pp.60-63, 112-14, 177-8, 268-78, 352-68; Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp.258-61, 375-9. "They never wish to inflict injustice", Bright declared of the British people in 1866 (*Speeches by John Bright MP*, ed. Thorold Rogers, I, p.376). By 'people' he meant the Radical anti-aristocratic alliance of working and middle classes (see pp.73-4 above). In Bright's opinion, it was the 'corrupt' aristocracy who acted according to class rather than public interest.

[51] Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, pp.128-42; Biagini, *Gladstone*, pp.43-5; Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp.50-83, 103-6, 258-61, 379-425; Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.28-9; Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, pp.113-14, 148-62. For many Liberals, including Gladstone, belief in the political 'capacity' of the working classes stemmed from the U.S. Civil War and working class support for the North. Another factor for Gladstone and Nonconformists Liberals was the Protestant view that the 'people' were the section of the community most activated by conviction rather than selfishness, for in their case man's sinful nature was modified by powerlessness and hard work.

[52] James Bryce, *England and Ireland* (London, 1884), pp.50-52; Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.157-247, 334-44; Biagini, *Gladstone*, p.61-5; Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, p.193. For Bryce, see also his "Alternative Policies in Ireland", *Nineteenth Century*, February 1886 (esp. p.327) and his speech on the 1886 Home Rule Bill (17 May), where he speaks of the "new sympathy" between English democracy and Ireland (Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce, 217/3). For Morley on the English people's love of 'fair play', see his *The Life of Gladstone*, (2 vols., London, 1908), II, pp.411, 465.

[53] Bryce, "Alternative Policies in Ireland" (pp.318-21); Bryce, speech (17 May) on 1886 Home Rule Bill (MSS Bryce, 217/3); Harvie, "Ideology and Home Rule: James Bryce, A.V. Dicey and Ireland, 1880-87," *English Historical Review*, xci (1976), pp.310-14; Peatling, *British Opinion and Irish self-government*, pp.33-49. "Any popular leader denouncing coercion was certain to have the sentiment of the English masses with him", wrote Bryce in 1887 (Bryce, "How We Became Home Rulers", in Bryce (ed.), *Handbook of Home Rule*, p.45), drawing on his experience of his own Tower Hamlets constituents.

under strain[54]). Whilst T.P.'s outlook in 1880-1 was no doubt stimulated by this ideology - he was, after all, in contact with Morley - its impact was probably greater after 1886, when Gladstone would celebrate working class support for Home Rule in his rallying cry of the 'masses against the classes'. In any case, through his own participation in the Eastern agitation, not to mention his working class Radical friends, he had first-hand experience of the 'virtuous' nature of the masses. He hoped that, having responded to the moral appeal of a nationality resisting metropolitan oppression, the British democracy would be similarly moved by the spectacle of the Irish people battling landlord 'tyranny'. But T.P.'s faith in working class sympathy for Ireland was not simply reliant upon their political 'capacity', either in theory or practice. He also had more concrete reasons, being able to cite evidence of considerable working class sympathy for the Irish cause.[55]

The enthusiasm working class Radicals had demonstrated for Irish reform in the late 1860s had proved receptive to the rise of Home Rule in the 1870s. Certainly, support for Home Rule ran deeper within working class Radicalism than its middle class counterpart. *Reynolds News*, a popular working class paper, gave its approval and at the 1874 election labour candidates like Alexander MacDonald, Thomas Burt, George Odger and Benjamin Lucraft (of the Labour Representation League) all promised to back a Home Rule inquiry, with Burt and MacDonald, both miners, being returned. Similarly, at the 1880 election the three successful labour candidates, Burt, MacDonald and Henry Broadhurst, the secretary of the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC, all took the Home Rule pledge.[56] The desire for Irish land reform was also stronger amongst popular Radicals, who were more willing to justify Irish violence against landlord 'despotism.' In November 1879 working class Radicals held a demonstration in Hyde Park to oppose the prosecution of Davitt and two

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[54] For Bryce and Morley (and Gladstone as well), it was the onset of state intervention in social matters that most threatened their 'moral' politics, so that their support for Home Rule can be seen, in part, as an attempt to resist this change. For other liberals, it was Gladstonian Home Rule itself which was the abnegation of 'moral' politics and so sealed their disenchantment with democracy. See pp.168-75 below for more on this.

[55] The whole area of working class attitudes towards Ireland in the late Victorian period is undergoing something of a revision, with former assumptions that the British masses were uninterested in Irish issues during the 1870s and 1880s being replaced by claims that they were in fact deeply attached to the land and Home Rule causes and that this can be linked to a tradition of popular support for Irish nationalism stretching back to Chartism. See especially here E.F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform* (p.58) and *Gladstone* (p.110), but also Matthew, *Gladstone* (p.571). An earlier study that notes the strength of working class sympathy for Ireland is Heyck's *The Dimensions of British Radicalism* (pp.25-6, 58-9, 66-7).

[56] J.S. Shepherd, "Labour and Parliament: the Lib-Labs as the First Working-Class MPs, 1885-1906, in E.F. Biagini and A.J. Reid (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism, Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics in Britain, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 189-98; Pelling *The Origins of the Labour Party, 1880-1900*, pp.3-4; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.25-6, 50.

other Land Leaguers and express support for the League goal of peasant proprietorship.[57] Working class participation at Bradlaugh's joint land conference in 1880 was also high, with Burt attending on behalf of the Northumberland miners. One of the unions present, the National Agricultural Labourers Union, had first shown an interest in Irish agrarian conditions in 1873, when an abortive attempt was made to form a sister union in Ireland.[58]

Through his close links with working class Radicalism, O'Connor would have been well aware of this popular sympathy towards Ireland. F.W. Soutter, for example, was a staunch advocate of the Irish tenant cause, visiting Ireland in late 1880 to investigate the situation at first hand, whilst the labour candidate whom O'Connor campaigned for at the 1880 Southwark by-election, George Shipton, was another who promised to back a Home Rule inquiry. Shipton, the secretary of the London Trades Council, was to be active in the coming battle against coercion.[59] He shows that if T.P. helped such candidates to advance labour interests, then he did so knowing he was also forwarding Home Rule. Additional encouragement came from the working class reaction to the state prosecution of October 1880, since, in contrast to middle class Radicals, this use of the ordinary law against the Land League was again condemned. Delegates from the London Radical clubs gathered in protest on 30 October, blaming landlordism rather than the League for agrarian crime, as the former had rejected the Compensation Bill. Shipton chaired the meeting and T.P. himself addressed it, furnishing further proof that he was fully apprised of working class Radical attitudes towards Ireland.[60]

Another factor behind O'Connor's faith in the Irish sympathies of the working class was the striking way in which emigration had shattered his assumptions about the English people. He often recalled how as a youth in Ireland he associated Englishness solely with privilege and luxury because of the English accents of the landlords and the wealth of English visitors. He believed the average Englishman was "very rich, very self-indulgent,

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[57] Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, p.58; Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, pp.350-3; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.48-9.

[58] *The Times*, 11 Feb. 1880; Horn, *Joseph Arch*, pp.85-92, 180-7; Pamela Horn, "The National Agricultural Labourers Union in Ireland, 1873-9, *Irish Historical Studies*, xvii (Mar. 1971), pp.240-52; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.48. The NALU attempt to expand into Ireland occurred in August 1873, but the plan was dropped because its Irish proponents at the launch meeting linked the project to Home Rule, which the NALU President, Joseph Arch, who attended the meeting, did not support. In 1886 he would come out strongly in its favour.

[59] Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, pp.73-84, 107-8; *The Times*, 1, 19 Feb. 1880; *Daily News*, 9, 13, 14 Feb. 1880; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.49.

[60] *The Times*, 1 Nov. 1880; *Daily News*, 1 Nov. 1880; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.58.

very calculating" and, consequently, far removed from the ordinary Irishman.[61] Moving to England dispelled these "childish" notions. T.P. found it was not a place of "universal wealth', but contained many who, like himself at this point, were afflicted by poverty. This experience enabled him to bridge the "abyss I had supposed between the Englishman and the Irishman." He felt an affinity with the English rather than the expected contrasts. Englishness no longer meant supremacy. Instead, he saw the same in both countries: the bulk of the people struggling for a better life.[62] Learning in this way that the two peoples were not separated by a vast gulf, but had common interests, provided the basis for his lifelong belief that the British people could be made to support the Irish nationalist cause. It laid the foundations for his vision of a mutual reform alliance by convincing him that Irish nationalists and the British democracy were waging the same battle for political and social justice. Friends like F.W. Soutter supplemented this initial revelation, replacing the 'calculating' Englishman of O'Connor's imagination with the "courage, the integrity, the disinteredness of the typical Englishman," showing how he well knew the moral qualities of the working man upon which Liberal hopes for Ireland were based.[63]

Finally, it must be remembered that if O'Connor had reasons for believing in the goodwill of the British democracy towards Ireland, then his Liberal education reinforced this with a basic confidence in the efficacy of rationalist methods in evoking that goodwill. It was a matter of publicising the 'facts' of the nationalist case. As he said later: "The English people as a whole, and when they had any knowledge of the facts, showed themselves full of love and sympathy" for Ireland.[64] Where there were signs of the British people favouring coercion in late 1880 this was because the partiality of Fleet Street denied them the 'facts'. "What means had they of knowing what was the state of Ireland but through their newspapers", he wrote in December.[65] Thus, from the outset of his

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O'Connor's speech was an early example of his use of the Balkan parallel, as he urged his Radical audience to give the Irish tenants the same support as they had the Bulgarians in their 'struggle for liberty.'

[61] O'Connor, introduction to Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, pp.5-10; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, pp.27-9; O'Connor, *C.S. Parnell, A Memory* (London, 1891), p.20; John H. Morgan, *John, Viscount Morley, An Appreciation and Some Reminiscences* (London, 1924), pp.96-7.

[62] Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, pp.5-10; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, pp.27-9; O'Connor, *C.S. Parnell*, p.20.

[63] Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, p.10. Later, O'Connor applied this process of enlightenment to the Irish in Britain as a whole. In contrast to the Irish in Ireland and their "ignorance...as to the English character", the Irish in Britain were "at one" with O'Connor in knowing the generous nature of the English (University of Liverpool, Brunner Papers, VII/fol.49: O'Connor to John Brunner, 23 May 1910). See too O'Connor's essay, "The Irish in Great Britain", in Felix Lavery, *Irish Heroes of the War* (London, 1917), pp.13-34). Similarly, A.M. Sullivan, the Home Rule MP, told the Commons in 1876 that spending time in Britain had erased his youthful hatred towards England (*Hansard*, 3rd series, 1880, ccxxx, 815-19).

[64] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.156.

[65] O'Connor, "The Land League and Its Work", *Contemporary Review*, Dec. 1880, p.996.

career as a Home Rule MP O'Connor had a firm conviction that a rationalist appeal to the British democracy was a profitable course for Irish nationalists. Moulded by his Radical background, his new nationalist identity was operating in a thoroughly liberal context. T.P.'s strategy would now be tested. He would attempt to give the working classes 'knowledge of the facts' and win their support for the Irish cause. As they proved better allies than the middle class Radicals, his faith was justified to some extent. But ultimately his hopes were not fulfilled.

How, though, did other nationalists react to O'Connor's aim of an alliance with the British democracy? F.H. O'Donnell and T.M. Healy were predictable dissenters, having already noted T.P.'s Radicalism with disapproval. Healy resented the idea of nationalism being submerged in the Radical agenda, whilst O'Donnell was hostile to both the Land League and Radicalism.[66] At the other end of the spectrum was McCarthy, who, as will be seen, understandably lent his support to something which suited his political outlook perfectly. Between these two extremes was Parnell. He showed flashes of interest during the winter of 1880-1 and then embraced the plan in February 1881 (in his "widening the agitation" letter), albeit for tactical reasons, namely that it was an alternative to the more revolutionary policy of seceding from Parliament.[67]

Yet the figure that really springs to mind is Davitt. He was the other great exponent of an alliance between Irish nationalism and the British working classes, for he too came to see their support as the key to success in both the Irish land struggle and, later, the Home Rule campaign. His views similarly stemmed from an emigrant background, since Davitt spent nearly all his youth in industrial Lancashire, including two years at a cotton factory. This led to an affinity with the working men and helped convince him, like T.P., that their cause was akin to Irish nationalism. Contact with Ernest Jones, the Chartist, in the 1860s fostered this view too and taught him to identify, as O'Connor did, a common aristocratic enemy in Britain and Ireland. As a result, Davitt also developed a lasting confidence that the British democracy would support Irish claims.[68] But he had little chance to act on it

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[66] O'Donnell, *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, I, pp.482-6; Callanan, *T.M. Healy*, p.115.

[67] O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, p.63; F.S.L. Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell* (London, 1978) p.153.

[68] Michael Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland* (London, 1904), pp.306-8, 446-50, 725-6; Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, pp.16-22; 365-6, 430, 460-1, 517-18; T.W. Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement, 1882-1906", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, vol.3 (1953), pp.53-62. At the Land Law Reform League conference of February 1880, Davitt had said: "I will... ask you Englishmen to go on parallel lines with us in Ireland, and declare from henceforth unceasing war against land monopoly and landlordism in the three countries" (*Daily News*, 11 Feb. 1880). In November 1885 he wrote: "I am satisfied that if the working men of England and Scotland could only have Ireland's demand for self-government properly put before them, they would without hesitation declare in favour of it" (Clement Shorter Papers: Davitt to Shorter, 9 Nov. 1885).

during the Land War. He was inevitably preoccupied with the conflict in Ireland and then, in early February 1881, he was re-arrested. His cultivation of the British democracy was restricted to participation at Bradlaugh's 1880 conference and his attempts, prior to his arrest, to persuade Parnell to appeal to the British working classes.[69] It was not until after his release in May 1882 that Davitt put his ideas into effect. Then, in association with the American Henry George, who also favoured 'carrying' the battle against landlordism into England, he sought to enlist the British working classes in the kind of mutual land reform alliance that T.P. had promoted. By now, however, Davitt's solution for the two countries was land nationalisation, not peasant proprietorship, as this, he argued, would benefit all sections of the population rather than just the tenant farmers. In conjunction with this he advocated independent labour representation in Parliament, both to advance the labour and land reform causes and to enhance the prospects for Home Rule.[70]

Given the close parallels between Davitt and T.P., the question arises of whether they co-operated at this juncture. The surprising answer is no. Certainly, they did not campaign together. The obvious reason here is that O'Connor's project occurred whilst Davitt was either absorbed in the Irish struggle or in prison, and by the time Davitt took the field in 1882 T.P. had rejected the reform alliance idea, although he opposed land nationalisation in any case. But, more interestingly, there was no real bond between them. The coolness was mainly on Davitt's side. In his 1881-2 prison writings Davitt evinced a clear mistrust of O'Connor, describing him as "ambitious, needs care; [holds] English radical more than Irish national opinions."[71] Despite their similar emigrant backgrounds there were crucial differences in their make-up that may explain this attitude. Davitt had suffered the harsh side of the Irish land system, his removal to Lancashire in 1850 being due to his family's eviction from their County Mayo holding. He also had a strong Fenian past. Both stood in contrast to O'Connor's London Radicalism. Davitt's misgivings may therefore reflect two things: the suspicion of an 'outsider' by someone who felt his past experiences, as well as his recent role in the Land League, meant that he saw the Irish land war from the 'inside', and the nationalist distrust of a Radical (à la Healy) combined with a Fenian derived

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[69] Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism*, pp.306-8, 446-50; Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement", pp.57-8; Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, pp.430-61.

[70] Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement", pp.58-63; Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, pp.519-27, 548. Although George himself did not advocate land nationalisation, he was the main inspiration for Davitt's doctrine, with his ideas on the injustice of private property in land and the single tax as a way of ensuring land benefited the whole community. In 1881 George published a pamphlet, *The Irish Land Question*, in which he emphasised that the most effective way to fight landlordism was to unite the masses in Britain and Ireland against it, as land problems were by no means peculiar to Ireland.

[71] Quoted in Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, p.512.

suspicion of political associates, especially careerist parliamentarians.[72] Another possibility is that because they were claiming the same political terrain Davitt saw T.P. as a rival. Whatever the source of his mistrust, it persisted and whilst O'Connor paid tribute to Davitt in *The Parnell Movement*, Davitt ignored T.P.'s efforts to win over the British democracy in *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland*, and in his prison writings said that the Land League committed the crucial error of failing to court British public opinion.[73] Whilst this judgement reflects Davitt's own inability to do so before 1882, it entirely overlooks O'Connor's appeal to the working classes in 1880-1.

Irish historians of the period have followed Davitt in this neglect of O'Connor's Irish-Radical reform alliance. The question of working class support has been viewed mainly in terms of Parnell's tactical endorsement of February 1881 and the belief is that Irish efforts to rally working class opinion were neither widespread nor successful. Cruise O'Brien, for example, notes that T.P. favoured the "widening the agitation" policy and that he was in contact with 'advanced' Radicals, but the full extent of his activities is not recognised. Instead, O'Brien overestimates the role of the socialist H.M. Hyndman and says that only the "middle class advanced radicals" of his Democratic Federation backed the Parnellites.[74] T.W. Moody, the biographer of Davitt's early career, understandably approaches the topic from Davitt's standpoint. As a result, he also omits O'Connor's parallel campaign and, perhaps swayed by Davitt's own inability to make much headway in 1880-1, he likewise concludes that the appeal to the British democracy was a failure.[75] In an earlier piece he writes that the British workers "shared the hostility of the British governing class towards the Land League" and similarly claims that only the "socialist elite" of Hyndman's Democratic Federation supported the Irish.[76] Surprisingly, T.P.'s biographer, L.W. Brady, treads a Davitt centred path too. Despite the fact Davitt was in prison Brady says "much of the wider agitation was left" to him in 1881. Brady makes no

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[72] "The influence of his early experience in the fenian underworld clung to him in a tendency to suspect the motives of political associates", says Moody of Davitt (*Davitt and Irish Revolution*, p.552). Another factor behind Davitt's mistrust was that he disliked how the Parnellite lieutenants, including O'Connor, ensured after 1882 that their party and its leader dominated Irish nationalist politics to the detriment of others, especially those, like Davitt, who wished to continue the land struggle (Ibid, pp.544-6; Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, pp.236-7).

[73] Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, pp.517-18; O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, pp.260, 297-303.

[74] O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, pp.62-3.

[75] Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, pp.480-1. Although arguing that an alliance with the British working classes never developed, Moody undercuts this by including details which point in the opposite direction. He notes, for example, both the large Hyde Park rally against the prosecution of Davitt and two other Land Leaguers in November 1879 (p.353) and the mass demonstration, again in Hyde Park, against coercion and the re-arrest of Davitt in February 1881 (p.468), for which see below p.91.

reference to O'Connor's mutual reform alliance and his 'outdoors' attempts to recruit working class backing, mentioning only his appeal to the wider English audience in the parliamentary debates on coercion. Where he does touch on T.P.'s cultivation of Radical support Brady wrongly dates an important event.[77] Elsewhere, although Alan O'Day emphasises how the Parnellites believed in a fair appeal to the British democracy in the early 1880s, he does not cite O'Connor's campaign of 1880-1 as an example of this.[78]

It is this neglect of O'Connor's Irish-Radical reform alliance, and the related belief that working class support for the Land League was minimal, which this study aims to rectify. It is contended that, whilst in the final reckoning the Irish appeal to the British democracy in 1880-1 failed, T.P's project reveals that Parnellite attempts to woo British Radical and working class opinion were greater and more effective than Irish historians have allowed. Accordingly, this study is closer to British historiography which, especially recently, has stressed the depth of working class sympathy for Ireland in the 1880s and throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.[79] A different side to the Land War is presented here, showing that away from the conflict in Ireland and the issue of Parnellite-Fenian interaction there was a considerable 'constitutional', or 'British', dimension to the Irish land struggle. In the process the distinctive contribution of the emigrant nationalist MPs to that struggle will be highlighted. Figures like O'Connor obviously had little time for the Anglophobia of the Fenian tradition and sought alternative sources of support to those of the 'new departure' (the fact he operated independently of the Fenian run Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain shows T.P.'s distance from Fenian circles). The Land War set the pattern for his and McCarthy's careers as nationalist politicians. Appealing to the British people through voice and pen would be their hallmark. They were never at the heart of Irish agrarian conflict like Davitt or William O'Brien.[80]

O'Connor's drive to create an Irish-Radical reform alliance began when, together with Samuel Bennett and Soutter, he founded the Anti-Coercion Association in London in November 1880. The latter two became co-secretaries.[81] This was formed, Bennett wrote

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[76] Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement", pp.57-8. Paul Bew is another (*Land and the National Question*, p.154) who limits Radical support for the Parnellites to the Democratic Federation.
[77] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.54-6. See note 81 below for the dating error.
[78] O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp.89-90.
[79] See note 58 above. As for O'Connor himself, T.W. Heyck (*The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.58-9) and Henry Pelling (*The Origins of the Labour Party*, p.15) briefly mention his contact with working class opposition to coercion in 1880-1, but, Irish politicians not being their focus, he is not closely explored.
[80] O'Connor's distance from the Land War comes through in his *Memoirs* (I, p.122) where he admits that when he visited Ireland in October 1880 he "was only beginning to learn the realities of the Irish situation."
[81] Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, pp.99-100; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.58-9; Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party*, p.15; Chushichi Tsuzuki, *H.M. Hyndman and British*

later, "not to oppose Gladstone, Bright and Chamberlain, but to support them in what was understood to be their earnest opposition to the territorial magnates who had sneaked into office under the wing of Mr. Gladstone's popularity."[82] Essentially, it was a working class body in composition and appeal, though some middle class Radicals were also involved, such as the Positivists Henry Crompton and Frederic Harrison.[83] Branches in Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool soon followed. Parnell sent Soutter his blessings, but feared that the 'misrepresentations' of the English press would make their task "very difficult, if not impossible."[84] This gloomy prognostication was fulfilled when the Association began to hold regular meetings only to find that the press ignored them. At a meeting on 24 November, which O'Connor attended, reporters left after learning that the MP scheduled to speak, Joseph Cowen, had cancelled. Annoyed by this, the Association decided to ensure that coverage of its work reached the public by creating its own journal.[85]

A preliminary gathering was held on 26 November. Those present included Bennett, Soutter, O'Connor, Lewis Dale, the treasurer of the Association, and William Webster, a Scottish Radical. Soutter and Dale were the most enthusiastic proponents of the scheme, whilst O'Connor, initially concerned about the financial risk, was won over by Soutter's zeal and subsequently provided "most effective help". After all, he must have welcomed this antidote to the partiality of Fleet Street. Following hard work by Soutter the opening issue of a new weekly paper, *The Radical*, appeared on 4 December. Soutter was editor and T.P. wrote the first 'leader.'[86] It was here that O'Connor unfolded his vision of a

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Socialism (London, 1961) p.36. It is in relation to the Anti-Coercion Association that Cruise O'Brien overestimates the role of Hyndman, stating incorrectly that he was behind its creation and only saying of O'Connor that he spoke at an Association meeting in February 1881 (*Parnell and His Party*, p.62). It is owing to this that Brady wrongly dates the Association's foundation as February 1881 and likewise says that Hyndman helped T.P. establish it (*T.P. O'Connor*, p.56). Brady completely overlooks the important connection between O'Connor and F.W. Soutter.

[82] *The Radical* ("A Year Ago"), 26 Nov. 1881.

[83] Of all the liberal academics of the 1860s, the Positivists (e.g. Harrison, Crompton, E.S. Beesly and J.H. Bridges) believed most in the political 'capacity' of the working classes and so identified with their views on many issues. One of these was Ireland. Here, they were aligned with working class Radical opinion not only through their opposition to coercion in 1880-1 and endorsement of the Land League but also through their support for Home Rule, which they had advocated since the late 1860s (Peatling, *British Opinion and Irish self-government*, pp.16-22; Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, pp.148-9).

[84] *Daily News*, 25 Nov. 1880; Parnell to Soutter, 23 Nov. 1880, printed in *The Radical*, 4 Dec. 1880.

[85] *The Radical* ('A Year Ago'), 26 Nov. 1881; Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, pp.99. A brief notice of the 24 November meeting did in fact appear in the *Daily News* (25 Nov. 1880). Cowen had earlier sent his support to the Radical Clubs' protest meeting of 30 October (*The Times*, 1 Nov. 1880) and would prove one of the Parnellites' staunchest Radical allies during 1880-1.

[86] Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, pp.100-101, 115; *The Radical*, 26 Nov. 1881; Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party*, p.15; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.59; Tsuzuki, *H.M. Hyndman and British Socialism*, p.36. Besides Soutter's testimony, O'Connor's authorship of this unsigned article is shown by the fact that he uses a quote from Gladstone (that eviction meant starvation) that he also uses in his *Contemporary Review* piece of Dec. 1880, "The Land League and Its Work" (pp.985-90).

mutual land reform alliance between nationalists and Radicals. He reminded Radicals that Ireland was the "cockpit" of English politics. Issues tackled there today would arise in England tomorrow. Land reform was a classic example of this, as both countries suffered from the same "disease": an aristocratic land monopoly. By helping to work a "radical remedy" of the Irish land question Radicals would thus pave the way for land reform at home.[87] T.P. stressed these points in part to shore up support for Irish land reform among those middle class Radical elements that had recently shown signs of favouring coercion. If Radicals had committed the "crime" of endorsing coercion, it would have created a "chasm" between them and the nationalists that "might have taken years to fill up", he said. Fortunately, that "calamity" had been averted for now (no doubt he was thinking here of Bright and Chamberlain's bold speeches at Birmingham). To maximise Radical backing for his reform alliance, O'Connor finished with words well calculated to stir Radical passion through their identification of a 'feudal' enemy and use of the familiar image of a joint aristocracy oppressing both countries. Let nationalists and Radicals remain united, T.P. said, "until living men may trample joyously in England and Ireland on the ruins of the feudal oligarchy."[88]

O'Connor's article set the paper's agenda. Soutter and Bennett (who became co-editor after the sixth issue[89]) took their cue from him and continued to denounce coercion and advocate a mutual land reform alliance. T.P. himself did not write further for *The Radical*, as his Irish-Radical strategy soon carried him away from London. He did manage, though, to pen an article for the December issue of the *Contemporary Review* entitled "The Land League and Its Work". Here, his aim was to forestall the growing pressure for coercion by delineating the legal, constitutional means the Land League had used and the fact that by reducing evictions it had reduced crime. Tory rhetoric and a gullible press had inflated the number of 'outrages', said O'Connor. Like his *Radical* 'leader', T.P. employed language well suited to Radical ears. Echoing English traditions of individual freedom, he claimed

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[87] "The English and the Irish Land Question", *The Radical*, 4 Dec. 1880. O'Connor's view that Irish land reform would be the catalyst for English land reform was neither new nor confined to Radicals. Opponents of Irish land reform had long cited the dangerous precedent - state interference in landed property - it would set for England. Such sentiments had fuelled the Whig opposition to the Compensation for Disturbance Bill (Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.149-61). T.P. does not detail the type of land reform he envisaged, but the downfall of 'landlordism' no doubt entailed the Land League goal of peasant proprietorship in Ireland and for England he probably followed the prevailing Radical call for 'free land'.

[88] Ibid. Bright had of course used the image of a joint aristocratic oppressor in his Irish speeches of 1866 (see p.65 above), but others to employ it included, as we have seen, Davitt and Chartists like Ernest Jones. Even the Fenians adverted to it, attacking the 'aristocratic locusts' of Ireland and England in their March 1867 proclamation (Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, pp.136-7).

[89] Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, p.114.

the Land League had transformed the Irish peasantry into "an organised force of spirited, self-reliant and even defiant freemen". At the same time, it had "shaken to its base a foul, plundering, and murderous tyranny of centuries' duration."[90] Yet, being published in such a journal, these words would have mainly reached middle class Radical ears. A different method was required if he was to awaken the heart of the British democracy.

Consequently, under the auspices of the Anti-Coercion Association O'Connor set out that month on a tour of northern England and Scotland. Between 30 November and 20 December he spoke to considerable audiences of working men at Birmingham, Bradford, Sheffield (with George Shipton), Glasgow, Dundee and Manchester. On 19 December he addressed the Radical Clubs of Southwark and Bermondsey.[91] This northern campaign was the cornerstone of T.P.'s attempt to build a reform alliance with the British working classes, but it has gone completely unnoticed by Irish historians. At the time, however, it naturally received extensive coverage in *The Radical*, with O'Connor's speeches reported in full, so that although the tour meant T.P. could not write for the paper, *The Radical* was still a prominent vehicle for his views.[92] Ireland was his focus and his message was plain: coercion was unjustified and instead British Radicals should help the Land League smash the Irish land system. His text was basically his *Contemporary Review* piece, with similar references to the newborn Irish 'freemen' and direct appeals to Radical anti-aristocratic sentiment. At Birmingham on 30 November, for example, T.P. labelled the Irish landlords a "murderous and plundering caste," whilst at Glasgow on 10 December he called them "an unscrupulous...murderous oligarchy."[93] One added feature of his northern speeches was that O'Connor frequently cited the known Radical sympathy for oppressed peoples and argued that if British Radicals could be moved by the plight of Bulgarians, Zulus and Greeks, then surely they could give the Irish people, their fellow subjects, the same help in their struggle. In all this, he sought to erase the unfamiliarity that often bedeviled Irish affairs and cast them in terms the Radical working men would understand.[94]

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[90] O'Connor, "The Land League and Its Work", *Contemporary Review*, Dec. 1880, pp.989, 999.
[91] *The Radical*, 4, 11, 25 Dec. 1880. At Bradford (1 Dec.) O'Connor addressed 2000 people, at Glasgow (10 Dec.) 4000 people, at Manchester (20 Dec.) 5000 people, whilst at Birmingham (30 Nov.) the Temperance Hall was "densely crowded". Coverage of the tour in other papers was limited, confirming the necessity of *The Radical*. Only the Manchester gathering was reported in *The Times* (21 Dec. 1880), though it did carry details of the Bermondsey meeting (20 Dec. 1880). The *Daily News* was better, including notices of the Birmingham, Sheffield, Bermondsey and Manchester meetings (1, 4, 20, 21 Dec. 1880), but only the last gave details of T.P.'s speech. 3000 people were at Manchester, it says, whilst Birmingham was "crowded."
[92] Brady's failure to note T.P.'s northern tour follows from his neglect of the Soutter link, as this means he entirely overlooks *The Radical*, both in terms of T.P.'s involvement with it and as a source for his activities.
[93] *The Radical*, 4, 11 Dec. 1880.
[94] Ibid, 4, 11 Dec. 1880.

Thus ended the first stage of T.P.'s Irish-Radical campaign. Did it provide grounds for optimism? Heyck suggests that the working class resistance to coercion did indeed stiffen the Cabinet Radicals' resolve during the November conflict with Forster, just as Bennett, Soutter and O'Connor had wished. For T.P. in early December, the Radicals' avoidance of the coercion pitfall meant that they and the nationalists were "once more united".[95] As for his northern tour, the enthusiasm of his audiences suggested that the desired alliance with the British democracy had some substance to it and in January *The Radical* claimed that since O'Connor's tour letters had "been pouring in upon us, advising us of the change his speeches have wrought on the public feeling of the country." Certainly, the tour had only strengthened O'Connor's own faith in the working classes. At its climax in Manchester he asserted the "determination of the English people that justice should be done to Ireland."[96] Even so it is unlikely he was sanguine about the political future. Despite the initial defeat of Forster and the demonstrations of working class support, coercion loomed larger than ever by the end of 1880. The *Daily News* told its readers in mid-December that it would be introduced in the new session. Had O'Connor known that Bright and Chamberlain had privately accepted coercion by the close of the month, he would have possessed even more reason for discouragement.[97]

In any case the government's plans were quickly revealed. Parliament opened on 7 January 1881 and the Queen's Speech declared that the government, as well as bringing forward an Irish land bill, would seek 'additional powers.' In the ensuing struggle against coercion O'Connor was at the forefront. L.W. Brady has speculated that Parnell gave him a "leading role in Parliament" because he had "already shown the right blend of qualities to be effective in debate." This may have been so, but it is also possible that Parnell gave T.P. a central part because he felt that O'Connor, with his Radical politics and contacts, was the Parnellite MP most likely to attract Liberal-Radical support inside and outside the Commons. Parnell himself may have lacked faith in English public opinion, but that was no reason to stop the better connected O'Connor from trying his hand. T.P.'s Irish-Radical alliance therefore entered a new phase. For the next month his focus was the Commons and the task of winning over the parliamentary Radicals. Yet O'Connor did not entirely lose sight of the wider Radical audience. He courted working class support when

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[95] Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.59; O'Connor 'leader', *The Radical*, 4 Dec. 1880.
[96] *The Radical*, 22 Jan. 1881; *The Times*, 21 Dec. 1880. T.P.'s connection with John Morley, who resolutely opposed coercion in the *P.M.G.*, may have also generated hopes that the Liberals would avoid repression.
[97] *Daily News*, 14 Dec. 1880, 5 Jan. 1881; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.63; Robbins, *John Bright*, pp.242-3.

he could (he spoke at Newcastle on 29 January for example) and, as Brady has said, his arguments were designed to reach beyond Westminster and sway outside opinion too.[98]

Battle was first joined over the address, the debate on which lasted until 20 January. During it T.P. compared Land League combination to trade union activism in Britain, decried the spectacle of a Liberal government "tampering with Liberal principles", and pointed out, as figures like Bright and Butt had done in the past, how those who preached Union did not practice it. The constitution so venerated in Britain was readily violated in Ireland. "Every day that I live in England, breathing a free atmosphere", said O'Connor, "I become more and more indignant at the manner in which my country has been treated by the English government."[99] Later, during the protracted debate on the motion for leave to introduce Forster's Bill, he contested the ministry's claim that British popular opinion backed them. Asserting his own "experience on that question", T.P. said (on 31 January) that the British working classes in fact opposed coercion. To support his argument, he cited a recent meeting in Birmingham at which coercion had been censured, mentioned his attendance at an anti-coercion rally in Newcastle and, using his knowledge of metropolitan Radicalism, stated that nearly every London Radical Club had denounced repression. For T.P. to make working class opinion his battleground is vivid confirmation of his continuing confidence in the Irish sympathies of the British democracy. Indeed, he asked for discussion of the Bill to be suspended so as to give the Irish MPs time to prove his claims. Drawing on his northern tour, he said: "if they [were given a fortnight]...from every town in England, in which there was a large working-class population...the voice of that class would be raised against that Liberal ministry." But the government was loath to test popular opinion, he added, and sought to avoid this by 'forcing' the Bill through.[100]

Whilst these appeals to liberal-democratic values were designed to awaken Radical consciences, they underline T.P.'s own bedrock liberalism, showing how his opposition to coercion was as much about dismayed Radicalism as ardent nationalism. They remind us that the Parnellite parliamentary armoury contained other weapons besides obstruction. O'Connor himself was unenthusiastic about the latter, being far happier pursuing

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[98] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.52-4; *The Radical*, 5 Feb. 1881.
[99] *Hansard*, 3rd series, 1881, cclvii, 122-32, 1052-4.
[100] *Hansard*, 3rd series, 1881, cclvii, 1747, 1828-34, 1903; *The Radical*, 5 Feb. 1881. The anti-coercion meetings O'Connor referred to on 31 January were similarly cited by Davitt as evidence of working class backing for the Land League (*The Fall of Feudalism*, p. 306-8).

rationalist discussion.[101] But his entreaties failed. For the bulk of Radical MPs the combination of obstruction at Westminster and violent unrest in Ireland outweighed T.P.'s invocation of liberal-democratic values and so, despite their election vows of sympathy for Ireland, they backed coercion.[102] O'Connor's earlier reservations about parliamentary Radicalism had proved correct. Any hopes of an alliance between it and nationalism were shattered. Five years later he was scathing about the Radical MPs in *The Parnell Movement*: "One of the most painful and...disgusting experiences of the whole Coercion struggle was [how]...the Radicals deserted their pledges to Ireland."[103] This 'desertion' was of course encapsulated by the Cabinet Radicals, who had failed to justify T.P.'s previous belief in them. Bright's volte-face was especially telling. The sight of a leading Radical and past friend of Ireland calling for coercion helped other Radicals follow suit. More indicative still of the breakdown in Irish-Radical relations was Bradlaugh. He not only advocated Irish land reform but favoured Home Rule and resisted coercion at every stage. Yet even he was alienated by Irish obstruction and Land League violence. For Bradlaugh, it was the latter that ended the possibility of joint Irish-Radical action on land reform. By the summer of 1881 he was warning his followers against co-operating with the Land League.[104] Other Radicals who opposed Forster's Bill included Labouchere, Sir Wilfred Lawson and Joseph Cowen. Of the labour members, Burt and MacDonald consistently opposed coercion, but Broadhurst backed the government.[105]

With Commons Radicalism a grave disappointment, and with obstruction a broken weapon after the Speaker's coup d'etat of 2 February, hopes of parliamentary resistance to coercion were effectively over. In response, T.P., aided by *The Radical*, again sought to mobilise the forces of working class Radicalism. His Irish-Radical alliance had begun its third phase and, though the target audience was the same as the first, O'Connor's efforts were this time confined mainly to London and the south, something doubtless dictated by

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[101] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.54-5. Of obstruction, T.P. said: "for his own part he did not like physical contests; he would rather the debates were conducted with decency and decorum" (*Hansard*, 3rd series, 1881, cclvii, 1833-4).

[102] O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, p.83; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.64. While some Radicals abstained during divisions, the number who voted against the government was small. For example, on a motion by Parnell condemning coercion (14 Jan.) around seventy Radicals voted for the government, seven opposed it and some forty abstained. Radicals also saw coercion as the only way to gain a strong Irish land bill (H.A.L. Fisher, *James Bryce*, (2 vols., New York, 1927), I, pp.204-5).

[103] O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, p.429. See also p.259, where he attacks the Radical "gospel of cant".

[104] Fisher, *James Bryce*, I, pp. 204-5; Arnstein, *The Bradlaugh Case*, pp.86-7, 213-15; D'Arcy, "Charles Bradlaugh and the Irish Question", pp.247-50. Where Bradlaugh did support the government during the coercion debate, it was on questions of obstruction rather than the bill itself. He took no part in the Anti-Coercion Association, having felt that the October 1880 state prosecutions could not be called 'coercion'.

his parliamentary duties. Over the ensuing weeks he addressed a number of London Radical Clubs and Associations: the Cabdrivers Society (2 February), the Social Democratic Club (8 February), an Anti-Coercion Association meeting in Southwark (11 Feb), the Magna Charta Association (15 February), and the Manhood Suffrage League (21 February).[106] Outside London, he spoke against coercion at Brighton (9 February), Sunderland (12 February) and Liverpool (26 February).[107] However, the centrepiece of this third phase was the mass demonstration held in Hyde Park on 13 February. According to *The Radical* "up to a hundred thousand people" were present at what was "the largest, most orderly...most enthusiastic gathering which has ever been seen in Hyde Park."[108] The rally was not only a condemnation of coercion but a protest at the re-arrest of Davitt on 3 February and the suppression of debate in Parliament. Organised by working class activists like Soutter and bringing together Irish nationalists, trade unions and the metropolitan Radical Clubs, the Hyde Park demonstration provided the strongest evidence yet that O'Connor's desired Irish-Radical democratic alliance was taking shape. T.P. was among several Irish MPs to address the crowd and naturally he heralded the "vast gathering" as additional proof that British popular opinion was behind the Parnellites rather than the government.[109] Like his northern tour, the third phase of T.P.'s project shows why Irish historians have erred in limiting Irish support to the middle class 'elite' of Hyndman's Democratic Federation.[110] It also emphasises O'Connor's distance from neo-Fenian circles: whereas at this point the more extreme Land Leaguers wanted the Irish MPs to combat coercion by seceding from Parliament, T.P. clearly felt that this goal was best served by redoubling his efforts to rouse the British democracy.

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[105] Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.65; Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation*, p.208; O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, p.63.

[106] *The Radical*, 5, 12, 19, 26 Feb. 1881; Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party*, pp.13-15. The Manhood Suffrage League was led by the old Chartists, Charles and J.F. Murray. T.P. was joined by John Dillon at the Cabdrivers Society, by Joseph Biggar at the Social Democratic Club and by Soutter at the Magna Charta Association and the Anti-Coercion Association. The involvement of Biggar and Dillon is further evidence that Parnellite wooing of the British working classes was greater than hitherto allowed.

[107] *The Radical*, 12 Feb., 5 Mar. 1881; *The Times*, 14 Feb. 1881.

[108] *The Radical*, 19 Feb. 1881. *The Radical's* report was probably somewhat exaggerated, but the accounts in other newspapers show that it was undoubtedly an impressive gathering. *The Times* (14 Feb. 1881) put the numbers in Hyde Park at "between 50, 000 and 100, 000", whilst the *Daily Telegraph* (14 Feb. 1881) estimated that 50, 000-60, 000 people attended. Only the *Daily News* (14 Feb. 1881) gave a much smaller figure - 20, 000 - but, as a Liberal paper, it may have deliberately minimised the scale of the demonstration so as to lessen the government's discomfort.

[109] *The Times*, 14 Feb. 1881; *The Radical*, 19 Feb. 1881; *Daily News*, 14 Feb. 1881. The other Parnellite MPs who spoke at Hyde Park included McCarthy (see below pp.109-10), John Redmond and the Rev. Isaac Nelson, reinforcing the point made in note 106 above.

[110] See pp.83-4 above. As for coverage of the Hyde Park meeting, it has been overlooked not only by Irish historians (except for a brief reference by Moody (see note 75 above)) but also by T.W. Heyck.

Whilst the first and third phases of O'Connor's alliance differed geographically, the other obvious contrast was that his combination had now been turned against the Liberal government. Rather than rallying working class Radicalism behind the Cabinet Radicals, T.P. was directing it against a Liberal ministry that seemed to have shamelessly discarded its own values. Thus, as in Parliament, O'Connor was the disgusted Radical, denouncing the government in the name of Liberalism. At the Cabdrivers Society he derided this "so-called Radical government" and at Hyde Park claimed that the "Liberal Ministry...had outraged Liberal principles."[111] His indignation was matched by the working class press. *The Radical* said "backsliding" Radicals like Bright had "sold" their constituents.[112] Another change from the first phase was that O'Connor was no longer appealing to the parliamentary Radicals. Even though he focused on working class backing in late 1880 he also threw a line to middle class Radicals. But following the collapse of Radical support in the Commons his alliance was based wholly on popular forces. As T.P. had suspected the year before, the Parnellites' staunchest allies were the working men, not the fair-weather middle class Radicals. Indicative of this shift was O'Connor's repeated call for a 'union of the two democracies.' At the Anti-Coercion Association on 11 February, for instance, he urged the "two democracies to be united against their common enemy, the governing...aristocracy", and reiterated this plea to the Magna Charta Association and the Manhood Suffrage League.[113] This vision of the 'union of the two democracies' gave full rein to T.P.'s belief, developed via emigration, that the masses in Britain and Ireland had common interests and should coalesce. It also echoed the Bright-Dillon concept of a 'new' Union of popular sentiment, which further underlines how O'Connor's nationalism operated outside the Fenian-separatist context.

In order to translate their disenchantment with the Liberals into practical terms, T.P. and others began pressing for a 'new Radical party', one based on labour representatives and opposed to Tories and Liberals alike. At the 21 February gathering of the Manhood Suffrage League, for example, a 'National Radical party' was suggested after O'Connor had said: "henceforth they could have no faith in the Liberal or the Tory party." The 'new Radical party' was also a common motif at the Hyde Park rally and was a popular idea in the Soutter-Bennett circle, being debated by the Anti-Coercion Association and advanced

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[111] *The Radical*, 5 Feb. 1881; *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Feb. 1881.
[112] *The Radical*, 29 Jan. 1881; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.66.
[113] *The Radical*, 12, 19, 26 Feb. 1881. The 'union of the two democracies' was also a prominent theme at the Hyde Park demonstration.

by *The Radical*.[114] Reversing the Liberal government's Irish policy would naturally be a priority for this labour party, which would not desert Ireland as the middle class Radicals had done. O'Connor's cherished goal of an Irish-Radical reform alliance and a 'union of the two democracies' would become a parliamentary reality. "The men to be supported by Irish electors in [England]", O'Connor told the Southwark Home Rule Association on 20 February, "were not Whigs, Liberals or Tories, but candidates hailing from the ranks of labour."[115] Promoting labour candidates was of course nothing new for T.P, but he was now doing so outside the Liberal fold. By championing independent labour representation in this way he was anticipating the direction that Davitt would take after leaving prison.

The desire for a 'new Radical party' brought more than one response. In Manchester local activists established a Democratic League of Great Britain and Ireland in April. Its vice-presidents included Parnell, O'Connor and Labouchere.[116] Meanwhile, following an invitation by H.M. Hyndman (a recent convert to Marxian Socialism), delegates from the various London Radical Clubs met in March to consider the question of a new, working class party. This led to the formation in June 1881 of the Democratic Federation. Initially, the delegates had looked to Joseph Cowen for leadership, but Hyndman instead emerged as the Federation's motive force, becoming its first President.[117] Along with the question of labour representation, Irish issues necessarily baulked large in the Federation's early programme, which Hyndman was active in moulding. Coercion would be ended and legislative independence and land nationalisation introduced (the latter policy applied to Britain as well). In July the Federation sent a team of delegates to Ireland to investigate conditions there.[118] As noted above, Irish historians have cited Hyndman and the middle

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[114] *The Radical*, 19, 26 Feb. 1881; Tsuzuki, *Hyndman and British Socialism*, p.43; Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party*, p.15, 53. A leader in *The Radical* on 5 March 1881 called for a 'new party' of "labour representatives rather than the middle class entrepreneurs who call themselves 'liberal'...to get elected." The paper had advocated an increase in labour MPs in its first issue (4 Dec. 1880), but in a less independent vein. Others promoting a separate labour party at this point included Frederich Engels, whilst H.M. Hyndman later testified to the "growing feeling" in 1881 in favour of a "really democratic party" (*The Record of an Adventurous Life*, p.223, 247). E.F. Biagini (*Gladstone*, pp.110-11) has recently stressed the potential that existed in the early 1880s for a separate workers party because of the Liberals' Irish policy.

[115] *The Radical*, 26 Feb. 1881.

[116] *The Radical*, 16 Apr. 1881; Tsuzuki, *Hyndman and British Socialism*, p.43, 48. The Democratic League of Great Britain and Ireland eventually affiliated to Hyndman's Democratic Federation in May 1882.

[117] *The Radical*, 5, 12 Mar. 1881; Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party*, pp.15-23; Tsuzuki, *Hyndman and British Socialism*, pp.38-40; Hyndman, *The Record of an Adventurous Life*, pp.246-50; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.66. There were three preliminary meetings (2, 5, 19 Mar.) before the foundation conference on 8 June. Cowen chaired the second of these, but had dropped out by the autumn. The Positivists E.S. Beesly and Henry Crompton were also among the Federation's early supporters.

[118] *The Radical*, 28 May 1881; Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party*, pp.17-18; Tsuzuki, *Hyndman and British Socialism*, pp.40-4; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.66-7; Hyndman, *The Record of an Adventurous Life*, p.255. To facilitate labour representation, and a more democratic political system in

class 'elite' of the Democratic Federation as the only Radicals to aid the Parnellites at this time.[119] But, as its origins indicate, the Federation at first enjoyed the support of most of the London Radical Clubs and was a prominent body in metropolitan working class politics. It was only in September 1881 that it shrunk to a middle class rump, when all the Radical Clubs but one withdrew after a Federation manifesto endorsing the Parnellite candidate for the Tyrone by-election. Although one of the Clubs' main objections to this document was its socialist tone (it denounced 'capitalist Radicalism'), the Federation's continuing support for the Parnellites at the expense of the Liberals was apparently now too much for them (presumably because the government had just passed a large Irish Land Act).[120] Even so, it is clear that Radical backing for the Parnellites in 1880-1 not only ranged well beyond the Democratic Federation as presented by Irish historians but that, initially at least, the Federation itself was, as Heyck says, further evidence of working class sympathy for the Irish cause.[121]

What of O'Connor? He had some links with the Democratic Federation, speaking at its meeting of 20 July 1881. Yet, despite its Irish priorities and ostensible commitment to labour interests, he was not closely involved with the Federation and played no real part in its formation. Two possible reasons for this were its (to O'Connor) unappealing land nationalisation policy and Hyndman's domineering nature (T.P.'s friends at *The Radical* were suspicious of him).[122] The later lurch towards socialism would only have increased the Federation's unattractiveness. But the most important reason for O'Connor's distance was that he was otherwise engaged that spring: his Irish-Radical alliance had entered its fourth stage.

The day after the Hyde Park rally O'Connor's attempts to rouse the British democracy received a welcome fillip with the publication of Parnell's open letter to the Land League from Paris stating that instead of withdrawing from Parliament and leading an intensified struggle in Ireland he would go on "widening the area of our agitation" and "appealing to the great masses of population of England and Scotland."[123] Parnell, it seemed, had taken up T.P.'s concept of a 'union of the two democracies'. Davitt's efforts to steer Parnell in

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general, the Federation's early programme stressed constitutional reform: adult suffrage, the payment of members, triennial parliaments and the abolition of the House of Lords.

[119] See note 110 above.

[120] Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party*, pp.22-3; Tsuzuki, *Hyndman and British Socialism*, pp.46-7; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.66-7.

[121] Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.67.

[122] *The Radical*, 23 July 1881; Tsuzuki, *Hyndman and British Socialism*, p.40; Pelling, *The Origins of the Labour Party*, pp.28-9.

[123] Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism*, pp.306-8; O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, pp.61-2.

this direction have been noted, and were acknowledged by Parnell himself.[124] However, O'Connor surely did likewise and so, despite not being in Paris with Parnell, he may have felt he had helped influence Parnell's decision. Certainly, the Paris letter endorsed the key ideas of T.P.'s Irish-Radical project in its third phase. Not only did it propose to appeal to the British working men on Irish issues but it called for a mutual reform alliance against a common landed enemy and heralded the time when labour candidates would run in every constituency.[125] Of course, Parnell's adoption of the democratic alliance strategy is said to have been tactical rather than inspired by the entreaties of Davitt and O'Connor, since it allowed him to remain in Parliament whilst continuing to appear 'revolutionary'.[126] Given that Parnell later ridiculed the idea of a labour alliance, it is hard to resist this conclusion. Nevertheless, it can perhaps be qualified, for there is evidence that Parnell was, as Davitt later claimed, more committed to this policy in 1881 than is usually thought.[127] If so, the arguments of T.P. and Davitt were possibly not without effect after all.

For a start, the Paris letter was not the first time Parnell had consented to appeal to the British working classes. In mid-January an Irish Party convention announced that the case against coercion would be carried to the British constituencies.[128] This suggests Parnell's Paris declaration was less tactical and novel than it appears, though he may already have been preparing his alternative to parliamentary secession, knowing that the impending enactment of coercion would force his hand on the issue.[129] More important are his attempts to fulfil the promises of the Paris letter. F.S.L. Lyons has described the letter as a 'gesture', whilst Moody says that Parnell had little time to implement his new policy owing to his arrest in October 1881. Moody wrote later that its only tangible outcome was the National Land League of Great Britain, which was formed in London on 25 March with the immediate aim of instructing the British working classes on the Irish land question. Understandably, T.P. was closely involved, becoming secretary. McCarthy was

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[124] Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism*, pp.306-8, 447.
[125] Ibid, pp.306-8.
[126] O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, pp.62-3; Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, p.153.
[127] Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism*, p.447. According to Davitt, Parnell "was by no means as insensible to English popular feeling and possible support in the early stages of the Land League movement as has been represented. His views changed between 1882 and 1885."
[128] *The Radical*, 22 Jan. 1881; Arnstein, *The Bradlaugh Case*, p.215. Arnstein is the only historian to note this January announcement. It no doubt bolstered the efforts O'Connor was making that month to win over the British democracy (e.g. the Newcastle meeting (see pp.88-9 above)).
[129] Indeed, Parnell himself had declared on 17 January that the first arrest under the Coercion Act would be the signal for a general rent strike, with the implication that this would involve the Irish MPs seceding from Parliament to organise the strike (Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, p.146). In the event, it was the rearrest of Davitt on 3 February which sparked the secession crisis, as it led to thirty-six Irish MPs, including Parnell, being suspended from the Commons.

President and the executive committee included Hyndman.[130] Yet what Moody and Lyons overlook, as have all Irish historians, is that Parnell did actually carry out the promises of the Paris letter and the declared purposes of the NLLGB by touring England and Scotland in April 1881 and addressing working class meetings.[131] Thus, Parnell's attachment to the new policy has possibly been underestimated: the Paris letter was something more than a 'gesture' and its results were not confined to the formation of the NLLGB. That Radical support for the Irish cause exceeded the Democratic Federation is also further illustrated.

Equally significant here is that Parnell was accompanied throughout his northern tour by O'Connor. The reasons for this are obvious: with Davitt in prison, T.P. was easily the leading Irish champion of the democratic alliance policy, his knowledge of, and contacts with, working class Radicalism were unmatched among nationalist politicians, and, due to his own strong Radicalism and 'outdoors' speeches since December 1880, he arguably enjoyed a greater standing among working class audiences than any other Irish politician, including Davitt. For T.P., the wheel had therefore come full circle. In the fourth phase of his Irish-Radical alliance he returned to the northern centres of working class Radicalism that he had addressed in the first, only this time with Parnell. Hailed as a great success by *The Radical*, their tour consisted of meetings at Manchester (13 April), Newcastle (16 April), Glasgow (18 April) and Edinburgh (20 April).[132] It sought to maintain the pressure on the government, with Parnell's speeches focusing on why his party was unable to accept Gladstone's Irish Land Act as a final settlement. At the same time, with his talk of just laws creating harmony between Ireland and England, Parnell's tone was far removed from the 'advanced' image he was presenting to Irish-American Fenians at this point.[133] As for O'Connor, his faith in the Irish sympathies of the British democracy was evidently still intact, since at Newcastle he claimed that "the working classes of England...had as keen a nose for smelling out the rights and wrongs of their fellow-countrymen in Ireland"

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[130] Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, p.153; Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement", p.58; Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution*, pp.480-1; *The Radical*, 2 Apr., 4 June 1881; Hyndman, *The Record of an Adventurous Life*, p.255.

[131] Cruise O'Brien, Bew and Brady also fail to mention Parnell's April 1881 tour, the latter's oversight being the most surprising given that O'Connor went on the tour.

[132] *The Radical*, 23 Apr. 1881; *The Times*, 14, 18, 19, 21 Apr. 1881; *Daily News*, 14, 18, 19, 21 Apr. 1881. Parnell did not attend the Edinburgh meeting, but his presence ensured that this tour was covered in more detail by the leading papers (especially *The Times*) than O'Connor's one of December 1880 had been. At Glasgow, where the City Hall was "crowded to excess", Parnell declared it would cheer "the struggling tenantry of Ireland...to see that magnificent meeting of Scotchmen" and claimed Englishmen had recently shown "a most intense anxiety" for information on the Irish land issue (*The Times*, 19 Apr. 1881).

[133] *The Times*, 14, 18, 19 Apr. 1881; *Daily News*, 14, 18 Apr. 1881. For Parnell's contact with American Fenians, see Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, pp.154-7.

as the Duke of Argyll, who had resigned from the Cabinet over the Land Act, "had for smelling out the rights and wrongs of English and Irish landlords."[134]

Unfortunately, the next six months seemed to belie this assertion. Manifestations of popular feeling like Hyde Park and the April tour faded from view and the latter became, in retrospect, the last sizeable demonstration of working class support for the Parnellites rather than the inauguration of a greater movement. It meant that the fourth phase of T.P.'s Irish-Radical alliance was also its last. Indeed, the April tour itself contained indications of what was to follow, as the bulk of the crowd at the Newcastle meeting were apparently Irish, not English, working men.[135] The evaporation of working class enthusiasm for an Irish-Radical alliance is clear from *The Radical*. In late August 1881 the paper basically admitted that the campaign to mobilise the working classes had failed. It conceded that "most working men" were not Radicals and even branded them "apathetic and servile."[136] This failure had much to do with the changed conditions brought by Gladstone's Irish Land Act. The protracted parliamentary struggle over this measure (introduced in April, it did not become law until mid-August) meant that the Parnellites had much less energy to expend on 'outdoors' agitation. It was also harder to rouse the British democracy over the intricacies of a complex Land Act than it was an emotive issue like coercion.[137] But, more than anything, the working classes were perhaps reluctant to back the Parnellites against the government now that they were contesting what was considered a generous Land Act rather than resisting repression, as the Radical Clubs' withdrawal from the Democratic Federation seems to show. (When coercion returned to the forefront, though, with the arrest of Parnell in October, working class Radical opposition resurfaced to some extent.[138]) After all, it could be said that the primary goal of the Irish-Radical alliance – Irish land reform – had been won. Nor was there any sign of substantial working class pressure for the second aim, English land reform. The idea of a mutual land reform campaign never gained momentum. Launching the NLLGB in March, Parnell said that it would focus on Irish land because the English land issue was "not ripe", whilst in September 1881 *The Radical* concluded: "We cannot

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[134] *Daily News*, 18 Apr. 1881.
[135] Ibid, 18 Apr. 1881. The Irish presence at the Edinburgh meeting was also considerable (*The Times*, 21 Apr., 1881). Both contrast with the Glasgow meeting (see note 135 above).
[136] *The Radical*, 27 Aug. 1881. As early as 5 February *The Radical* had expressed concern at the British democracy's seemingly muted response to Irish coercion, but these fears had been swiftly allayed by the Hyde Park demonstration.
[137] Hammond makes this point in *Gladstone and the Irish Nation*, p. 217.
[138] See Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.74.

yet hope for any real national agitation for the Radical reform of our land system."[139] A natural casualty of this decline in working class assertiveness was the drive for greater labour parliamentary representation. The Radical Clubs' secession from the Democratic Federation meant that – in London at least – hopes of a 'new Radical party' had receded. But even before this *The Radical* was complaining that little progress had been made in this area.[140] After a promising start, working class backing for an Irish-Radical alliance had gone the way of its parliamentary counterpart. 'The union of the two democracies' had not materialised, leading Soutter to later label *The Radical* a "costly failure."[141]

At what point O'Connor gave up on his Irish-Radical alliance is unclear. Addressing the Democratic Federation in late July, for example, his tone was markedly different from former pronouncements. Rather than advocating a 'union of the two democracies' or expressing his faith in the British working classes, he spoke in a strongly nationalist vein and emphasised Irish self-sufficiency: "Notwithstanding the hostility of a corrupt press and of a landlord Parliament, he and his friends would fight on until English tyranny should give way before the courage, energy and patriotism of the Irish race."[142] Yet the month before he apparently attended a NLLGB rally in Hyde Park, which attracted some working class support in the shape of the Cleveland and Durham Miners' Associations. And, just three weeks after the Democratic Federation meeting, T.P. went to an Anti-Coercion Association gathering in Bermondsey.[143] Thus, O'Connor's loss of belief in the Irish-Radical alliance was probably gradual rather than sudden. By October, however, he must have known his strategy was dead. His friend Samuel Bennett undoubtedly did, penning for *The Radical* what amounted to a formal announcement of the alliance's final breakdown. In an article entitled "English Democrats and Irish Nationalists" he said the latter did not want Radical aid and that such mistrust was justified by the way Radical

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[139] Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism*, p.447; *The Radical*, 2 Apr., 24 Sept. 1881. *The Radical's* sense of failure over English land reform was doubtless heightened by the fact it had adopted the more drastic solution of land nationalisation. Ineffectiveness on this issue was not confined to the working classes: the parliamentary Radicals also failed to develop a coherent English land reform policy in the early 1880s (see Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, p.192). This tardiness was partly because both working class and parliamentary Radicals first wanted to guarantee Radical control of future land legislation by enfranchising the agricultural labourers. However, through the influence of Henry George the land question made greater progress amongst the working classes during 1882.

[140] *The Radical*, 27 Aug. 1881. There remained the possibility that an independent Radical like Joseph Cowen, with his strong local base in Newcastle, might launch a separate workers party (see Biagini, *Gladstone*, pp.110-11).

[141] Soutter, *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, p.110-14, 126. *The Radical* ceased publication in July 1882.

[142] *The Radical*, 23 July 1881. O'Connor's reliance here on the 'Irish race' contrasts neatly with his *Radical* 'leader' of 4 December 1880. He had spoken then of "that cordial co-operation between all Radicals, without which radical changes are impossible, either in England or Ireland."

support had collapsed: "Irishmen tell me that neither my help nor my gratitude is wanted; that they can fight their own battles...I am not angry at the frequent rebuffs I and other English Radicals have received from the leaders of the Land League. They have abundant cause to be distrustful."[144] Whether T.P. himself explicitly rejected his Radical allies in this way is unclear, but his departure to the United States the following month was effectively an acknowledgement that his political project was finished. The time had not been right. The desertion of the parliamentary Radicals over coercion became the lasting image of 1881. O'Connor's earlier prediction that such an outcome would open a 'chasm' between Radicals and nationalists that would take "years to fill" essentially came true.[145] Certainly, it distanced T.P. himself from Radicalism, pushing him deeper into the nationalist fold. But this process was not irrevocable. His idea of an Irish-Radical reform alliance endured and would be reasserted five years later when political circumstances had changed dramatically. O'Connor had elicited enough of a response from the British working classes for his basic confidence in their Irish sympathies to survive.

In the meantime his nationalism was arguably further strengthened by his trip to the United States. T.P.'s original aim had been to make a profitable lecturing tour, but at Parnell's request he agreed to raise funds for the Irish Party and soothe those sections of Irish-American nationalism angered by the policy of 'testing' the new Land Act. He remained in America until May 1882.[146] It is fair to assume this patriotic atmosphere bolstered O'Connor's nationalist convictions and made British Radicalism seem very remote. Even so, upon returning to Britain this could have mattered little. During T.P.'s absence the possibility arose - at the highest level - of better relations between Radicalism and Irish nationalism. By early 1882 middle class Radicals had become dismayed at the Liberals' continuing reliance on coercion. Building on this, Chamberlain took a leading role that April in arranging the Kilmainham 'treaty' between Parnell and the government. Its main provision was Parnellite help in ending the Land War in return for a satisfactory adjustment of Gladstone's Land Act, but the 'treaty' also held out the prospect of a full-blown Radical-nationalist reform alliance, as Parnell spoke of co-operating "cordially for the future with the Liberal Party in forwarding Liberal principles and measures of general

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[143] *The Radical*, 4 June, 13 Aug. 1881. On 4 June *The Radical* published an advert for the NLLGB meeting (which was the next day) naming O'Connor as one of the speakers.
[144] *The Radical*, 29 Oct. 1881.
[145] See pp.85-6 above. Parnellite relations with the parliamentary Radicals had been further damaged by the Parnellites' guarded response to the Irish Land Act. Radicals saw them as ungrateful (O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, p.84; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.69-70).
[146] See Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.58-61 for details of this American tour.

reform".[147] How would T.P. have reacted to these developments? Judging by his actions four years later, he would surely have forgotten the disappointments of 1881 and, quickly recovering his Radicalism, energetically promoted the alliance if it had indeed emerged. Unfortunately, in 1882 he never got the chance, as his return coincided with the Phoenix Park murders of 6 May. Whilst the Irish part of the Kilmainham settlement survived this tragedy, the ensuing renewal of stringent coercion meant that an active Irish-Radical alliance was no longer viable. As a result, O'Connor displayed only his nationalism over the next few years.

Evidence of this eschewal of Radicalism came with his July 1882 attack on Bright. Here, T.P's earlier anger at the man who shattered his Radical-nationalist expectations and sabotaged his desired alliance joined the effects of his American tour to produce a damning verdict (with Bright having pioneered the Irish-Radical alliance, this attack seemed to symbolise T.P.'s sidelining of that project).[148] But he not only pilloried leading Radicals: he kept away from old Radical friends too. In June a meeting was held in Fleet Street to consider how best to rescue the precarious finances of *The Radical*. People like Sam Bennett were present, but O'Connor was not. Nor was he among the life subscribers the paper listed at this time.[149] That month he also held aloof from a Hyde Park rally against the new Crimes Act, which was organised by the Democratic Federation and chaired by Joseph Cowen. Indeed, in contrast to the Hyde Park meeting of February 1881, not one Irish MP attended this event, showing that even though popular Radicals were again protesting against coercion the breach between them and Irish nationalists remained.[150] T.P.'s absorption in nationalist politics intensified in September 1883 when he became President of the newly formed Irish National League of Great Britain, which superseded the NLLGB. This position made him responsible for directing the Irish vote in Britain and helped establish O'Connor as the leading figure in Home Rule nationalist politics in Britain.[151] It was an office, and a status, he retained for over thirty years.

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[147] Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.73-8; Garvin, *Joseph Chamberlain*, I, pp.348-75; Lyons, *Parnell*, pp.189-207; Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation*, pp.264-314. According to Heyck and Garvin, Chamberlain certainly saw the Kilmainham 'treaty' as promising nationalist aid for Radical reform measures. He had first tried to seal an alliance with Parnell in 1879 (see note 43 above).

[148] See pp.54-5 above for this attack on Bright.

[149] *The Radical*, 3, 10 June 1882. Besides a wish to reduce his Radical links, O'Connor had a more specific reason for cutting his ties with *The Radical*, for the paper, as a supporter of land nationalisation, felt the Kilmainham settlement was too limited and now praised Davitt over Parnell (*The Radical*, 24 June 1882).

[150] *The Radical*, 17, 24 June 1882; Pelling, *Origins of the Labour Party*, p.22.

[151] This change of organisation mirrored events in Ireland, where the Irish National League had replaced the defunct Land League in October 1882. These changes were part of Parnell's shift from land agitation to Home Rule. The extent to which T.P. was involved in the INLGB at this time is shown by a letter he wrote

More immediately, T.P.'s new political course had been set and would gather momentum down to the 1885 general election. In May 1883, for example, he gave vivid proof of his detachment from Radicalism by reversing his earlier support for Bradlaugh and joining the Irish Party, including Parnell, in opposing the Affirmation Bill that would have enabled Bradlaugh to take his seat. The Bill was defeated by a narrow margin and O'Connor celebrated this as evidence of the power of the Irish vote. Controlling the Commons was now more important than defending liberal principles. Then, when in April 1884 Parnell derided Davitt's belief in the British democracy, T.P. stayed conspicuously silent.[152] In both cases Parnell had of course reversed his previous position too. These changes reflected his desire to gain the backing of the Catholic Church in the post-Kilmainham period. Demonstrating the party's antagonism towards the British left in general and irreligious Radicals in particular helped reassure the Catholic bishops. As O'Connor's actions show, he was happy to follow Parnell in this direction. Having refused to play 'champion of the faith' in 1880, he was prepared to do just that by 1883-4.[153] His political identity had seemingly become unequivocally nationalist. "They were not Liberals, not Tories; they were Irish Nationalists and nothing else," T.P. said of the Parnellites at Birkenhead in December 1884.[154] This process culminated with O'Connor penning the infamous anti-Liberal manifesto of the November 1885 general election. Davitt, who disagreed with the manifesto, felt, like others, that O'Connor's influence lay behind Parnell's 'vote-Tory' strategy. Indulging his mistrust of T.P., Davitt even implied to James Bryce that O'Connor had been bought by the Tories.[155] Yet if, as Healy claimed, T.P. was indeed "strong for supporting the Tories", his likely motive was not Tory gold but his professed belief that this would leave the Irish holding the balance of power in

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to Labouchere during the 1885 election, saying he had had "practically the working of the organisation altogether in my own hands" (Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46,015, fol.54: O'Connor to Labouchere, 16 Nov 1885). O'Connor's election to the INLGB presidency in 1883 was another source of tension between him and Davitt, for the latter had seen himself, not T.P., as the leader of the Irish in Britain and so had harboured hopes of securing this office. I am grateful to Mr. John Dunleavy for this point.

[152] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.65-9; O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp.122-3; O'Connor, *Gladstone's House of Commons*, p.335; Arnstein, *The Bradlaugh Case*, pp.211-13; Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, p.258.

[153] O'Day *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp.122-3; Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, pp.242-62; O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, pp.87-90.

[154] *The Nationalist and Irish Programme*, 13 Dec. 1884.

[155] Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism*, pp.481; Bryce Papers, MSS 213, fols.53-4: Bryce, Irish Memorandum, Dec. 1885. According to Bryce, Davitt said: "Parnell erred in going with the Tory party at this election – they are enemies of Ireland & Mr G has tried to help her...He has been guided probably by T.P. O'Connor whom I don't think honest." Labouchere was another who not only believed that T.P. had unduly influenced Parnell's election policy but that the Tories had bought him. See below p.135 for more on this.

Parliament.[156] It was striking confirmation of how far down the nationalist path O'Connor had travelled. The man who started out energetically advocating an Irish-Radical alliance was now prepared to side with the Conservatives if it would bring Home Rule.

However, despite T.P.'s declarations to the contrary his nationalism of 1882-5 was not wholly unqualified. Below the surface earlier political currents persisted, albeit in much reduced form. Firstly, on one occasion – the Birkenhead speech above – O'Connor showed how the dream of an Irish-Radical democratic alliance was not utterly forgotten in these years, as he promised that if "there was a mighty uprising of the agricultural classes of England and Scotland against landlordism, the Irish members would go into it and assist them."[157] Secondly, there were repeated indications that O'Connor's basic political values remained unchanged. Although at times, such as the Affirmation Bill, he had to violate them, his touchstones were still essentially liberalism and democracy. Alan O'Day, who says this was true of many Parnellites in 1882-5, cites, for instance, a speech of O'Connor's at Birmingham in 1883 during which T.P. stated he was "a Liberal – not in the English sense of the word, but as one believing that the staple principles of every constitution should be self-government and popular control."[158] This enduring liberalism came through when O'Connor attacked the Liberals. As before, he often criticised them on liberal or democratic grounds. A good example of this was T.P.'s 1883 journalistic onslaught against Bright after he had called O'Connor a 'rebel'. Discussing Bright's hostility to Home Rule, T.P. said he was not truly democratic because he did not cherish democracy as an end in itself. Instead, Bright had only wanted certain reforms and now that these were won his inner conservatism had been exposed.[159] A similar approach characterises *The Parnell Movement*. Here, the late Liberal government is frequently denounced for trampling on liberal values: "The Ministry, consisting of men, as Mr. Bright proudly declared when he was passing a Coercion Act, who had devoted their lives to the cause of freedom, did everything it could to urge...on the landlords in the crusade of extermination."[160] Thus, whilst nationalism was the motive for O'Connor's attacks on

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[156] Healy to Labouchere, 10 Nov. 1885, quoted in Algar Thorold, *The Life of Henry Labouchere* (London, 1913), p.242. Labouchere told Rosebery just before the election that O'Connor had claimed the Parnellites could "turn the scale so far as to ensure holding the balance in Parliament by getting the Irish in England to vote for Conservatives" (Rosebery Papers, MS 10041, fol.10: Labouchere to Rosebery, 14 Nov. 1885).
[157] *The Nationalist and Irish Programme*, 13 Dec. 1884.
[158] O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp.89-90.
[159] O'Connor, 'The Decadence of Mr. Bright' (20 June 1883), *Gladstone's House of Commons*, pp.341-2.
[160] O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, p.478. Other examples of this pattern include T.P.'s claim (p.530) that the Parnellites' 'relentless war' against the Liberals was how "the lesson of Irish constitutional rights could be most emphatically taught." His use of a liberal discourse is also evident at the close (p.557), where, as in 1880-1, he appeals to the British Liberal tradition of sympathy for oppressed peoples.

the Liberals, the nature of these attacks owed much to his Radical background. The disappointed Radical of 1881 still lurked off-stage.

The third factor qualifying T.P.'s nationalist identity was the Liberal contacts he retained notwithstanding his estrangement from most of the party. Unsurprisingly, they lay outside the Liberal mainstream, being his old editor, John Morley, and the maverick Radical Henry Labouchere. In his *Memoirs* O'Connor claimed that during his time on the *Pall Mall Gazette* his relations with Morley were "of the friendliest". Morley's firm opposition to coercion and T.P.'s then Radicalism help explain this, but Morley was apparently also impressed by the quality of O'Connor's work, for T.P. says he rarely altered it.[161] Due to his U.S. tour O'Connor had to relinquish his *Pall Mall Gazette* post and did not resume it after returning. Indeed, he struggled to re-establish himself in Fleet Street at all and for the next five years depended largely on the American and Irish press for work.[162] His relations with Morley survived his lengthy absence, though, and the two continued to be on good terms, so that T.P. retained a link with the *Pall Mall Gazette*. In January 1883, for example, he told Charles Gavan Duffy that he had "received a note from John Morley, promising a review [of Duffy's book, *Four Years of Irish History*] in the *Pall Mall*".[163] Later that year O'Connor and Morley were drawn into closer contact when Morley entered Parliament (consequently he left the *Pall Mall Gazette*). T.P. recalled talking with Morley at Westminster shortly after his election and this at a time when, according to O'Connor, the English and Irish MPs were 'boycotting' each other.[164] But Morley and T.P. had two major bridges across this supposed divide: Ireland (where Morley was starting to entertain the possibility of Home Rule) and Egypt, where both men were 'non-interventionists'.[165] At present their connection did not signify too much. Instead, its importance lay in the future.

O'Connor first met his other Liberal contact, Henry Labouchere, through the Lambeth Radical Club in 1880.[166] Following his recruitment by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he probably

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[161] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, pp.284.

[162] O'Connor worked for the *New York Sun* from June 1882 to May 1883, when he joined the Dublin *Freemans Journal*. He evidently felt his Fleet Street difficulties were due to anti-Irish feeling, for he wrote in September 1882 of how, amid a general anti-Irishness in England, "Irish journalists are locked out of the newspaper offices" (*Gladstone's House of Commons*, p.255). However, this claim was no more accurate than his earlier belief that joining the Parnellites would ruin his journalistic prospects (see pp.72-3above).

[163] NLI, Duffy Papers, MS 8005 (27): T.P. O'Connor to Charles Gavan Duffy, 31 Jan. 1883.

[164] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, pp.226, 289.

[165] Ibid, I, pp.284, 313-14; O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, p.159; D.A. Hamer, *John Morley: Liberal Intellectual in Politics* (Oxford, 1968), pp.129-46; Morley, "Irish Revolution and English Liberalism", *Nineteenth Century*, Nov. 1882, pp.647-66.

[166] See p.59 above.

further encountered Labouchere within London journalistic circles, as Labouchere had his own paper, *Truth*, but it was Parliament that really brought them together. Politically, they had much in common. Ireland was the obvious issue here. Although Labouchere was at first opposed to an Irish Parliament, he did favour substantial local government and extensive land reform in Ireland. More importantly, he was one of the few Radicals to join the Parnellite struggle against Forster's Coercion Act in 1881, prompting O'Connor to salute his skilful efforts in *The Parnell Movement*. In 1882 Labouchere was again prominent in resisting the Crimes Act and in the process became an informal conduit between the Liberals and the Irish Party, a role he continued to fulfil over the following years.[167] Until 1882 this Irish bond was supplemented by T.P.'s strong Radicalism. In particular, the two men were united by their hostility to the Lords, with Labouchere also desiring its eventual abolition. Another area of agreement was Egypt, for Labouchere, after initially backing British involvement, was a firm proponent of non-intervention by the close of 1882.[168] That he and O'Connor had forged a growing connection by 1885 is clear from Labouchere's correspondence. His letters during the 1885 election crisis frequently mention O'Connor and refer to letters received from him, some of which survive because Labouchere forwarded them.[169] When, in December 1885, Labouchere described how his Irish views had thrown him "into personal...relations with many of the Irish and Parliamentary party", T.P. was surely among those he had in mind.[170]

One last link between Labouchere and O'Connor in this period remains and this was the most significant of all. Like T.P. in 1880-1, Labouchere desired a democratic reform alliance of Radicals and Irish nationalists, especially on the land issue. Realising this goal became the cornerstone of his politics. To him, it would enable Radicalism to triumph by first replacing the Whigs in the Liberal party with the 'democratic' Irish and then being too strong for its opponents.[171] He made an early thrust in this direction in February 1881. Attempting to salvage the idea of Irish-Radical co-operation from the wreckage of coercion and obstruction, he asked the Parnellites to avoid the latter as it only prejudiced

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[167] Thorold, *Labouchere*, pp.152-71; *The Times*, 3 Dec. 1880; O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, p.421; Arnstein, *The Bradlaugh Case*, pp.217-20; *The Diary of Sir Edward Hamilton*, ed. Bahlman, I, p.286-90, II, pp.545, 805; W.S. Blunt, *Gordon at Khartoum* (London, 1911), p.379.
[168] Thorold, *Labouchere*, pp.173-204, 217-20; *Daily News*, 28 Oct. 1880.
[169] For example, a letter from T.P. to Labouchere can be found in the Viscount Gladstone Papers (ADD MS 46, 015, fol.54: O'Connor to Labouchere, 16 Nov. 1885). T.P. is mentioned by Labouchere in the following letters: to Herbert Gladstone, 10 Oct., 17 Nov., 9, 10, 12 Dec. 1885 (Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 015, fols. 53-73), and to Rosebery, 12, 14, 23 Nov., 9 Dec. 1885 (Rosebery Papers, MS 10041, fols. 7-27). Wilfrid Blunt attested to the connection between the two men (*The Land War in Ireland* (p.39).
[170] Labouchere, letter to *The Times*, 26 Dec. 1885, quoted in Thorold, *Labouchere*, pp.264-5.
[171] Thorold, *Labouchere*, pp.205, 235.

their cause in Britain. If they appealed to the British constituencies unencumbered by obstruction they would secure much sympathy, he said. After all, "in England there was a Land Question, and in the counties there was a demand for Home Rule; and, indeed, there were many points on which the democracy of England and Ireland ought to unite."[172] This was basically the approach that O'Connor advocated and was doing his best to implement. Yet, despite this, and his stiff opposition to coercion, Labouchere hung back from T.P.'s Irish-Radical alliance. There were probably several reasons for this. Firstly, his friendship with O'Connor was still in its infancy. Secondly, whilst obstruction did not deter him, Labouchere did feel that the Parnellites had not condemned agrarian 'outrages' enough.[173] Thirdly, at that stage T.P.'s alliance was a labour oriented movement against Liberals as well as Tories rather than a strategy for supplanting the Whigs. The fact that most Radical MPs had voted for coercion did not cause Labouchere to look beyond the Liberals, his vice-presidency of the Democratic League of Great Britain notwithstanding.

However, when, in April 1882, the Parnellites showed their willingness to suppress agrarian violence and work with the Liberals, he naturally responded enthusiastically, for his type of alliance seemed to be emerging. Like Chamberlain, Labouchere interpreted the Kilmainham 'treaty' as a full Irish-Radical reform pact, not just a settlement of the Irish land question. Such a combination would prove irresistible. "The democracy of England and Ireland, with Mr Gladstone at their head, would make short work of Conservative and Whig obstructive trash", he wrote in July 1882. Unfortunately, Sir William Harcourt foresaw this outcome too, said Labouchere, and so, as a Whig, killed the budding Irish-Radical alliance by preventing any softening of the Crimes Act and repeatedly offending the Parnellites during its passage.[174] Although thwarted this time, Labouchere continued to pursue his grand scheme. Writing in the *Fortnightly Review* two years later, he said:

> The Irish MPs are sound upon almost every question; they are even more democratically inclined than us. We want their aid and they want our aid. Irish, English and Scotch Radicals should coalesce. Mutual concessions may be necessary, but this is always the case in political alliances.[175]

The concession that the Radicals would have to make was obviously Home Rule, but to this Labouchere raised no objection. By 1884 he was a confirmed Home Ruler and argued here that a workable plan should be "easy to conceive". In return Radicals would be able to pass their wide-ranging reform programme. According to Labouchere, this included

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[172] *Hansard*, 3rd series, 1881, cclviii, 1784; Thorold, *Labouchere*, pp.154-6.
[173] *The Times*, 1 Nov. 1880; *Daily News*, 1 Nov. 1880.
[174] Thorold, *Labouchere*, pp.161-71; Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation*, pp.292-302.
[175] Henry Labouchere, "Radicals and Whigs", *Fortnightly Review*, Feb. 1884, pp.223-4.

proposals like 'one man one vote', payment of members, land reform (the break-up of 'huge domains') and reform of the Lords. But, more significantly, it also contained those measures of social amelioration that Chamberlain had begun to champion the year before, such as taxation of urban ground landlords, better working class housing and a progressive income tax.[176]

Promisingly for Labouchere, Radical MPs seemed to be heading towards that large Irish concession his alliance demanded. By 1884 most of them were willing to accept an elective national 'board' in Ireland. That year the 'Committee on Irish Affairs', a group of backbench Liberals MPs formed in 1883 and containing many Radicals, moved closer to Home Rule. Acknowledging that the present system of government had 'broken down', the Committee advocated granting Ireland "the widest measure of self-government ...compatible with the maintenance of the Empire."[177] Then, in the winter of 1884-5, Chamberlain made another attempt to strike an accommodation with the Parnellites. Drawing on the developments above, he floated a plan of local self-government in the shape of an Irish 'central board'. It is not necessary here to trace the various phases of this project over the next eight months. More important is the question of Chamberlain's motives. These were basically twofold, but, crucially, they did not include the kind of Irish-Radical reform alliance that Labouchere favoured and which Chamberlain himself had welcomed in 1882 and still liked in theory.[178] In 1883 he expressed doubts to Labouchere about the wisdom of uniting their Conservative and Whig foes and by mid-1885 felt that, with the franchise recently extended, the Liberals would win a large enough majority at the coming election to be independent of the Irish.[179]

In any case the 'central board' plan was not enough to satisfy Irish aspirations. By June-July 1885 the scheme had collapsed as Home Rule overtures from the Tories led the Parnellites and their clerical allies to break suddenly with Chamberlain amid a savage

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[176] Ibid, pp.218-25; Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.199-206; Garvin, *Joseph Chamberlain*, pp.376-407.

[177] Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.92-7; Bryce, *England and Ireland* ('Printed for the Committee on Irish Affairs'), pp.4-5.

[178] Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.97-102; Garvin, *Joseph Chamberlain*, I, pp.575-624, II, pp.3-30; Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, pp.268-74; O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, pp.90-102. For Chamberlain's thoughts on an Irish-Radical alliance, see his letters to Captain O'Shea and John Morley, both 21 January 1885 and quoted in Garvin, *Joseph Chamberlain*, I, pp.586-7. His 'central board' plan was, like the Irish Committee's policy, an attempt to meet the impending parliamentary challenge from Parnell, who was certain to enlarge his party at the next election, especially given the recent Reform Act. Chamberlain nourished hopes that his scheme would finally settle the Irish difficulty. He was also keen for the Liberals to avoid facing the new democracy at the coming election with no Irish policy save coercion, particularly as that democracy now contained thousands of Irish voters.

renewal of earlier Parnellite anti-Radicalism.[180] In these circumstances Chamberlain was even less likely to head a full Irish-Radical alliance. Nevertheless, Labouchere, with a election looming, not only intensified his efforts to create that alliance but earnestly wanted Chamberlain, his Radical chief, to be its leader, urging him to go the extra yard and adopt Home Rule. "Do...be revolutionary", wrote Labouchere on 17 July. "Get the Irish, no matter what it costs...we look to you as our political leader." Shortly afterwards he warned him: "it is all very well expecting to win the elections, but the Irish vote is [important] and if [we turn] the 80 Irish in the House...into your supporters, Whigs and Tories would be dished." Simultaneously, Labouchere was in touch with the Parnellites, telling Healy on 22 July: "We want your votes in the House of Commons; you will...do nothing without ours."[181] Chamberlain, though, responded coldly. Opposed to an Irish Parliament, he felt the Irish were 'gone' after their recent actions.[182] As a result, it would not be Chamberlain, or Healy, who helped Labouchere realise his Irish-Radical reform alliance but the man who had already tried to forge such a combination, T.P. O'Connor.

After O'Connor, the most prominent Parnellite in his Irish-Radical campaign of 1880-1 was Justin McCarthy. He was admirably fitted for such a project. Like T.P., it was a case of bringing the two sides of his identity together. Despite becoming a Parnellite his earlier Radicalism remained strong. He defended Bradlaugh's claims (although, in contrast to O'Connor, this did not reflect a weakening of his Catholicism) and also supported T.P.'s mid-1880 onslaught against the Lords.[183] More obviously, he had taken part in this type of Irish-Radical combination before, having been involved in the Bright-Dillon alliance of the 1860s. With its stress on the democratic union of the Irish and English peoples and its identification of an aristocratic enemy, this previous alliance gave McCarthy a good education in the core values of O'Connor's project, although, as seen earlier, he had begun to develop such ideas even before emigrating to Britain.[184] Like O'Connor, he felt

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[179] Chamberlain to Labouchere, 28 Dec. 1883, quoted in Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, p.195; Chamberlain to O'Shea, 11 July 1885, quoted in Garvin, *Joseph Chamberlain*, II, pp.21-3.
[180] Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell*, pp.288-90; O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, pp.99-102; Garvin, *Joseph Chamberlain*, II, pp. 3-30. Parnell was also moved to throw over Chamberlain because he felt that he could gain more from Gladstone, with whom he had into entered private communications.
[181] Labouchere to Chamberlain, 17 July 1885, quoted in Callanan, *T.M. Healy*, p.126; Thorold, *Labouchere*, pp.230-2.
[182] Garvin, *Joseph Chamberlain*, II, p.27.
[183] O'Donnell, *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, I, pp.483-4. The continued strength of McCarthy's Catholicism comes through in Volume Four (pp.230-8) of *A History of Our Own Times,* where he draws the traditional picture of the Irish peasantry wedded to Catholicism on national as well as religious grounds.
[184] See pp.55-6 above, and McCarthy, *Irish Recollections*, p.82.

that the next stage of this joint battle had dawned. Tapping into the prevailing sense of agricultural crisis, McCarthy argued in August 1880 that the land reform issue would soon dominate "our civilisation." The bitter opposition recently provoked by the moderate Compensation for Disturbance Bill was because it was considered a sign of this coming upheaval in both countries, he said (correctly). Certain measures -'free trade in land' in England and tenant right leading to a peasant proprietorship in Ireland - were inevitable.[185] And, importantly, McCarthy possessed the same confidence as T.P. that in this joint battle the British working classes would rally behind the Irish people, being able to understand the plight of the Irish tenants.[186] For him, such confidence was of course nothing new. It had been evident in his support for the Bright-Dillon alliance, had fuelled his rejection of Fenianism in *The Fair Saxon* and had brought him into the Home Rule movement. Whilst first nourished in Ireland, this faith owed much to McCarthy's emigrant experiences.

These experiences closely resembled O'Connor's. Through his involvement in Radical politics and links with figures like Bright and Mill, McCarthy was similarly exposed to the Liberal belief in working class goodwill towards Ireland. Further, Bright and Mill were themselves examples of English sympathy for his country. When it came to personal contact with working class backing for Ireland, McCarthy, with his working class political connections dating back to the 1860s, had greater experience even than O'Connor. He witnessed, for instance, the working class concern for the Fenian prisoners. In May 1867 he attended a "great public meeting" at St James's Hall to protest against the death sentence imposed on the Fenian leader, Colonel Burke. Mill addressed the audience, which was "altogether an English meeting", said McCarthy. "The hall was crowded with English working men." Later that year he took part with Bradlaugh in a Trafalgar Square rally for the 'Manchester martyrs'.[187] He must have also closely observed the enthusiasm of the new British democracy for the Bright-Gladstone Irish Church campaign of 1868. Such developments persuaded McCarthy that the working classes would support the restoration of an Irish Parliament. Later, he wrote of the 1860s:

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[185] McCarthy, "The Landowners Panic, *Nineteenth Century*, Aug. 1880, pp.305-12.

[186] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, pp.298-9. Speaking in 1893 of the rise of the Parnellite Party, McCarthy said: "we had from the first the most perfect faith" in the British democracy (*The Sun*, 19 Mar. 1893). Whilst not true of the party as a whole, this certainly reflected McCarthy's own outlook.

[187] McCarthy, *A History of Our Own Times*, IV, pp.142-3; Arnstein, *The Bradlaugh Case*, p.207. That working class support for the Fenian prisoners was not short-lived is shown by the activities of the International Democratic Association. Formed in July 1869, this working class Radical body organised meetings on the issue throughout 1869-70 (see Finn, *After Chartism*, p.265-6; Fergus D'Arcy, "Charles Bradlaugh and the English Republican Movement, 1868-78", *Historical Journal*, 25 (1982), pp.367-83).

> I had...a strong faith in the ultimate sense of justice of the English people, of the great working democracy. I had lived in England for many years; I had taken part in many public movements there, and I knew something of the English democracy. Some time or other, I knew, these English democrats...will have the franchise, and enfranchised they will help to give Ireland back her national Parliament.[188]

That working class Radicals did respond positively to the emergence of the Home Rule movement in the 1870s would have not have escaped his notice, for, as seen earlier, he kept in touch with working class Radicalism and its leaders, such as Arch and Holyoake, during the 1870s. Thus, McCarthy's own adhesion to the Home Rule cause in the mid-1870s reflected not only his youthful confidence in the English people but his close contact over many years with the Irish sympathies of the British democracy. Like O'Connor and Davitt, emigration helped convince him that a rationalist appeal to the British working classes was "the true method" for achieving nationalist success.[189]

He now had the chance to test his convictions, and utilise his long-standing Radical links, albeit on behalf of Irish land reform rather than Home Rule. McCarthy's contribution to O'Connor's Irish-Radical reform alliance further illustrates how the 'British' side of the Land War was not inconsiderable. Although his campaigning was confined to London, his actions buttress the earlier assertion that Parnellite efforts to gain Radical and working class backing have been underestimated. Before the alliance proper had begun he was active, speaking with T.P. at the Radical protest meeting against the state prosecution of the Land League on 30 October 1880. He then played his part in the first phase of the alliance, joining O'Connor at the Southwark and Bermondsey Radical Clubs on 19 December.[190] Even after war had been declared on the Liberals, McCarthy remained prominent. He spoke at the Hyde Park rally of 13 February 1881, where, like O'Connor, he demonstrated his own bedrock liberalism, and how his opposition to coercion was due to appalled Radicalism as much as nationalism, by similarly attacking the government in the name of Liberalism. The Irish Party would resist to the end, he said, "the...treacherous measures introduced by the Liberal party, which was false to its traditions."[191] McCarthy naturally accepted the new resolve to rely solely on the working classes. With the 1860s alliance to draw on, he readily embraced T.P.'s call for a 'union

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[188] Justin McCarthy, *Ireland's Cause in England's Parliament* (Boston, 1888), pp.47-8.
[189] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, I, p.330. Other examples of emigrant nationalists who believed in the Irish sympathies of the British working classes include O'Connor's brother-in-law, William O'Malley, who moved to England in 1869 and was an Irish Party MP from 1895 to 1918 (William O'Malley, *Glancing Back* (London, 1933) pp.62-4), and the Fenian turned Home Rule electoral organiser, John Denvir (John Denvir, *The Life Story of an Old Rebel* (London, 1910), pp.182, 253, 271-2). A.M. Sullivan largely falls into this category too (see note 223 below).
[190] *The Times*, 20 Dec. 1880; *Daily News*, 20 Dec. 1880; *The Radical*, 18, 25 Dec. 1881.
[191] *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Feb. 1881; *The Times*, 14 Feb. 1881.

of the two democracies', telling the Anti-Coercion Association on 23 February that as "the democracies of the two countries [understood] one another better they would...band themselves together [in] their common cause."[192]

Moreover, McCarthy was not simply paying lip service to the idea, for he participated in the attempts to realise this democratic union through a 'new Radical party.' Indeed, his efforts on this score were greater than O'Connor's. He attended some of the preliminary meetings of the Democratic Federation in March and was at its foundation conference in June. He then chaired the Federation meeting of 20 July. However, he too seems to have dropped out following the September lurch towards socialism.[193] Earlier, in March, McCarthy had become President of the NLLGB. Given his faith in the British working classes and his involvement in the Irish-Radical alliance, this appointment was as fitting as O'Connor's. No one believed in the NLLGB mission more than its President and its secretary. *The Radical* certainly felt this way. Seizing on the fact they had gone to an Anti-Coercion Association meeting in Bermondsey, the paper described them in August 1881 as "the only two Irish representatives who still believe in the sympathy of...the English democracy" for Ireland.[194] Although not strictly accurate (T.P. was losing faith by this stage), such singling out of O'Connor and McCarthy was a testament to how they had spearheaded Parnellite attempts to secure working class support. And, significantly, it was no coincidence that *The Radical's* last two nationalist believers were emigrants.

How, though, did McCarthy respond to the ultimate failure of the Irish-Radical alliance, both in Parliament and the country? Here, interesting differences as well as parallels begin to surface between him and O'Connor. Despite the setback of 1881 McCarthy, like T.P., did not lose confidence in the British working classes. The dream of a democratic alliance remained for him too, with McCarthy later claiming that in the early 1880s there was "some of us who always thought...the party...should stump this country ...and talk to the English people in favour...of Home Rule."[195] As this suggests, he did not shed his basic liberal-democratic values in these years any more than O'Connor. In fact, whilst T.P. eschewed popular Radicalism and Radical issues at this time, McCarthy retained some links in this area, attending, for example, a woman's suffrage meeting in

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[192] *The Radical*, 26 Feb. 1881. At Hyde Park, McCarthy had assured his audience "that the cause which he and his friends advocated was...the cause of the English as well as of the Irish labouring population" (*The Times*, 14 Feb. 1881).
[193] Hyndman, *The Record of an Adventurous Life*, pp.246-7; Tsuzuki, *Hyndman and British Socialism*, pp.38-40; *The Radical*, 23 July 1881.
[194] *The Radical*, 13 Aug. 1881.

July 1885.[196] However, it was in their relations with mainstream Liberalism that the two men differed most. Whereas O'Connor broke with the parliamentary Liberals in disgust over coercion, McCarthy overcame this obstacle, and his involvement in the attempts to supplant them with a 'new Radical party', to maintain a measure of contact. A similar pattern prevailed in Fleet Street, where, unlike T.P., McCarthy kept his place at the heart of Liberal journalism. This is not to say that the Parnellite-Liberal friction of 1881-5 did not cause him problems. The breakdown of his friendship with Bright shows this. He also found his position in Liberal society under considerable threat. But, essentially, McCarthy remained part of Liberal London in a way that T.P. did not. This reflected the fact that his connection with this world was well established, stretching back to the 1860s. T.P., on the other hand, was only just branching out from his working class Radical base when the coercion battle erupted. He was then absent for six months in America. Hence, it was him rather than the entrenched McCarthy who temporarily lost contact with Liberal London.

McCarthy's *Daily News* post was effectively the focal point of his Liberal network. In the 1870s he regularly dined with Frank Hill, the editor, and John Robinson, the manager, usually at the Reform Club. It was doubtless through Hill and Robinson that McCarthy gained membership of his various clubs, including the Reform.[197] Crucially, this *Daily News* keystone stayed intact even though, in contrast to Morley's *Pall Mall Gazette*, the paper acquiesced in coercion.[198] McCarthy still attended Robinson's Reform Club dinners, for example, and also dined occasionally at Hill's.[199] This *Daily News* continuity is a good example of how his long association with Liberal London now benefited him. By 1881 McCarthy had been on the paper for a decade and had clearly forged close enough friendships with its leading figures to see out the coercion storm, although the fact that he did not resign in protest at the paper's policy shows a healthy concern for his journalistic career. His survival on the *Daily News* undermines O'Connor's claims of Fleet Street hostility towards Parnellite and Irish journalists during the early 1880s.[200]

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[195] Justin McCarthy, "The Tory Leaders and the Irish Party", a speech delivered at the Hull United Liberal Club, 15 Dec. 1887, *Eastern Morning News* (1887), p.7.
[196] McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 9 July 1885 (MS 3701).
[197] For examples of Hill-Robinson dinners see McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 25 Nov. 1871 (MS 3691); 18 Jun, 11 Nov. 1873 (MS 3693); 30 May 1874 (MS 3694); 20 May, 2 Dec. 1876 (MS 3696); 23 Feb. 1878 (MS 3698). See p.52 above for McCarthy's Liberal clubs.
[198] *Daily News*, 4, 15, 24, 25, 31 Jan. 1881; John Morley, *Recollections* (London, 2 vols., 1917) I, pp.173-4.
[199] McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 26 Mar., 22 June, 2 July 1881 (MS 3699); 4, 10 Feb., 22 July 1883 (MS 3700); 6 June 1885 (MS 3701).
[200] See pp.72-3 and note 162 above for O'Connor's claims of Fleet Street hostility.

Indeed, given that it also employed the war correspondents J.J. O'Kelly and Edmund O'Donovan in these years, the *Daily News* almost disproved T.P.'s assertions by itself.

Unfortunately, McCarthy did not fare as well with Liberal society. With the outbreak of the Parnellite obstruction campaign, London doors began to close on him. "Soon the storm burst upon him", wrote O'Connor. "From the moment Justin McCarthy joined the Parnellite ranks he ostracised himself from all his old social friends." H.M. Hyndman told the same story and there is certainly much truth in such claims.[201] McCarthy ceased to call on the staunchly Gladstonian Lady Stanley of Alderley, for example, and his diaries reveal that his social engagements, including visits to Liberal clubs, declined substantially in 1881-3.[202] The bewilderment engendered by his Parnellism could evidently give way to antipathy. But this was not the whole picture. As his *Daily News* dinners show, some social outlets persisted. Even in the higher echelons McCarthy still had friends. Both Lady Dorothy Nevill and Mrs Jeune stayed loyal to him in these difficult years.[203] Other indications exist that his London social life by no means collapsed. In May 1881, for example, he declined a dinner invitation from the novelist Bram Stoker because he had "to go to a party at Campden." Two years later McCarthy was present at a farewell banquet for the actor Henry Irving before his departure to America. Also there were Stoker (who was Irving's close associate and manager) and Liberal friends like Hill, James Knowles, and Edward Russell of the *Liverpool Daily Post*, who had worked under McCarthy at the *Morning Star*.[204] Such events suggest that although he suffered some snubs, McCarthy's place both in Liberal society and London society in general was not entirely ruined by his Parnellism. And by 1885 the worst was over.[205]

A comparable assessment can be made with regard to the Liberal parliamentary party. Whilst there were difficulties in 1881-5, such as with Bright, McCarthy remained on good terms with many Liberals (according to Rosa Praed, he was "a link between the Irish and English parties"). They included some of the front bench. Away from the public conflict

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[201] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, p.70; Hyndman, *The Record of an Adventurous Life*, p.259. McCarthy himself wrote that the average Parnellite was at this time regarded as "a sort of social outcast whom no respectable British citizen could possibly receive inside his doors as a guest" (*The Story of an Irishman*, p.298).

[202] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, I, pp.365-6; McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 1881 (MS 3699); 1883 (MS 3700); 1885 (MS 3701). Of course, there is the possibility that the diaries lack social engagements simply because McCarthy failed to note them as meticulously as before, especially as he now had Parliamentary duties. The Henry Irving dinner of July 1883, for example, goes unrecorded.

[203] McCarthy and Campbell Praed, *Our Book of Memories*, p.43. What non-Irish social engagements there are in his diaries for 1881 and 1883 are almost entirely with Mrs Jeune and Lady Nevill.

[204] Bram Stoker Papers, Leeds University: McCarthy to Stoker, 7 May 1881; Liverpool Record Office, Edward Russell Papers: Personal Book, 1867-9, 1874-6 (920 RUS/2), p.33; McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, I, p.168.

of Parliament, McCarthy's dealings with ministers were often amicable.[206] The most conspicuous example here was of course Gladstone. Another, more interesting, one was Sir William Harcourt, the Home Secretary. He was hardly noted for his Irish sympathies, and had crossed swords with McCarthy in the Commons, but when the latter approached him at this time on behalf of several Irish families seeking greater access to their imprisoned relatives, he responded in a friendly manner, much to McCarthy's surprise.[207] Nor is this all. In March 1881 McCarthy wrote to Harcourt to correct press claims that he had denigrated him in a recent speech. Harcourt wrote in reply: "it is a satisfaction to me to know that I have not caused the disesteem of one whom I have always regarded with personal respect." McCarthy in turn thanked him for his "kind and characteristic letter, friendly...in its tone."[208] These episodes corroborate O'Day's assertion that relations between the government and the Parnellites in 1882-5 were often better than is commonly thought. Once again, McCarthy benefited from his well-established Liberal affinities, which disposed MPs like Harcourt to be friendly, although, as seen earlier with Bright and Gladstone, his Liberal credentials could also heighten Liberal disappointment at his Parnellism.[209] Beyond the frontbench, McCarthy's Liberal contacts inevitably included Labouchere. For them, the political bonds of Radicalism and Ireland were supplemented by the length of their connection. If McCarthy's place at the *Daily News* had indeed been in jeopardy, he could have turned to Labouchere, as he remained a major shareholder.[210]

Yet, when the Parnellites did clash violently with the Liberals in these years, McCarthy, with his strong Liberal associations, understandably found it a trying experience. "It sometimes went very much against the grain with me to...join in such a struggle," he wrote. Like James Bryce, he felt the proper order of things was for the Irish and Liberal MPs to co-operate on Irish reforms. In part this feeling stemmed from his own Liberal ties and regard for Gladstone and Bright. But it obviously also came from the Liberals' Irish record and the fact that the two groups had co-operated so often before, as

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[205] See *Our Book of Memories*, p.15. His diary for 1885 is far more crowded than those for 1881 and 1883.
[206] McCarthy and Campbell Praed, *Our Book of Memories*, p.114. That there could be this contrast between public and private relations is shown by McCarthy's later comment: "Even while we were carrying on our ...obstruction, I was fortunate enough to make many warm friendships among men opposed to Home Rule as well as obstruction" (*The Story of an Irishman*, p.229).
[207] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, II, pp.356-7. McCarthy does not give the exact date of this episode.
[208] Bodleian Library, Harcourt Papers, MSS Harcourt dep.210, fol.47-8: McCarthy to Harcourt, 17 Mar. 1881; MSS Harcourt dep.728, fol.16-17: Harcourt to McCarthy, 16 Mar. 1881.
[209] O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp.61-78.
[210] McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 1 Jan, 5 July 1885 (MS 3701). McCarthy's friendship with Labouchere is also evident from the latter's correspondence. See, for example, Viscount Gladstone Papers (ADD MS 46, 015, fols.24, 74: Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, 2 Mar., 14 Dec. 1885).

McCarthy himself knew from the 1860s. "The Irish people...always look to a Liberal government for...redress", he said in the Commons on 20 May 1880.[211] During the coercion struggle he hoped for a return to this natural order. "I too look out for the days when we shall be engaged in work more satisfactory to...your side as well as to ours", he told Harcourt in March 1881 after Harcourt had written of his satisfaction at soon leaving coercion behind for land reform.[212] In McCarthy's case at least O'Day is right to argue that it was the Liberals who cut Irish-Liberal relations in 1881-2, not the Parnellites.[213] When the Kilmainham 'treaty' seemingly repaired those relations McCarthy was "hopeful and happy." He was not angry at Parnell's 'surrender'.[214] But if he wished for Irish-Liberal harmony, his nationalism should not be underestimated. Whenever it (or his Radicalism for that matter) entailed conflict with the Liberals he was not found wanting. His nationalism always came first. That this threatened his place in Liberal society, and temporarily damaged his popularity as a writer, underlines his dedication to the cause.[215] At the same time, he continued to hope and expect that it would be his and Ireland's best friends, Gladstone and the Liberals, who eventually took up the Home Rule challenge.[216]

If Justin McCarthy is one example of Liberal-Parnellite links during the divide of 1880-5, then Barry O'Brien is another, for he developed contacts on both sides. Although he refused to enter Parliament as a Parnellite in 1880 (perhaps out of residual loyalty to Butt), O'Brien knew Parnell from the outset of the decade and was in touch with his lieutenants, including McCarthy.[217] "He knows most of Parnell's 'Cabinet' personally & pretty well", James Knowles wrote of O'Brien in 1885.[218] These Parnellite contacts were matched by the notable Liberal connections he made. Not encumbered with the Parnellite tag, it was easier for him to maintain closer relations with Liberalism in these turbulent years. His initial Liberal connections were Charles Russell and James Bryce. Neither man endorsed full-blown Home Rule during the 1880-5 Parliament, but both were moving in

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[211] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.248; *Hansard*, 3rd series, 1880, cclii, 148-51.
[212] Harcourt Papers, MSS Harcourt dep.210, fol.47-8: McCarthy to Harcourt, 17 Mar. 1881; MSS Harcourt dep.728, fol.16-17: Harcourt to McCarthy, 16 Mar. 1881.
[213] O'Day's assertion is of course equally true of T.P. (*The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, pp.60-1).
[214] McCarthy and Campbell Praed, *Our Book of Memories*, pp.95-6.
[215] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.251; Doyle, *Justin McCarthy*, pp.20-24; O'Brien, *Parnell and His Party*, pp.44, 66-7.
[216] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, II, p.452; "The Tory Leaders and the Irish Party", a speech delivered at the Hull United Liberal Club, 15 Dec. 1887, p.7.
[217] O'Brien, letter to the *Freemans Journal*, 24 Nov. 1890; O'Brien, *Parnell*, p.209; McCarthy Papers, Diaries, 15 Jan. 1885 (MS 3701). O'Brien told Bryce after Parnell's death in 1891: "I knew Parnell for 11 years" (Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 112, fol.9: O'Brien to Bryce, 9 Nov. 1891)

that direction and believed in the need for extensive Irish reforms. Later, O'Brien met Gladstone, thus bringing him into personal contact with the second of his Liberal heroes, having met Bright in 1884. As this shows, O'Brien was cultivating the higher echelons of the Liberal party, either those already established there, such as Gladstone, or those who soon would be, such as Russell and Bryce. These connections were subsequently of great benefit and will be the focus here. They provide a strong contrast with O'Connor and his working class Radical base, showing that the qualified barrister O'Brien was starting to infiltrate more elevated (and moderate) political and social circles in these years.

His first important friendship was with the Ulster advocate Charles Russell, whom O'Brien published a biography of in 1901 and whose Catholic middle class emigrant background so closely resembled his. They first met through legal channels in 1874, O'Brien visiting Russell's chambers so that the latter could sign his admission to the Bar. There were occasional encounters in the ensuing years, said O'Brien, but "there was no intimacy between us". It was not until the early 1880s that their friendship blossomed. By then Russell was a Liberal MP, having been elected for Dundalk at the third attempt. In these years O'Brien was sharing chambers in the Temple with A.M. Sullivan, the Irish barrister and Home Rule MP, and Russell often called on them, for he had known Sullivan since the late 1850s, when he had contributed a 'London letter' to Sullivan's Dublin paper, the *Morning News*. "Throughout the years 1881, 1882 and 1883 I saw Russell frequently", wrote O'Brien. "It was at this period my intimacy with him began." By 1884 Russell and O'Brien were seeing "more of each other than ever," as the two men had moved to New Court in Lincoln's Inn. Their time together – both at the Temple and Lincoln's Inn – was invariably spent discussing Irish politics.[219]

Russell hung back from Home Rule at this time because he remained unconvinced of the need for an Irish Parliament, not because the idea of Irish self-government frightened him. In his opinion Westminster might still prove an effective medium for Irish reforms. This was because the British masses were "gradually getting power" and he was yet another emigrant Irishman who believed they would support Irish claims. "They, who have grievances themselves, will understand our case and sympathise with us," said Russell.[220] As this suggests, his faith in the British people was theoretical rather than based on the kind of experience of working class politics which McCarthy and O'Connor

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[218] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 232, fol.31: James Knowles to Gladstone, 2 Nov. 1885.
[219] O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, pp. 70, 117-23, 154-7, 185. O'Brien's own affection for Sullivan was evident in his *Life of Russell* (p.70), and also in his *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland* (II, pp359-60).

possessed, although Russell had moved to Britain in time to witness the enthusiastic popular response to the Bright-Gladstone Irish campaign of 1868-9. His faith may have also owed something to the personal influence of like-minded Liberals such as Bryce, Morley and Gladstone. Later, during the Home Rule struggle, he would fortify his earlier confidence through closer political contact with the British people.[221] But for now he showed that an emigrant faith in the British democracy could facilitate Irish Liberalism as well as appear the key to nationalist success.

What of O'Brien in all this? Interestingly, despite being an emigrant he expressed doubts whenever Russell spoke of the Irish sympathies of the British people.[222] The fact that, unlike McCarthy and O'Connor, he had no links with working class Radicalism does much to explain this, although, as Russell illustrates, O'Brien could still have developed a faith in the British democracy, especially when friends like Russell and Bryce had that faith.[223] Yet, he was not entirely dismissive. Instead, whereas McCarthy and T.P. believed in a direct appeal by nationalists to the British democracy, O'Brien felt that Liberal politicians were more likely to triumph with such an appeal.[224] It was another reason why his books, though written for the wider Liberal audience, were specifically aimed at Gladstone and Bright. His strategy was, in effect, to convert them to the Irish cause and then let them convert the British people. But, whether the target was the British democracy or Liberal statesmen, these three had one vital factor in common: emigration had helped convince them that Irish nationalism could operate successfully within the rationalist framework of British politics.

If, as an Irish Liberal, Russell believed Westminster could yet meet Ireland's wishes, then he certainly worked hard himself during the 1880-5 Parliament to ensure this was the case, consistently urging Gladstone, for whom he had great respect, to adopt a constructive and conciliatory Irish policy. He tried to persuade the Liberals that the only alternative to Home Rule (and the only hope for Irish Liberalism) was a full Irish reform programme. Accordingly, he opposed the Coercion Acts of 1881 and 1882 and was a

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[220] Ibid, p.137.
[221] Ibid, pp.199-210, 222. At the 1885 election Russell left Dundalk and became Liberal MP for South Hackney. He retained the seat in 1886 and would be at the forefront of the Liberal Home Rule campaign.
[222] Ibid, pp.154-5, 216-22, 368-9; O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.541-2.
[223] A.M. Sullivan was another of O'Brien's friends to believe in the British people's generosity towards Ireland, telling Parliament in 1876 that "they saw growing up masses of population in the great towns entertaining sentiments of generosity to which the statesmen of former days were strangers" (*Hansard*, 3rd series, 1876, ccxxx, 815-19). Like McCarthy, this belief somewhat preceded emigration, for, although his parliamentary duties brought him to England once a year, he only moved there in 1877.
[224] O'Brien, *Parnell*, p.405.

vigorous proponent of land reform, energetically supporting Gladstone's 1881 Act.[225] His commitment to land reform was demonstrated by the fact that he visited Kerry in late 1880, writing a series of reports for the *Daily Telegraph* which were republished as *New Views on Ireland*. Like O'Brien's *The Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question*, Russell's book advocated the '3 Fs' as the prelude to a peasant proprietorship.[226] As a result of his zeal for reform and resistance to coercion he was on good terms with the Parnellites. It helped that he had known Parnell and emigrant MPs like Sullivan and McCarthy for some years.[227] Russell therefore acted as a Parnellite-Liberal link himself as well as through his friendship with O'Brien, frequently seeking to improve relations between the two sides. "You met Mr Russell and Mr Parnell in the lobbies", wrote F.H. O'Donnell in typically colourful fashion. "You met them in the corridors. You saw them consulting in the libraries."[228] Overlooked by O'Day, Russell provides further evidence that Parnellite-Liberal traffic after 1882 was greater than is often allowed.

When the backbench 'Committee on Irish Affairs' was formed in 1883 with the aim of promoting further Irish reforms (e.g. popular county government, franchise extension and land legislation) by educating British opinion on Irish affairs, Russell became a leading member. Its desire to make Westminster deliver more for Ireland (and so, with franchise reform looming, revive the flagging fortunes of Irish Liberalism) naturally struck a chord with him and in February 1884 he was part of an executive committee charged with overseeing the publication of a series of 'impartial' pamphlets.[229] But later that year the Committee effectively admitted its project was dead and changed tack.

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[225] O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, pp.138, 154-5, 361-2; Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 471, fol.64: Russell to Gladstone, 17 Aug. 1881. During the debate on Forster's Bill Russell told Parliament that coercion was the surest way to ensure a Parnellite triumph in Ireland (*Hansard*, 3rd series, 1881, cclvii, 1757-71). In February 1881 he wrote to Harcourt protesting at the arrest of Davitt (Harcourt Papers, MSS Harcourt, dep.95, fol.35: Russell to Harcourt, 4 Feb. 1881). Then, in early 1882, he pressed Gladstone to deal with the arrears and leaseholder questions (Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 474, fol. 260: Russell to Gladstone, 17 Mar. 1882; ADD MS 44, 475, fol.39: Russell to Gladstone, 15 Apr. 1882).

[226] Charles Russell, *New Views on Ireland* (London, 1880), pp.96-124; O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, p.138. Like O'Brien, Russell concluded his book with a direct appeal to Gladstone (p.129), to whom he sent a signed copy (Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 467, fol.186: Russell to Gladstone, 21 Dec. 1880).

[227] McCarthy, *Reminiscences*, II, pp.90-1; McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 29 June 1881 (MS 3699). It was at McCarthy's Gower Street house in the late 1870s that Russell first met Parnell.

[228] O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, p.155; O'Donnell, *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, II, p.134. The clearest examples of Russell trying to improve Liberal-Parnellite relations date from 1882, when he urged the government to release the imprisoned Irish MPs (Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 475, fol.39: Russell to Gladstone, 15 Apr. 1882; *The Diary of Sir Edward Hamilton*, ed. Bahlman, I, p.70 (4 May 1882)) and later endeavoured to modify the severity of the Crimes Act (Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish Nation*, p.299).

[229] Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 213, fols.5-11: 'Committee on Irish Affairs' circulars, dated March 1883 and 15. Feb. 1884; MSS Bryce 218, fol.1: 'Committee on Irish Affairs' circular, undated, probably Feb. 1884; Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 050, fol.35-8: 'Irish Political Committee' circular, 27 Feb. 1883;

Conceding that a Parnellite triumph at the next election was inevitable and that this challenge should not be awaited, it declared, as seen earlier, that the current system was insupportable and that the largest amount of Irish self-government compatible with Imperial unity should be granted without delay.[230] This new departure was somewhat in advance of Russell. Although considerably closer to Home Rule by 1884-5, being swayed by the depth of Irish popular support for an Irish Parliament, he retained some faith in Westminster and preferred Home Rule to follow more urgent measures like local government and land reform. He and O'Brien were thus separated now by means rather than end, O'Brien of course wishing to go directly for Home Rule.[231]

An interesting feature of O'Brien's relations both with Russell and Parnell was how he supplied them with useful historical information for their speeches. They certainly needed such help, for, unlike most nineteenth century Irish politicians, their historical knowledge was limited. "Of distinguished Irishmen", wrote O'Brien, "none probably knew less of political history than Charles Russell and Charles Stewart Parnell." O'Brien helped them overcome such ignorance. During the February 1881 debate on coercion, for example, Parnell, after being coached by O'Brien, told the Commons how O'Connell had employed obstruction against a Coercion Bill of the early 1830s, whilst Russell was advised by O'Brien to examine the evidence given to an 1839 House of Lords Select Committee on Irish 'outrages' and note the testimony of Thomas Drummond, the Under-Secretary, which proved that reform, not coercion, reduced crime.[232] However, such piecemeal advice paled into insignificance beside the aid that O'Brien gave Russell during the Parnell Commission of 1888-9, for he was among those who helped him prepare the epic historical speech with which he opened for the defence.[233] Russell sought to show how Irish agrarian crime had existed for decades and so sprang from the land system itself rather than being a Land League invention. His debt to O'Brien came through in his speech, most obviously when he quoted from *Fifty Years of Concessions to*

Harvie, "Ideology and Home Rule: James Bryce, A.V. Dicey and Ireland, 1880-87," *English Historical Review*, xci (1976), pp.303-5.

[230] Prefatory notes to Bryce, *England and Ireland*, pp.1-5; Bryce, "How We Became Home Rulers", in Bryce (ed.) *Handbook of Home Rule*, p.53.

[231] O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, pp.137-8, 196-7.

[232] O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, pp. 134-6; O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.209-10; *Hansard*, 3rd series, 1881, cclvii, 1816-17; MacDonagh, *The Home Rule Movement*, pp.147-8.

[233] O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, pp.216-55. The others to help Russell included his and O'Brien's friend, Charles Gavan Duffy. In late 1888 Russell wrote to Duffy asking him to think of "any historical authorities or parallels worth quoting" in his speech (Duffy Papers, MS 8005 (32): Russell to Duffy, 10 Dec. 1888).

Ireland. He also cited authorities recommended by his friend.[234] As helping Russell benefited Parnell too, the Parnell Commission can be seen as the apogee of O'Brien's historical services to the two men.

Another man well aware by this time of the political value of O'Brien's historical knowledge was James Bryce. Identifying exactly when these two historians first met is difficult, but it seems reasonable to assume it occurred in the early 1880s. Firstly, by 1886 they were good friends, thereby suggesting that contact had begun earlier. Secondly, they inhabited the same legal world, as Bryce was a practising barrister until 1882 and lived in Lincoln's Inn until 1884.[235] Thirdly, and most significantly, Bryce knew Russell and so could easily have met O'Brien through him. Bryce no doubt first encountered Russell through legal channels (as barristers, they both worked the northern circuit in the 1860s), but any existing links were greatly strengthened in 1880 when they both became MPs. After voting for Forster's Coercion Bill in 1881, a decision he later regretted, Bryce, like Russell, looked to promote Irish reforms and improve Liberal-Parnellite relations. In 1882 the two men were among those who sought to soften the Crimes Act and then in 1883-4 Bryce worked alongside Russell in the 'Committee on Irish Affairs'. He too was on the publication executive and in fact was very much the Committee's driving force.[236] Yet he became more disillusioned than Russell, frustrated not only by Parliament's inability to tackle Irish problems but its general ineffectiveness and disorganisation. Increasingly convinced the status quo was untenable, he felt by 1884 that some kind of Home Rule was the only solution, coercion and Crown Colony government being unpalatable to the British democracy (Harvie speculates that Bryce also embraced Home Rule as an alternative to Chamberlainite state intervention in social issues).[237] The Committee's 1884 change of front therefore reflected Bryce's outlook more than Russell's and was probably written by the former. This advance towards Home Rule, albeit for what he called 'negative' reasons, brought Bryce closer still to O'Brien, whilst for O'Brien

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[234] O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, pp.220, 244-6; Sir Charles Russell, *Speech Before the Parnell Commission* (London, 1889), pp.65-81. One of the authorities which O'Brien ensured Russell made extensive use of was George Cornewall Lewis's *Irish Disturbances* (1836).

[235] Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 157, fol.33: letter to Bryce from unidentified correspondent, 3 Dec. 1883.

[236] Bryce, "How We Became Home Rulers", in Bryce (ed.) *Handbook of Home Rule*, p.41; Fisher, *James Bryce*, pp.204-8; Thorold, *Labouchere*, pp.162-6; Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 213, fols.5-11: 'Committee on Irish Affairs' circulars, dated March 1883 and 15. Feb. 1884; Harvie, "Ideology and Home Rule: James Bryce, A.V. Dicey and Ireland, 1880-87", pp.303-5; Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, pp.203-4.

[237] Bryce, "How We Became Home Rulers", in Bryce (ed.) *Handbook of Home Rule*, pp.29-54; Fisher, *James Bryce*, pp.197-221; Harvie, "Ideology and Home Rule: James Bryce, A.V. Dicey and Ireland, 1880-87, pp.303-14; Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, pp.202-4, 238-9.

contact with Bryce increased his Liberal party connections and gave him a personal link with the world of academic liberalism.

O'Brien's final pre-1886 Liberal connection was the most notable, being Gladstone. Having brought himself to Gladstone's attention through his work on the Irish land issue, O'Brien followed this up by sending the Liberal leader the two volumes of his *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland* when they were published in October 1883 and October 1885 respectively.[238] This time his method of rationalist persuasion through history was turned to the Home Rule cause. Reiterating how the British public lacked the required knowledge of Irish history, O'Brien explores not just the Irish land question but all the major Irish legislation of the past fifty years in order to show how Westminster has failed to either consider or conciliate Irish public opinion, surrendering only to the threat of force. What 'concessions' there have been have lacked a sense of generosity or grace. Consequently, the Union has not pacified the Irish people. As an experiment, it has failed. "There was hand-to-mouth legislation, but no true policy of redress", writes O'Brien at the close of the second volume, "the government of Ireland, according to English ideas, has broken down." In the light of these historical experiences, the Irish are justified in their demand for Home Rule. No settlement will be acceptable to the Irish people, he avers, which does not establish a system of "Home Government."[239]

If *Fifty Years of Concessions* continued O'Brien's strategy of wielding history for political purposes, then the various influences and ambitions delineated earlier necessarily combined to ensure that it also maintained the standards and style of his previous work on Irish land. His approach was again dispassionate, his desire for accuracy once more evident in his extensive use of original sources (the facts will be stated 'simply and fairly', says O'Brien[240]). These features of O'Brien's work, and with it his aspiration to be a serious historian, are underlined by comparing *Fifty Years of Concessions* to *The Parnell Movement*, for O'Connor, with his Parnellite identity and background in popular journalism rather than intellectual liberalism, is more partisan in tone and less concerned with anchoring his narrative in original material. As before, O'Brien had drawn his political lessons from the long-term patterns of history and, as in his second title, had focused on recent parliamentary history. Liberal authorities again litter the text, especially Bright, who is frequently lauded. Like Gladstone, Bright was sent the first volume by

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[238] *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. XI*, ed. Matthew, pp. 38, 412.
[239] O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, II, p.427
[240] Ibid, I, p.12.

O'Brien in October 1883.[241] More importantly, the strident Home Rule conclusion reflected the fact that by the time the second volume appeared a general election was only a month away and Home Rule had, over the summer, come to the front. Although Liberal opinion was once more O'Brien's main audience, Gladstone alone was his specific target at the close, as appealing to Bright no doubt seemed less worthwhile now that he had turned against Irish nationalism. Home Rule, said O'Brien, was "not above the stature of the great statesman who has already striven...honestly and...successfully to do justice to [Ireland]."[242] This targeting of Gladstone is interesting considering it came at a time when the Parnellites were publicly nearer to the Tories than the Liberals. Established factors - Gladstone's Irish record, his past impact on O'Brien and O'Brien's Liberal affinities - largely explain this, but there was another, more significant, reason for it and this was that by October 1885 O'Brien had learnt how Gladstone was moving towards Home Rule.

On 5 August Gladstone was informed by Katharine O'Shea that the earlier 'central board' scheme would no longer suffice; only self-government along Colonial lines would satisfy Parnell now. With Parnell expected to sweep the board at the coming election, the stakes had been raised. In response, Gladstone wrote that day to James Knowles of the *Nineteenth Century*, advising him that the Irish question would soon occupy first place and that he should "present to the world solid and relevant materials of judgement" with regard to it. One area requiring treatment was the history of the Union, on which a "searching and impartial" article was needed. To help Knowles find authors, Gladstone added: "You might try Mr. Bryce...There was also an O'Brien, I think a Barry O'Brien, who wrote an excellent book on the Parliamentary History of Irish Land."[243] This letter raises several points. Firstly, it is an early sign that in his consideration of the Home Rule issue Gladstone was much concerned with the historical dimension. Secondly, it clearly echoes the McCarthy-Knowles episode of 1880. Together, Gladstone and Knowles were again looking to fix public attention on Home Rule, although this time the initial move came from Gladstone rather than Knowles. And, thirdly, McCarthy's place would now go to O'Brien. The same reasons that had led Gladstone and Knowles to fasten on McCarthy held true for O'Brien. As the style and content of his books showed, his nationalism was reasoned and moderate enough (like his second book, *Fifty Years of Concessions* ends with a commitment to the Empire) to predict a fair reception for the articles from English

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[241] O'Brien, *John Bright*, p.11. For references to, and praise of, Bright in *Fifty Years of Concessions*, see I, pp.2-3, II, pp.168-9, 220-4, 231-2, 265-7, 280-2, 362, 424.
[242] O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, II, p.427.

public opinion.[244] Indeed, not being a Parnellite MP O'Brien was even better qualified here than McCarthy had been (McCarthy's Parnellism no doubt ruled him out this time). Equally importantly, O'Brien too had the credentials for writing on Ireland, especially its history. Gladstone knew this from O'Brien's books and his letter to Knowles is further evidence of his high estimation of O'Brien's work. Gladstone also knew from O'Brien's work that he could write with the required impartiality. For O'Brien, the personal consequences of impressing Gladstone had begun to emerge.

Knowles acted quickly on Gladstone's advice, contacting O'Brien within a few days and inviting his help with regard to a series of articles, "not on Home Rule, but on the Irish case generally." O'Brien called on Knowles and the upshot of their meeting was that O'Brien, whilst agreeing to write the essays and arranging that the first one should be a 'dispassionate' history of the Union which examined whether it "had proved a successful experiment or not", suggested that Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, the Young Ireland leader turned colonial politician, should write them instead, as he was in London at this point. O'Brien had known Duffy since the mid-1870s, having met him through a mutual friend, the Irish MP and lawyer Patrick MacMahon, who had been a parliamentary colleague of Duffy's during the Tenant Right struggle of the 1850s.[245] At this stage O'Brien did not know for sure that Gladstone had sponsored the articles, as Knowles simply said a "very great man" was involved. However, Knowles did add that O'Brien would probably guess his identity and O'Brien - with Duffy's help - duly did. Realising, then, that Gladstone was behind the project, O'Brien could only conclude that he was gravitating towards Home Rule, particularly as Knowles – reflecting Gladstone's letter to him - said the 'great man' felt Home Rule had "come to the front and must be faced." Duffy certainly believed that Knowles's disclosures meant that Gladstone was about to adopt Home Rule. This impression was reinforced by Gladstone's September election address.[246] Thus, when, two months later, O'Brien issued his appeal to Gladstone in *Fifty Years of Concessions*, he had good grounds for believing that Gladstone would prove a receptive audience.

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[243] *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. XI,* ed. Matthew, pp.380-1; Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, p.474.
[244] *Fifty Years of Concessions*, II, p.427. For more on O'Brien and the Empire, see Chapter 7 below.
[245] O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.364-5; O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, pp.124-5. O'Brien first met Duffy during Duffy's visit to Europe in 1874-6. He then corresponded with him after his return to Australia in 1876. The closeness of their friendship is shown by the fact Duffy acted as godfather to O'Brien's daughter Sarah and his eldest son Henry, whose full name was Henry Duffy Barry O'Brien (for this information, I am grateful to Barry O'Brien's grandson, Mr. R. Barry O'Brien). Duffy later contributed to O'Brien's biographies of Thomas Drummond and Parnell, whilst O'Brien wrote Duffy's entry for the *Dictionary of National Biography*. O'Brien had shared chambers with MacMahon in the early 1870s (*Life of Russell*, pp.118-19).
[246] O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.365-6.

Meanwhile, the Knowles article had been put on hold, eventually appearing in November 1885 with O'Brien, not Duffy, as the author. It was entitled 'Irish Wrongs and English Remedies' and by then Knowles had confirmed Gladstone's involvement. That same month Gladstone began his election speeches. Although he would soon sketch a plan for an Irish Parliament in private, his aim in these speeches was, in keeping with his August letter to Knowles and his September election address, merely to focus attention on Ireland as the question of the hour, to make others recognise the wisdom of a generous measure of Irish self-government. He felt that it would be disastrously premature to go further. Ireland must first give her electoral verdict, not least because until then it would be impossible to swing the Liberal party behind Home Rule. He also hoped that the Tories might settle the issue instead. Writing to Lord Rosebery on 13 November, Gladstone said that he had simply "endeavoured to lay the ground by stating largely the possibility and the gravity, even the solemnity, of that demand [i.e. self-government]. But well I know…that a new project of mine launched into the air, would have no *momentum* [to] carry it to its aim."[247]

O'Brien's article for Knowles was part of this Gladstonian process of 'laying the ground', with Gladstone ensuring this was so by checking O'Brien's essay before publication. It was for this reason that Duffy had not written the article. He wanted to be bolder and outline "an Irish Constitution". Gladstone did not want his careful strategy hijacked in this way and so, through Knowles, he insisted on O'Brien being the author.[248] As originally arranged, therefore, and as Gladstone desired, the article confined itself to examining whether the Union had been a success or not. It was essentially a condensed version of *Fifty Years of Concessions*, covering the same field of recent British legislative incompetence and making the same case: that the Union had failed and that the Irish cry for self-government was justified, springing from historical causes rather than an 'irreconcilable' temperament (Are the Irish people unreasonable in being disloyal to an arrangement that has done this?" asks O'Brien at the end). In this way it laid the Home Rule ground for Gladstone. By showing the historical validity of the Home Rule demand O'Brien's article would hopefully make its readers confront the issue and accept the necessity of some measure of Irish self-government. And to Gladstone, broadcasting the

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[247] Morley, *The Life of Gladstone*, ii, pp.355-60; Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, p.381; Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, pp.475-83; Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.244-55. As Jenkins points out, Gladstone also thought he had plenty of time to produce a plan because he expected a healthy Liberal majority at the coming election.

[248] O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.365-6.

historical legitimacy of Home Rule was important because, tutored by O'Brien, he too now felt that knowledge of Irish history in Britain was "dangerously deficient".[249]

It was around this time - November 1885 - that O'Brien first met Gladstone, later recalling his "magnificent" voice and "delightfully scoffing accents". O'Brien in turn struck Gladstone, thereby adding to the high opinion Gladstone already had of him from his work. Writing to Gladstone on 2 November, Knowles, who was also impressed by O'Brien, said: "I am so glad you liked him & his work. I never saw him until I hunted him up to do a series of Irish articles for me – but what I see & hear of him is very prepossessing."[250] This letter suggests that it was probably Knowles who introduced O'Brien to Gladstone, although it may have been Bryce or Russell. November 1885 also saw Knowles contact O'Brien about his second piece for the *Nineteenth Century*. It was time, said Knowles, to "have an article on Home Rule" and so this essay, 'A Federal Union with Ireland', did as Duffy had earlier wanted and grappled with the details of a Home Rule scheme, with O'Brien outlining the kind of constitution that he felt Parnell would accept. The main question was the division between Irish and Imperial affairs. The article was an attempt to show what Home Rule would actually entail. As before, Gladstone was kept informed, approving the essay prior to publication.[251] It was understandable he should do so. By the time the article appeared in January 1886 it was no longer a case of 'laying the ground' but of educating the Liberal party in the realities of Home Rule. This was because following the press revelation in mid-December that Gladstone was to adopt Home Rule the chances of a Tory led non-partisan approach had faded and it had become increasingly apparent that the Liberals would have to take-up Home Rule. At the same time Gladstone's desire to avoid conducting that education himself by producing a plan had intensified since, as well as his concern for Liberal unity (itself required to form a Liberal government), he knew that, with the election having left the Liberals needing Irish support to hold office, such a move would be deemed a bid for the Irish vote. O'Brien's second piece clearly met both these requirements, but the impact of such indirect education was necessarily limited.[252]

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[249] O'Brien, "Irish Wrongs and English Remedies", in O'Brien, *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies*, pp.1-30; Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, p.379.

[250] O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.366-7; Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 232, fol.31: Knowles to Gladstone, 2 Nov. 1885.

[251] O'Brien "A Federal Union with Ireland", in O'Brien, *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies*, pp.152-66; O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.374-5; O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, p.197.

[252] Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, pp.481-5; Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.244-63. Another example here was Bryce's "Alternative Policies in Ireland", which appeared in the February *Nineteenth Century*, although its origins can be traced back to Gladstone's August 1885 letter to Knowles.

Aware that Gladstone had approved his second article, O'Brien now knew for certain that the Liberal leader meant to adopt Home Rule, and by February 1886 Gladstone had formed his third administration along Home Rule lines. In doing so it became clear that O'Brien's Liberal contacts had acquired a distinctly front bench flavour, for, besides his links with Gladstone, his two main Liberal connections, Bryce and Russell, had become Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs and Attorney-General respectively. In addition to their abilities, these appointments reflected how, as the 'Committee on Irish Affairs' showed, both men were well-versed in Irish politics and in advance of most Liberals on the Home Rule issue. In Bryce's case, it also reflected how he had decided that only the front bench offered a means of making Parliament effective.[253] Meanwhile, in April 1886 a third article by O'Brien appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*. Entitled "Three Attempts to Rule Ireland Justly", it placed Gladstone alongside William III and Lord Melbourne as one of only three British statesmen to have dealt constructively and honestly with Ireland. Despite these past legislative efforts, though, Ireland remained "the difficulty...of the Empire." The remedy, said O'Brien, was Home Rule. The publication of the article coincided with the introduction of the Home Rule Bill into Parliament, thereby showing how the whole series had, understandably, mirrored Gladstone's changing political needs.

Whilst setting forth Gladstone's personal credentials for solving the long-standing Irish question, this essay was more important for its attempt to place his Home Rule policy within a Whig/Liberal tradition of trying to pacify Ireland. This strategy was an early attempt to counter two strands of opposition. Firstly, in answer to the argument that Home Rule was an 'unnatural' break with the constitution, it demonstrated that it in fact had deep roots in British political history. Secondly, and more specifically, it rebutted claims by dissentient Liberals that Home Rule went against 'true' Liberalism. This, they said, had always been Unionist and, referring to the democratic ideals of the 1860s, had focused on the moral instruction of the electorate rather than surrendering to numbers. By unveiling Home Rule as the latest instalment of a historic Liberal mission of 'justice to Ireland', the article showed that it was actually an inherently Liberal policy, being in keeping both with the party's heritage and Liberal 'moral politics'.[254] For O'Brien to be

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[253] O'Brien, *Life of Russell*, p.197; Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, pp.203-4.

[254] O'Brien, "Three Attempts to Rule Ireland Justly", in O'Brien, *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies*, pp.31-62; Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, p.561; Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, p.229; Dunne, "Les trahison des clercs: British Intellectuals and the first home rule crisis", *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii (1982-3), pp.134-73. O'Brien's inclusion of William III in his article is further evidence of his intellectual liberalism, as it almost certainly stemmed from reading (as O'Brien had) Macaulay's *History of England*, of

constructing Liberal 'tradition' in this fashion was eloquent testimony to how he had gravitated towards the party in the preceding six years. Unfortunately for him, not enough Liberals saw it his way for Home Rule to pass the Commons and this was followed by a crushing Gladstonian defeat at the 1886 election. In the wake of these setbacks the latter faced the daunting prospect of re-directing public opinion into a Home Rule channel.

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which William III is the hero (see *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies*, Appendix A, pp.221-33). I am thankful to Mr. Owen Dudley Edwards for this point.

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'Home Rule in Fleet Street': T.P. O'Connor and *The Star*, 1886-90

Despite the size of the task confronting the Gladstonians in their battle to win the British public over to Home Rule, they at least had the support of their new Irish allies, both within the Parnellite party and outside it. Nowhere was this more evident than with regard to the three Irishmen under consideration here. As befitted their emigrant status, O'Brien, O'Connor and McCarthy all had prominent roles in the Liberal Home Rule campaign in Britain, either as writers or speakers, or both. In the next two chapters, though, the focus will be on O'Connor and O'Brien, not McCarthy. This is because for them the later 1880s represented a period of considerable change. Due to the Liberal need for Irish political talent they were both drawn (or in T.P.'s case redrawn) ever more closely into the political-journalistic world of Liberal London, and at a higher level too. For McCarthy, the sense of difference was probably less acute. His connection with the *Daily News*, which continued despite a temporary withdrawal, was long-standing. He had worked in tandem with the Liberals before. Furthermore, though he was also brought into greater contact with Liberal society after 1886, this was effectively a return to his popularity of the 1870s. It was as much a case of regaining lost ground as entering new territory. Thus, references to McCarthy will recur but he is not the central concern. Instead, it is the contributions made by O'Brien and O'Connor to the Liberal literary and journalistic campaign for Home Rule that will be explored in detail. In the process a comprehensive account of that campaign will emerge.

The explosive manifesto to which O'Connor put his name in November 1885 marked the low point in his relations with the Liberal party, but within nine months things were very different. As a result of Gladstone's adhesion to Home Rule and the subsequent struggle inside and outside Parliament, T.P., like the rest of the Irish Party, found himself on closer, more equable terms with the Liberals (the Unionist introduction of coercion in 1887 consolidated this growing intimacy). With O'Connor, what is interesting is how he tried to aid this process himself. Once Gladstone's initiative had begun a re-adjustment in relations, T.P. responded in kind. During 1886 he exhibited a flexible, conciliatory approach towards the new situation (as early as December 1885 he told Labouchere that

"he would do anything in reason" to reach a settlement with the Liberals[1]). He showed that in his case at least political movement was not confined to the Liberal side. This accommodating attitude was perhaps most apparent in his speech on the second reading of the Home Rule Bill in June 1886. For a start, he used this opportunity to soften his line towards John Bright, whom he had again criticised as recently as July 1885.[2] Referring to the letter in which Bright declared he would vote against Home Rule, T.P. remarked: "I am not going to say one harsh word...I have said harsh words of the right. Hon. Gentleman, and I regret having said them." Given that very few of O'Connor's actions had provoked the same level of Liberal displeasure as his attacks on Bright, it made sense to try and ease such painful memories at this critical juncture. Another sign of his conciliatory attitude was his willingness to accept various safeguards for the protection of the minority in Ireland. Most strikingly of all, he argued that the impending vote was simply one of principle (i.e. Irish self-government) rather than details, some of which (e.g. the exclusion of Irish MPs from Westminster) had caused widespread anxiety among the Liberals.[3] Although Healy felt that in "suggesting compromise" T.P.'s "judgement was sound", Parnell was angry that he made no attempt to tie Gladstone down to detail. For him, O'Connor's readiness to conciliate went too far.[4]

A second example of T.P.'s diplomacy was *The Parnell Movement*. The first edition (published in early 1886) was completed before Parliament met in January and constituted an opening shot in the Home Rule battle. One of the central themes of the book is the treachery of the Whig/Liberal party towards Ireland. O'Connor selects several points during the nineteenth century (1833, 1846-52, 1880) when the Irish members at Westminster entrusted their hopes to the Liberals only to find such faith shamelessly betrayed. Such a narrative was obviously designed to show the need for the independent Parnellite party. Further, he closes the book with a distinctly unflattering account of Liberal behaviour at the 1885 election. Although Gladstone (unsurprisingly) is spared, the majority of the party are criticised heavily. Driven by the need to explain away Chamberlain's Radical programme, and with little else to put forward, the Liberals resorted to an anti-Irish cry, says O'Connor. This was acceptable enough where the constituency did not contain an Irish contingent, but caused problems in the reverse

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[1] Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 016, fol.73: Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, 12 Dec. 1885.
[2] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.77.
[3] *Hansard,* 3rd series, 1886, cccvi, 848-84; Loughlin, *Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question*, pp.101-2.

situation. In these latter areas the Liberal candidates instead cajoled and wheedled the Irish voters, promising future benefits and repenting past mistakes.[5] This unfriendly portrait was no doubt intended to provide additional justification for the anti-Liberal manifesto besides the main motive of electoral arithmetic (i.e. the need to balance the two parties). By concentrating on Liberal turpitude O'Connor hopes to make Parnellite policy appear more reasonable. When the second edition of *The Parnell Movement* was published in June, though, the situation had of course been transformed. With the debate on the second reading of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill in progress, the Parnellites and Liberals were starting to re-position themselves as allies. Significantly, T.P. recognised this change in his book, appending another page or so in an effort to moderate the previously antagonistic ending. Gladstone, naturally, is lauded, both for his "great speech in introducing the Government of Ireland Bill" and for 'obliterating' the "bitter measures of so many centuries." More importantly, the Liberal party itself is praised. "No cause," says O'Connor, "yet adopted by English Liberalism has failed ultimately to triumph." Whilst this was a widely held belief, being based on recent history, this confidence in Liberal tenacity contrasts neatly with the recurring Liberal treachery noted above.[6]

What prompted these conciliatory moves? At the forefront was obviously the desire to obtain Home Rule. In Parliament he sought to improve the Home Rule Bill's chances by allaying Liberal fears, whilst both there and in *The Parnell Movement* he was aware, as its author, that the bitter legacy of the anti-Liberal manifesto required softening and that he especially had ground to make-up.[7] Beyond this lay the question of his Radical past. Given that past and his Gladstonian sympathies, it was understandable that he should react positively to the fact that Home Rule had been embraced by the Liberals, not the Tories. But there was more to it than this. T.P. had his eye on the political future. Firstly, with the Home Rule outlook cloudy, an extended Irish-Liberal campaign on the issue was becoming a possibility (a prospect raised by his reference to Liberal doggedness). More significant was the shape that campaign was likely to take. Those who objected to Home Rule were primarily Whigs and moderate Liberals. Even though Chamberlain and his associates eventually voted against the Bill, the majority of Radicals inside and outside

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[4] Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day*, I, p. 255; William O'Brien, *Evening Memories* (Dublin and London, 1920), p.129.
[5] O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, pp.2-3, 110-11, 314, 543-56.
[6] Ibid, 2nd edn (London, 1886), pp.519-20; Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.337-8.
[7] Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day*, I, p. 255. "We Liberals are more or less seething with rage at Irish hostility during the recent election", wrote T.P.'s old friend Atherley Jones in January 1886 (*Looking Back*, p.37).

Parliament stayed loyal to Gladstone. "Chamberlain has only twenty Radicals with him", John Morley told Wilfrid Blunt in May 1886. "The Radical party of the country is quite sound for Home Rule." Davitt spoke to Blunt in a similar vein and Chamberlain himself conceded that 'out of doors' Liberalism was behind Gladstone. Radical influence within both the Liberal party and the movement as a whole was greatly enhanced. Radicalism would be the backbone of any Liberal Home Rule crusade.[8] For T.P., the signs were clear. The Irish-Radical democratic alliance he had unsuccessfully promoted in 1880-1, and never entirely forgotten, at last seemed to be emerging. That he saw it in these terms is revealed by the last sentence of the second edition of *The Parnell Movement*, where he revives his earlier anti-aristocratic rhetoric and his 'union of the two democracies' idea: "Between the two democracies rushing to each other's embrace...stands the aristocracy, combined from different parties, to crush popular rights."[9] Echoing Gladstone, O'Connor had cast Home Rule in familiar Radical terms. It was the 'people' versus 'privilege'. He was thus beginning to reassert the Radical side of his identity. His political vision looked set to be realised and T.P. wanted to secure his place at its head. Restoring friendly links with the Liberals would lay the foundations for a full return to the Radical fold.

Exactly how he responded after 1886 to this emerging Irish-Radical alliance will be the main concern here. The principal medium through which he conducted this response was the press. His renewal of good relations with the Liberals would bear fruit in 1888 when, with Liberal aid, he established *The Star* newspaper. From this editorial platform O'Connor proceeded to promote Home Rule and develop his plans for the Irish-Radical combination. That he operated chiefly through the press is no surprise considering that he was a journalist. Yet there were also wider, more significant, reasons why the newspaper world became the focus of his efforts. By examining them another important aspect of *The Star* will come into view, namely how it helps illustrate the advantageous effect the Liberal Home Rule alliance had on the Fleet Street status of Catholic-nationalist Irish journalists working on the political press.[10] This chapter will therefore look firstly at the

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[8] Blunt, *The Land War in Ireland*, pp.88-92; Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.432, 443; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.144, 154-5; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.87-97; Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.220-9, 250-51, 285-90. Popular Liberalism's support for Home Rule was strikingly demonstrated in May 1886 when the Gladstonians wrested control of the National Liberal Federation from Chamberlain, its creator.

[9] O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, 2nd edn, p.520. T.P. had even started moving in this direction by late 1885. Believing that an Irish-Liberal Home Rule alliance was inevitable after the election results, he told Labouchere in their conversation of mid-December "that he himself was a Radical" (Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 016, fol.73: Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, 12 Dec. 1885).

[10] The importance of *The Star* in this respect has hitherto gone unnoticed. L.W. Brady, for example, overlooks it.

circumstances surrounding the creation of *The Star* and then explore what T.P. tried to achieve with the paper. The vital point of departure is the condition of the Liberal metropolitan press after the 1886 election.

Over the preceding thirty years the Whig-Liberal party had enjoyed a larger share of London press support than the Conservatives, but Gladstone's of adoption Home Rule brought this Liberal press hegemony to an end. As Stephen Koss has shown, the balance of power now shifted abruptly in favour of the Conservatives or, more precisely, the Unionists.[11] Amongst the morning papers, the *Daily News* alone upheld the Home Rule standard, whilst the Liberal evening press suffered a grievous blow when the Radical *Echo* went over to the Unionists. In the latter sphere there remained the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but Morley had been succeeded as editor by the erratic crusader W.T. Stead, so that its reliability and effectiveness were considerably impaired. Elsewhere, there were isolated points of Liberal support, such as Labouchere's paper, *Truth*. Overall, though, the picture was a gloomy one. As well as splitting the party asunder, Home Rule had ended Liberal dominance of the London press. "In Fleet Street," says Stephen Koss, "the lights of Liberalism were virtually extinguished."[12]

Liberal problems were compounded by the fact that the *Daily News*, supposedly the most prominent party organ, was in a moribund state. By the beginning of 1886 Labouchere had come to despair of Frank Hill, and his "inability to present political matters in a popular manner", and so helped replace him with H.W. Lucy, the famous parliamentary correspondent. However, this did not improve the paper's fortunes either and almost immediately Labouchere realised that Lucy was no more effective than Hill. "The difficulty of finding a good editor is greater than that of finding a good Cabinet minister," he told Herbert Gladstone in February 1886 before adding:

> The editor has to understand about the working of the Press – arranging news – and getting Articles upon various social topics, as well as on politics. Lucy does not know much about the matter...so soon as we can, we will find a man, but he must be receptive, not only write clearly, but be able to put his ideas into that sort of common place, which is necessary in articles for people to read them. [13]

Labouchere's conception of the ideal editor emerges clearly here. As well as writing in a popular, inclusive way, he must widen his scope to include subjects other than politics. Labouchere evidently believed that a paper had to be accessible and entertaining before it

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[11] Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain* (2 vols., London, 1981, 1984), I, p.286; Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, p.554; Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.292-3.
[12] Koss, *Political Press*, I, p.292.
[13] Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 015, fol.28: Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, 13 June 1885; ADD MS 46, 016, fol.4: Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, 10 Feb. 1886.

could become influential. Certainly, *Truth* followed such ideas. Hill, though, with his dry, scholarly style, did not fit these criteria (he lacked "man-of-the-worldism"). Nor apparently did Lucy and so, as Labouchere indicated, the search for a capable man was soon resumed (Lucy's editorial career in fact lasted eighteen months).[14] In the meantime the *Daily News* was unable to shoulder the Home Rule burden. John Morley wrote several pieces on Ireland at the start of 1886, but after his appointment to the Cabinet a few weeks later he had no time for such work. McCarthy, in protest at the way Hill had been treated, also ceased to write for the paper at this point. Responsibility for the Home Rule cause rested with the unconvincing Lucy.[15]

It was painfully obvious, then, in the aftermath of the 1886 election that the Liberal metropolitan press was in a deplorable state. Very few journals remained in Gladstonian hands and those that did – such as the *Daily News* and the *PMG* – were unsatisfactory. Such a loss of newspaper support could only be perceived as a serious handicap in an age when it was widely assumed that journalists had the capacity to sway a large number of voters. It was especially hard on the Liberals given that the rationalist approach was the bedrock of their political creed. If the Home Rule cause was to triumph, the health of the Liberal press surely had to be restored. This was particularly true in terms of London politics. The importance of the London constituencies was generally acknowledged in the late-Victorian period, a fact reflected by the efforts made by various figures, including O'Connor and Charles Russell (now MP for South Hackney), to induce Gladstone to speak in the capital during the 1886 election.[16] But, wearied by speaking commitments elsewhere, Gladstone limited himself to a public letter to the London constituencies and in the event the Liberals only won ten out of seventy-two London seats.[17] After such a poor electoral performance in the capital, a swift solution to the problem of the Liberal metropolitan press was clearly required.

Understandably, the Liberals were quite aware of the deficiencies of their press support. Soon after the election defeat Morley wrote to Bryce: "What we want is an

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[14] *Truth*, 14 Jan. 1886; H.W. Lucy, *Sixty Years in the Wilderness* (London, 1909), pp.129-36; Hamilton Fyfe, *Sixty Years of Fleet Street* (London, 1949), p.34.

[15] Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, 10 Feb. 1886; Koss, *Political Press*, I, pp.269-70, 281; McCarthy and Praed, *Our Book of Memories*, pp.104-5. In September 1886 McCarthy went to the United States for six months, where, as the Irish Party's 'accredited envoy', he lectured to audiences on 'The Cause of Ireland' (Doyle, *Justin McCarthy*, p.31).

[16] Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, p.554; Hamer, *John Morley*, p.250; Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 498, fols. 61, 68: Russell to Gladstone, 25 June 1886, O'Connor to Gladstone, 27 June 1886.

[17] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 458, fol.105: Gladstone to O'Connor, 28 June 1886; Paul Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour* (London, 1967), pp.90, 301. In 1885 the Liberal performance in London, although again poor, had been somewhat better, with the party winning twenty-eight seats.

energetic and fighting newspaper. If only the *D. News* could be got hold of. Could not we all (you & me & F. Harrison) write a series of articles there?"[18] Morley, as a former editor, was only too conscious of the gravity of the problem. The same could be said of Labouchere. He too was alive to the situation, as his concern for the *Daily News* showed. Now, in the summer of 1886, he began floating plans for an evening newspaper with Sir Charles Dilke, who had been forced from parliamentary politics at the start of the year because of a divorce scandal. Dilke, however, was not optimistic about such a venture. "I am not able to afford to sell out £20,000 of safe investments to start an evening/ld paper," he told Labouchere in August 1886, "which to judge by the *Pall Mall* won't pay...A ½ d paper does not tempt me. It is a different sort of thing: a speculation – never a power." Consequently, nothing came of their plans, but they do reveal the ideas beginning to drift through Labouchere's mind. Following the defection of the *Echo*, he was correct to identify the evening press as an area demanding Liberal attention.[19]

By April 1887, therefore, no substantial improvement in the Liberal metropolitan press position had occurred and so Morley could repeat his lament of the previous year. "It is certainly deplorable that at a pinch like this, we should be left as we are in the London press", he told Gladstone on 10 April. Unfortunately, the immediate sequel to this complaint simply confirmed the Unionist dominance of Fleet Street. In March 1887 the *Times* had published the first of its "Parnellism and Crime" series and then, only a week or so after Morley's complaint, it reproduced on its front page the infamous letter in which Parnell appeared to condone the Phoenix Park murders of 1882. Its publication was clearly designed to convince wavering Liberal Unionists to support the government's Coercion Bill, which was about to be read for the second time. In the face of such direct and seemingly effective pressure from the Unionist press - as the Bill passed - the case for a Liberal response was more obvious and urgent than ever.[20] But what was also obvious was that the 'energetic and fighting' journal desired by Morley would require an editor conversant with the intricacies of Irish politics in general and Home Rule in particular. Unhappily, there were few Liberal publicists qualified for such a task. Those who were,

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[18] Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 107, fol.106: Morley to Bryce, 28 July 1886. Even after *The Star* had appeared in January 1888 Edward Hamilton could still lament the lack of Liberal press support: "London is without a single good Liberal newspaper; the *Daily News* is not what it ought to be, and the patronage of the *Pall Mall Gazette* is calculated to do more harm than good to any party" (BL, Hamilton Papers, ADD MS 48, 646: Hamilton Diaries, 18 Jan 1888). Nor did he feel that *The Star* was the answer (see note 146 below).

[19] BL, Dilke Papers, ADD MS 43, 892, fol. 152: Dilke to Labouchere, 28 Aug. 1886; Koss, *Political Press*, I, p.288.

[20] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 255, fol.191: Morley to Gladstone, 10 Apr. 1887; Koss, *Political Press*, I, p.297.

such as Bryce, were often already engaged with other aspects of the Liberal campaign.[21] As for Dilke, his main motive in launching a paper was probably the need to re-establish himself after his divorce scandal. Liberal options seemed sparse. Moreover, the problem had perhaps been exacerbated by Gladstone's cautious approach in the winter of 1885-86. With his education of the party having been indirect and limited, Liberal politicians and journalists were possibly still attuning themselves to Home Rule.

The most likely candidate for a press venture was Morley, as he had both the editorial experience and the necessary Irish political savvy. Indeed, his April letter to Gladstone shows that even before the Parnell facsimile he was considering a return to Fleet Street. The catalyst was Labouchere, who, following the collapse of his plans with Dilke, had again confronted the problem of the *Daily News*, where Lucy's editorial tenure was drawing to a close. Labouchere's solution was to ask Morley to take over in some way, but he was reluctant. "I am...doubtful," Morley told Gladstone, "whether...I could do what L. wishes as to the *D.N.*...But if you think I should be more useful at the *D.N.* I would turn to it cheerfully...it would cost me no pang to throw Parliament and platform into the second place. Writing comes much more easily to me."[22] Gladstone evidently did not feel that Morley would be better employed at the *Daily News* as little came of this idea. Instead, after Lucy's departure editorial duties were divided between John Robinson and P.W. Clayden (the chief leader writer), whilst McCarthy also returned to the paper.[23] Nevertheless, Morley remained the Liberal most likely to try and restore their press fortunes. That summer, for example, it was rumoured that Andrew Carnegie was to start a new evening paper and that Morley would be its editor. The Liberals continued to oscillate between developing their existing resources and initiating new projects.[24]

It was at this stage that O'Connor intervened. If the Liberals themselves lacked press expertise on Home Rule, they could always turn to their new allies for assistance. Amongst the numerous Irish journalists in Fleet Street were men who could certainly provide the Irish political knowledge required by an "energetic and fighting newspaper." Liberal shortcomings meant that there was an obvious opportunity for someone like T.P., with his political and journalistic credentials, to exploit. Thus, in the summer of 1887 he began to broach the subject of a new evening paper for London, being initially unaware of

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[21] See Chapter Five below for more on Bryce's activities.
[22] Morley to Gladstone, 10 Apr. 1887.
[23] Edward Russell Papers, Acc 4187: P.W. Clayden to Edward Russell, 3 Sept. 1887; Koss, *Political Press*, I, pp.269-70.
[24] Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.143; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.104.

Morley's similar scheme. One Liberal who responded enthusiastically to T.P.'s ideas was Labouchere. He had already shown his awareness of Liberal problems in the London evening press in his discussions with Dilke and so it was understandable that he should revive previous plans by co-operating with O'Connor. An evening journal would also spare the ailing *Daily News* further competition.[25] Accordingly, Labouchere's help, says Fyfe, "was always at T.P.'s disposal and was worth a good deal. He was a man with many friends...He and T.P. now talked over the prospects of a progressive evening newspaper. He urged T.P. to start one: he promised help in raising the necessary capital among wealthy Liberals." Elizabeth O'Connor, T.P.'s American wife, corroborated this story of an energetic and invaluable Labouchere, describing him as "very encouraging, helpful, and active in getting the capital together."[26] Two of the 'wealthy Liberals' that he initially introduced O'Connor to were John Brunner, the chemical manufacturer (towards whose by-election victory that August T.P. lent a hand), and James Williamson. With the defection of the Whig aristocracy, it was industrialists like Brunner that now provided the bulk of Liberal finance. O'Connor, with Labouchere's assistance, worked hard to raise the necessary capital from these men and also began negotiations for his staff. Another Liberal to help him was Professor James Stuart, one of the leading London MPs.[27]

The crucial moment came when O'Connor learnt about Morley's plans for an evening paper. He was almost ready to abandon his own scheme, but Elizabeth O'Connor and Labouchere intervened and stiffened his resolve. Morley was informed of T.P.'s impending venture and in the event he withdrew from the field rather than O'Connor.[28] The important question this episode raises is why should Labouchere have backed T.P.'s plans in preference to those of Carnegie and Morley when both schemes satisfied his desire for a Liberal evening paper? Most obviously, there was their growing friendship. This had been threatened somewhat by the anti-Liberal manifesto of November 1885, for the gossipy Labouchere (who was exempt from its strictures due to his services against coercion) purported to believe, like Davitt, that O'Connor's motives were suspect. "I am afraid that the ingenuous t.p. has been bought by the enemy," he told Herbert Gladstone

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[25] Koss, *Political Press*, I, p.308.
[26] Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.142; Elizabeth O'Connor, *I ,Myself* (London, 1910), p.211.
[27] Koss, *John Brunner* (Cambridge, 1970), p.157; Koss, *Political Press*, I, pp.308-9; *Daily News*, 13 Aug. 1887; A.F. Havighurst, *H.W. Massingham, Radical Journalist* (Cambridge, 1974), pp.20-1; Wilson Pope etc, *The Story of the Star* (London, 1938), p.12. Evidence of this group coming together in the summer of 1887 can be found in McCarthy's *Our Book of Memories* (p.111), where he notes dining in the Commons with O'Connor, Stuart and Labouchere in June of that year.
[28] Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.143; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.104.

on 17 November, a view he also expressed to Lord Rosebery.[29] But, as with the Liberal party as a whole, matters soon improved after the Home Rule concord of 1886. By August that year the difficulties of late 1885 had been put behind them, as Labouchere can be found recommending T.P. to Herbert Gladstone as a 'Radical' and as someone prepared to keep the Parnellites tied to the Liberals.[30] With the advent of their newspaper project, the two men became closer still. Further, Labouchere had strong political reasons for backing O'Connor. Significantly, these went beyond a simple recognition of T.P.'s Irish expertise. But the political dimension will be examined later. For now, what needs to be considered is O'Connor's reputation as a journalist.

Due to his parliamentary sketch work of the early 1880s T.P. was well regarded in journalistic circles.[31] What had brought him attention was the 'personal note' in his writing. He had developed a popular, lively style in which the details of a statesman – his manner, appearance, and traits – were considered as important as the words he spoke. This focus on 'personality' had been evident both in *Gladstone's House of Commons* and *The Parnell Movement*. It was something he may have partly owed to his 1881-2 visit to America, for whilst there he noticed how American journalists concentrated on such matters.[32] The relevance of all this to Labouchere is obvious. As his criticism of Hill and Lucy showed, Labouchere prized an editor who could make his paper accessible and attractive, since such qualities were the key to influence. That Labouchere thought of O'Connor in this way seems clear. He praised the style of *The Parnell Movement* and, according to Elizabeth O'Connor, described T.P. as "an-always-to-be-depended-upon-journalist, never dull...continually interesting, and indeed with a touch of genius."[33] In contrast, Morley was known for scholarly austerity rather than liveliness or accessibility. Labouchere therefore arguably backed T.P.'s scheme because he felt that, unlike Morley, O'Connor was capable of capturing a readership and creating a popular paper (he virtually said as much when T.P's paper appeared in January 1888[34]). Yet, if Labouchere

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[29] O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, p.548; Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 015, fol.53: Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, 17 Nov. 1885, Rosebery Papers, MS 10041, fol.16: Labouchere to Rosebery, 23 Nov. 1885.

[30] Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 016, fol.115: Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, 7 Aug. 1886.

[31] When Gladstone's government fell in June 1885, for example, it was O'Connor whom W.T. Stead chose to provide the account for the *Pall Mall Gazette* (for this sketch, see *Gladstone's House of Commons*, p.550). This episode shows that T.P. continued to have links with the *Pall Mall Gazette* even after Morley's departure.

[32] O'Connor, *Gladstone's House of Commons*, preface; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.202.

[33] *Truth*, 11 Feb. 1886; Elizabeth O'Connor, *I, Myself*, p.210.

[34] Writing in *Truth* (19 Jan. 1888), Labouchere said of O'Connor: "few men have had a greater experience of journalism than he has. I anticipate, therefore, that his newspaper...will prove a financial success."

had proved his worth as a Liberal contact, then perhaps so had Morley. Like Labouchere, Morley was aware not only of T.P.'s political abilities but also his journalistic talent, having come to appreciate the latter during his editorship of the *PMG*. The link between the two men had then continued. All this may have become significant in 1887 when Morley heard of O'Connor's newspaper plans, for it may well have contributed to his decision to step aside. Confident that T.P. would make the new paper a success, Morley was possibly happy to give him his chance. Certainly, there was no friction between them over the matter, as they remained on good terms. In June 1888, for example, we find O'Connor providing Morley with valuable political information, whilst a year later Morley gave T.P. advice on how to deal with his directors.[35]

More immediately, the smoothing of the way with Morley meant that O'Connor was free to press ahead with his own plans. These were concluded by the end of the year and so on 17 January 1888 a new, halfpenny, Radical evening paper, dedicated to the Home Rule cause and edited by T.P. O'Connor, appeared in London. The principal backer of the paper was John Brunner, for T.P. failed to agree terms with Williamson. Others who were induced to support *The Star* included Isaac Holden, a Yorkshire woollens manufacturer, and J.J. Colman, the Norwich mustard magnate, both of whom were Liberal MPs. Wilfrid Blunt (a friend of both T.P. and Labouchere) and Thomas Lough, the Irish Liberal, were also among the shareholders.[36] From the outset the paper was a tremendous success. On its first day 142,600 copies were sold and by June that year the paper was selling on average over 160,000 issues a day. Its weekly circulation greatly exceeded the number achieved by any London evening paper in the past. A considerable proportion of this success was obviously owing to the fact that *The Star* lacked competitors. "We start with the immense advantage of supplying instead of creating a want," said O'Connor in the first issue. "There is no halfpenny Radical paper in London to-day."[37]

However, this success was also due to the paper's low price and the way in which T.P. developed the techniques of the 'new journalism', for these two factors helped make *The Star* the first daily or evening paper to gain a large working class readership.[38] The 'new journalism' had a number of aspects. In typographical terms *The Star* was laid out in

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[35] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 255, fol.208: Morley to Gladstone, 20 June 1888; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.154. The two men would remain friends for the next thirty years (Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.278-9).
[36] Wilson Pope etc, *The Story of the Star*, p.15; Koss, *Political Press*, I, pp.308-9; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.104-5; Blunt, *The Land War in Ireland*, pp. 10, 154-5, 301-2; Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day*, I, pp.276-7.
[37] *The Star*, 17, 18 Jan. 1888, 18 June 1888.

a bold, accessible fashion. Articles were shorter and clearer, headlines were used to capture attention, and 'cross-heads' were employed to divide up the longer columns. The writing itself was lucid and striking. *The Star* also deemed subjects other than politics worthy of coverage. "We believe that the reader of the daily journal longs for other reading than mere politics," declared O'Connor, "and we shall present him with plenty of purely unpolitical literature."[39] Consequently, *The Star* included regular articles on sport and society gossip as well as devoting more space to news. There was even a large degree of sensationalism involved in its coverage of the Jack the Ripper murders in the autumn of 1888. Unsurprisingly, a third element in the new method was the kind of 'personal' tone with which O'Connor had become associated. *The Star* now brought this into even greater prominence. The 'human touch' characterised the paper. "Tom...really revels in people," wrote his wife in August 1888, "his mind is very personal, he does not care for pictures...or houses...only people."[40] Accordingly, it was T.P. himself who contributed the gossip column "Mainly About People," a feature which typified the new approach. He defended these various innovations in an important essay for the *New Review* in 1889.[41] It is through them and the mass circulation newspaper that they helped create that he has won his place in the history of the press.[42] Equally significant here is that T.P. had vindicated Labouchere's confidence in his abilities. Labouchere had believed O'Connor to be capable of producing a popular and readable newspaper and T.P. had repaid that faith handsomely. Indeed, Labouchere probably gave T.P. some guidance, as the inclusion of society gossip reflected both his criticism of Lucy and the style of *Truth*. Sensationalism was also something that Labouchere countenanced. Whether the desired political clout would follow such success remained to be seen.[43]

If O'Connor helped change the world of Fleet Street, then his own position within that world had also changed considerably. Writing in 1912, he reflected: "I had never then had

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[38] Fyfe, *Sixty Years of Fleet Street*, p.45. Hitherto, only weekly papers like *Reynolds News* and *Lloyd's Weekly* had enjoyed a large working class audience (Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp.20-22).
[39] Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.140-1; Havighurst, *H.W. Massingham*, p.18; *The Star*, 17 Jan. 1888. "We owe much of our success," said the paper on 17 January 1889, "to our method of handling news by remorseless condensation, rapid treatment, picturesque announcement. Every heading in *The Star* tells its own story."
[40] BL, G.B. Shaw Papers, ADD MS 50, 512, fol.50: Elizabeth O'Connor to Shaw, 28 Aug. 1888.
[41] T.P. O'Connor, "The New Journalism", *New Review*, October 1889.
[42] Robert Donald, who worked under O'Connor at *The Star* and later became editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, described him as the 'Father of the modern newspaper' (Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.341). For *The Star's* place in the development of the popular press, see John Goodbody, "*The Star*: Its Role in the rise of popular newspapers, 1888-1914", in *Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History* (Vol.1, no.2, Spring 1885).
[43] Fyfe, *Sixty Years of Fleet Street*, p.34. In an article of 1903 O'Connor acknowledged his debt to the pioneering Labouchere, speaking of how *Truth* "created something like a revolution in journalism." "If to-

any association with a newspaper except as an ordinary contributor. I had never been an editor. My journalistic career had been somewhat interrupted by my entrance into the House of Commons."[44] Certainly, his London press career had not progressed entirely as he might have hoped. Although a well-known journalist, his contributions after 1882 had been mainly to American and Irish papers. Now, he was back in Fleet Street full-time and not merely as a journalist. Instead, he was the editor of an important evening paper. T.P. is thus a crucial example of the beneficial effect that the Irish-Liberal Home Rule alliance had on the Fleet Street status of Catholic-nationalist Irishmen on the political press. Despite the proliferation of Irish journalists in London during the century, the Catholic or nationalist had nearly always been a leader writer or reporter on the political press, with war correspondent a particular favourite. The editorial summit had tended to elude his grasp. An exception to this rule was McCarthy at the *Morning Star*, whose appointment as editor was no doubt helped by Bright's strong influence on the paper, which meant that McCarthy's religion and politics were no handicap. That it was only on a Radical outpost like this that an Irish Catholic-nationalist stood a chance in a sense proves the general rule. None of this is meant to suggest that Irishmen were unsuccessful in Fleet Street (the evidence hardly points to this), but rather to define that success more precisely.[45]

In the late 1880s, though, this pattern began to change, as the case of O'Connor shows. The Liberals' desire to establish the Home Rule cause in Fleet Street had led to a demand for Irish political expertise. Home Rule was the new watchword and the Liberals required able, informed commentators to aid in its projection. This provided a niche for Irish journalists on the nationalist side like O'Connor and so he took advantage of Liberal needs to become the editor of a London Liberal paper. Party funds were at the disposal of Irishmen in a way that they had never been before the alliance. It is a change highlighted by comparing T.P.'s leap forward with McCarthy's rise through the ranks on the *Morning Star*. Whilst the latter did not suddenly become editor because of his Irish political pedigree, O'Connor's elevation was both immediate and driven by Irish politics. Of course, T.P.'s advance was not solely due to such a pedigree. It was obviously augmented

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day journalism in England has lost a good deal of its old pretentiousness...Labby must get most of the credit for having produced the change" (T.P. O'Connor, "Labby", *Everybody's Magazine*, 9, pp. 476-84 (1903)).

[44] Wilson Pope etc, *The Story of The Star*, p.12.

[45] There are examples of Irish editors on the nineteenth century political press, but these are Irish Protestants, whose politics tended to be strongly anti-nationalist. They include Colonel Robert Torrens (*Globe*, 1820s), Stanley Lees Giffard (*Standard*, 1827-57) and Charles Williams (*Evening News,* 1880s). Irish Catholics could gain editorships outside the political press. R.B. Knowles, for instance, edited the *Illustrated London Magazine* and the *London Review* in mid-century, whilst, as seen above, Edmund Downey edited *Tinsley's Magazine* in the early 1880s.

by his burgeoning reputation as a journalist and the fact that he had the Liberal connections, such as Labouchere, to facilitate the process. His pre-1882 Radicalism and the way that he had repaired his relations with the party since 1886 probably also helped the Liberals accept his claims. As a London based Irish journalist with the Liberal associations to complement his nationalist identity, O'Connor had the right combination of qualities. But he was not a unique case, as will be seen.[46]

Before examining the political dimensions of *The Star*, it is worth noting some of the other effects of O'Connor's new editorial role. In social and economic terms the change in T.P.'s position was marked. He began to make money and, with Brunner's help, he purchased more shares in the paper in February 1889.[47] At first O'Connor and his wife lived above *The Star* in Stonecutter Street. When this proved rather uncomfortable they moved in 1889 to the more congenial surroundings of Carlisle Mansions, Victoria Street. By June 1891 they had moved again, this time to Upper Cheyne Row, Chelsea, a switch which helps indicate O'Connor's social advance.[48] Even though he had actually left *The Star* in the summer of 1890, T.P. had been handsomely rewarded. After considerable friction with some of the paper's directors, he agreed to be bought out for over £15,000. This was a substantial sum at the time, especially for someone who claimed to have not "had a penny when he started the paper."[49] Another way in which O'Connor's social rise can be charted is by looking at how he moved upwards in the world of Liberal London. Following the creation of the paper T.P.'s status in Liberal circles was greatly enhanced. After all, he was now editor of what soon became the leading Liberal journal in London. As a result, he not only found himself on more intimate terms still with the party but, significantly, he also came into more frequent contact with its hierarchy.[50] For example, in March 1888 he met Lord Spencer and Edward Hamilton at a private dinner party composed mainly of Liberal MPs. O'Connor told Hamilton " it was the first time...he had

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[46] McCarthy and the *Daily News* of course do not fall into this pattern, as his connection with the paper pre-dated 1886 and he was a leader writer, not editor. The only way a parallel might be drawn is if his return in 1887 was due to a lack of Irish expertise, but this is unclear.

[47] Liverpool University, Brunner Papers, VII, fols.15-18: O'Connor to Brunner, 6 Feb. 1889, 7 Aug. 1890, 25 Oct. 1890; Koss, *John Brunner*, pp.158-9.

[48] T.P.'s changes of address can be tracked through his correspondence. See his letter to Brunner cited above, O'Connor to Gladstone, 7 Oct. 1889 and 6 July 1891 (Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44,508, fol.26, ADD MS 44, 513, fol.27), and O'Connor to Percy Bunting, 1 Aug. 1890, 11 Oct. 1890, 21 June 1891, (Norfolk Record Office, Massingham Papers, MC 41/98/7-8). See too Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.97.

[49] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, p.270; Wilson Pope etc, *The Story of The Star*, p.29; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.153.

[50] O'Connor's social ascent was also due to the influence of his wife, who, after their marriage in 1885, encouraged T.P. to dine out (Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.135). But within the more political network of Liberal London her social influence must have counted for less than T.P.'s new editorial status.

ever met Lord Spencer, whose honesty and pluck he greatly admired."[51] Nor would it be the last, for two months later T.P. was vice-chairman and Lord Spencer was chairman at a public dinner at the National Liberal Club. Whilst acknowledging past differences, the latter paid tribute to O'Connor's new role as editor of *The Star*. Then, in July of that year, T.P. attended a garden party given by Lord and Lady Aberdeen at their house in Dollis Hill. Gladstone and "almost all the leadership of Liberalism in London" were there.[52]

T.P. played the host too. In June 1888 he held a soiree at *The Star* offices, an event that symbolised how the parliamentary alliance between the Liberals and the Parnellites had been re-created in the press. Besides O'Connor, those attending from the Irish side included McCarthy, J.J. O'Kelly, Timothy Harrington and Joseph Biggar. Amongst the Liberals present were Labouchere, directors of the paper like Brunner and Colman, and journalists such as Robinson and Clayden of the *Daily News*.[53] As all these different occasions show, O'Connor was beginning to make his mark; he was becoming a notable figure within the social world of Liberal politics and journalism. It offers a contrast to the late 1870s when T.P.'s ties with Liberal London, though strong, were based on the working class Radical clubs. Now, he was mixing with some of the higher echelons of metropolitan Liberalism and was beginning to achieve the type of social success that McCarthy had long enjoyed (in January 1888, for instance, O'Connor dined at Mrs Jeune's[54]). As for McCarthy himself, the post-1886 period naturally saw him dine more often in Liberal circles than earlier in the decade. Like T.P., he came into greater social contact with front bench Liberals such as Rosebery, Spencer and, of course, Gladstone.[55] But, as noted above, this was essentially a return to the 1870s. It was not fresh ground for McCarthy and so did not represent a social advance in the way that it did for O'Connor.

T.P. was not the only Irishman to be thankful for the creation of *The Star*, for his position as editor enabled him to act as patron to young Irish journalists. The staff he put

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[51] Hamilton Papers, ADD MS 48, 648: Hamilton Diaries, 6 Mar. 1888. It was also the first time that O'Connor had dined with Hamilton, something which itself was a mark of social progress, for, as a former private secretary to Gladstone, Hamilton was well established in the higher social circles of Liberalism.

[52] *The Star*, 17 May, 9 July 1888. Judging from a letter of Charles Russell's (Rosebery Papers, MS 10094, fol.60: Russell to Rosebery, 11 May 1894), O'Connor also made social contact with Lord Rosebery.

[53] *The Star*, 28 June 1888.

[54] Hamilton Papers, ADD MS 48, 647: Hamilton Diaries, 25 Jan. 1888. Further evidence of O'Connor's parity with McCarthy comes from a garden party at Kew in June 1893 that they both attended. The other guests included Wilfrid Blunt, Lord and Lady Denbeigh and Lady Harcourt (W.S. Blunt, *My Diaries* (2 vols, London, 1919-20), I, p.31).

[55] For McCarthy's social interaction between 1886 and 1891, see *Our Book of Memories*, which shows him dining, for example, with Lord Ripon (p.111), Lord Rosebery (pp.138, 156), Lord Spencer and Lord Carrington (p.291), Lady Aberdeen (p.286), Lord Dufferin (p.183) and Gladstone (p.101). See too D.W.R. Bahlman (ed), *The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton, 1885-1906* (Hull, 1993), pp.121-2.

together on *The Star* has frequently been noted, containing as it did later Fleet Street luminaries like Robert Donald, Clement Shorter, H.W. Massingham and Ernest Parke.[56] In comparison his habit of finding space for obscure Irishmen has gone unrecorded. Yet the Liberal financial backing from which he had benefited was, through him, made to benefit other Irish journalists. The one figure usually mentioned is George Bernard Shaw, though this is due to his later literary fame rather than his nationality. Shaw was hired on the recommendation of Massingham, O'Connor's assistant editor, who told him: "I think you would find...the "Star" a medium which you would like." Unfortunately, this was not the case at first. Hired as an assistant leader writer (according to T.P.), Shaw, the Fabian Socialist, soon found that his political notes were unacceptable on a Radical Home Rule paper. T.P. refused to print nearly all his contributions and remembered Shaw as "the greatest of the difficulties" he faced in the early management of his staff. Consequently, in February 1888 Shaw offered to resign.[57] Instead of allowing him to depart, though, T.P. agreed to let Shaw work on other areas of the paper and despite their political differences the two men initially stayed on amicable terms.[58] By August of that year Shaw was helping Belfort Bax with the paper's musical reviews and then, in February 1889, he succeeded Bax as *The Star's* chief music writer. Under the pseudonym of "Corno di Bassetto," he made his name as a brilliant critic.[59] However, this did not last, as O'Connor was irritated by Shaw's attempts to insert in his musical notes the type of socialist criticism that had been barred from the paper's political columns. Shaw, for his part, continually hankered after a pay rise. A deteriorating relationship was brought to an end in the summer of 1890 when Shaw accepted a superior offer from Edmund Yates and defected to *The World.*[60]

The valuable assistance that T.P. gave Shaw for a time was extended towards other Irishmen who came within his orbit. D.P. Moran, for example, joined the paper at the

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[56] Koss, *Political Press*, I, p.307; Havighurst, *H.W. Massingham*, p.21; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.108. Other famous pressmen on *The Star* staff at its inception were R.A. Bennett, James Douglas, A.B. Walkley and Richard Le Gallienne.

[57] Shaw Papers, ADD MS 50, 543, fol.94: Massingham to Shaw, 17 Dec. 1887; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, pp.265-6.

[58] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, pp.265-6; Shaw to O'Connor, 9 Feb. 1888, Shaw to Massingham, 9 Feb. 1888, both in Dan H. Laurence (ed) *The Collected Letters of G.B. Shaw, 1874-97* (London, 1965), pp.183-5. At the time of his attempted resignation Shaw admitted to Massingham that he liked O'Connor "immensely". We find more evidence that their early problems were overcome in a letter of Elizabeth O'Connor's (which T.P. also signed) inviting Shaw to lunch (Shaw Papers, ADD MS 50,512, fol.36: Elizabeth O'Connor to Shaw, 21 May 1888).

[59] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p. 115; G.B. Shaw, *London Music in 1888-9* (London, 1938), pp.v-viii.

outset, whilst O'Connor's brother-in-law, William O'Malley, recorded how T.P. made him secretary when *The Star* was formed in 1887. Within a few months O'Malley had been raised to the post of manager. Interestingly, he also describes how the young Thomas Marlowe, a future editor of the *Daily Mail*, received his Fleet Street introduction: "One day on *The Star*, T.P. handed me a note from his father introducing young Marlowe who had only just come to London. T.P. asked me to introduce him to Ernest Parke, which I did, with the result that he was there and then employed on the editorial staff. That was his first job in London."[61] Although born in Portsmouth, Marlowe's father was from County Tyrone and, like O'Connor, Marlowe had attended the Queen's College, Galway. To judge from O'Malley's account, these were the credentials behind his engagement on *The Star*. Certainly, his background must have outweighed his journalistic qualifications, for in 1888 he was simply an unknown reporter from the provinces. But whilst his apprenticeship on *The Star* is noted by historians, the debt he owed to his Irishness is not.[62] As for O'Connor, he probably had in mind his own difficulties finding employment in Fleet Street in the 1870s. These unpleasant experiences prompted him to be as helpful as he could towards the young Irish aspirants who now sought his aid.[63]

This habit of providing opportunities for budding Irish journalists was something T.P. continued on his later papers. Frank MacDonagh, W.P. Ryan and a young Cork man called Tim McCarthy (who became a sub-editor) all found employment on *The Sun* in the 1890s, whilst the paper's first news editor was Kennedy Jones, a Glasgow Irishman who subsequently made his name at the *Daily Mail* with Alfred Harmsworth. O'Malley also worked for O'Connor on *The Sun* and the drama critic on T.P.'s *Sunday Sun*, which he established in 1891, was Justin Huntly McCarthy.[64] It is unsurprising, therefore, that F.H. O'Donnell should have written of O'Connor's "kindness to many Irishmen" and that a director of one of his journals should have quipped: "If we take on all the people you

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[60] Shaw Papers, ADD MS 50, 512, fol.224: O'Connor to Shaw, 15 May 1890; Shaw to O'Connor, 5 Feb. 1890, 4 Mar. 1890, Shaw to Massingham, 28 Feb. 1890, all in Laurence (ed), *The Collected Letters of G.B. Shaw, 1874-97*, pp.241-6; Michael Holroyd, *Bernard Shaw* (London, 1998), pp.133-5.

[61] William O'Malley, *Glancing Back* (London, 1933), pp.79, 102; Patrick Maume, *D.P. Moran* (Dundalk, 1995), p.7; *Waterford News*, 7 Feb. 1936; *The Irish Peasant*, 26 May 1906.

[62] For example, see Koss, *Political Press* (I, p.307) and Havighurst, *H.W. Massingham* (p.21).

[63] Of the 1870s in Fleet Street, O'Connor wrote in 1928: "It was a matter of immense difficulty to even get the opportunity of an interview with either the proprietor or the editor of a great newspaper in those days" ('Men, Women and Memories', *Sunday Times*, 8 July 1928). See too T.P.'s comments on Shaw in his *Memoirs* (II, p.266) and Michael MacDonagh, *The Home Rule Movement*, p.137.

[64] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.44; Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: W.P. Ryan to Downey, 7 Oct. 1894; W.P. Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival* (London, 1894), p.121; Kennedy Jones, *Fleet Street and Downing Street* (London, 1920), pp.118, 126; O'Malley, *Glancing Back*, p.100; W.P. Ryan, "From a Modern Portrait Gallery IV: Justin Huntly McCarthy", in *New Ireland Review*, October 1894.

recommend, you will soon have more staff than readers." But this generous practice could spark trouble. According to Fyfe, one of the factors that caused problems between T.P. and the *Star* directorate was his "habit of foisting friends or persons who asked help of him on firms he worked for." Nevertheless, *The Star* and O'Connor's other papers show how the Fleet Street opportunities for Irishmen, which had always been widespread, seemed greater than ever following the Home Rule alliance.[65]

The most important consequence of *The Star's* foundation, though, was undoubtedly the unprecedented political platform that it provided for O'Connor. Hitherto, Irish nationalists on the London press had never had the scope to directly express their highest aspirations. T.P. now had precisely this scope and so his commitment to the paper's political purposes was absolute. "A journal should be founded to advance definite and distinct principles," he declared in 1889. The "journal...[is] a weapon to wound the enemy and defend the friend."[66] He eschewed completely the notion that a newspaper could be 'independent' in political matters. Thus, although O'Connor's development of the 'personal note' placed him in the vanguard of the 'new journalism', his belief in the partisan purposes of a paper showed that he was also, in part, a product of the older traditions of the political press. Indeed, at *The Star* his priorities were clear. He had created a popular paper, but it was the political rather than the commercial benefits this might bring which mattered most to him. In his first 'leader', entitled 'Our Confession of Faith', he set out the lines on which the paper would be conducted. Significantly, the tenets of his political creed came first. Only at the close did he turn to the paper's picturesque reporting style and the need to cover subjects other than politics. Whilst *The Star* might go beyond politics for its news, politics would remain paramount.[67] Yet, if O'Connor's commitment to the cause is undoubted, it raises the question of how he defined that cause. How did he present the issue of Home Rule, the issue which had brought the paper into being? In particular, how did he treat the Irish-Radical alliance that had sprung up around Home Rule and which had been for him such a long-standing objective? In order to examine such considerations it is first necessary to look at the nature of that alliance between 1886 and 1888.

When the Irish-Radical combination first emerged in the summer of 1886 not all Home Rule sympathisers welcomed this development. Wilfrid Blunt, for example, felt

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[65] O'Donnell, *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, I, p.463; T. Michael Pope (ed.), *The Book of Fleet Street* (London, 1930), pp.96-8; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.344, 151.
[66] T.P. O'Connor, "The New Journalism" in *New Review*, October 1889.

that "Home Rule did not lie quite on the straight track of English Radicalism, and...that if the Bill was rejected this year, Radicalism would go its way and leave Home Rule behind."[68] In the event Blunt's fears were unfounded, as the Liberals responded to their general election defeat by embarking upon a nationwide Home Rule crusade in which the Radicals played a leading role. Liberal initiatives included a Publication Department, which was established in 1887 and produced a huge amount of Home Rule literature, and the Home Rule Union, an essentially Radical body that was formed in December 1886 and organised lecture programmes, distributed pamphlets and arranged for British MPs to visit Ireland. In 1887 Walter Foster, a National Liberal Federation official, could write: "We are doing Irish work all the time here & have our hands pretty full."[69] Due to such activity Home Rule remained in the ascendant position it had acquired in 1886. It continued to be the dominant political issue of the hour, monopolising Liberal energies. This trend of course reflected the priorities of the Liberal front bench, especially Gladstone and Morley. "The satisfactory adjustment of the Irish question," wrote the former in August 1886, "will now...be the supreme object of every member of the Liberal party." Home Rule was the chief interest of both men and to them its primacy was clear. They believed that until it had been passed effective domestic reforms were impossible.[70] Although he later discussed other initiatives, Morley always insisted that Home Rule was the dividing line. Programme politics were rejected in favour of the single question approach. To Morley, this was the best way to carry a great reform.[71]

His position was strengthened in April 1887, for that month Balfour, the Irish Chief Secretary, introduced a stringent measure of coercion, thereby deepening the Liberal preoccupation with Ireland. Balfour's repressive campaign and the incidents it sparked, such as the infamous Mitchelstown massacre of September 1887, brought an energetic response from the Liberals. Their efforts to promote Home Rule were matched by an equally intense struggle against coercion, with groups of Liberal MPs crossing the Irish

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[67] *The Star*, 17 Jan. 1888.
[68] Blunt, *The Land War in Ireland*, p.88.
[69] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.107-17, 154-5; Heyck, *Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.181-4; Brunner Papers VII, fol. 25: Walter Foster to Brunner, 23 Sept. 1887.
[70] W.E. Gladstone, *Special Aspects of the Irish Question* (London, 1892), p.21; Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-98*, pp.558-78; W.E. Gladstone, *Speeches on the Irish Question in 1886* (Edinburgh, 1886), p.296; *Daily News*, 3 Oct. 1887. There was also the possibility, as Hamer has shown (*Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery*, pp.124-53), that in focusing on Home Rule to the exclusion of other issues Gladstone and Morley were trying to bring order and unity to Liberal politics following years of confusion in which the Liberals had been weakened by a proliferation of competing reform interests.
[71] Hamer, *John Morley*, pp.195-207; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.58, 180-1; NLS, Haldane Papers, MS 5903, fol.77: Morley to R.B. Haldane, 29 Jan. 1888.

Sea to observe Balfour's regime at close hand. Indeed, owing to coercion, and the publication of the "Parnellism and Crime" series, the whole English political world was preoccupied with Irish affairs, not just Liberals. Dissenting voices were heard within the Gladstonian camp at their absorption in Irish affairs, but by 1888 it was clear that hitherto the Irish-Radical alliance had been wholly built upon Ireland, whether that meant Home Rule or the coercion struggle. "The electoral question is now simply the Irish question", declared the *Daily News* in September 1887, "let this Recess be an uprising of the English people against the Irish policy of a Tory government."[72]

It was this political mould which O'Connor set out to alter on *The Star*. A concern with both countries rather than just Ireland would now be evinced. The one-sided affair that the Irish-Radical alliance had been so far would change with the help of the new evening paper. "You have no policy," said Shaw to T.P. in his resignation letter, "you think it safe to risk a general election on Home Rule alone." However true this may have seemed to Shaw, the impatient socialist, it scarcely does justice to O'Connor and what he tried to achieve on *The Star*.[73] This is because instead of presenting Home Rule as the sole item of Liberal policy (or even the most prominent), *The Star* made it part of a wider package of reforms. This change of approach was signalled from the start. In his opening leader (written in a 'white heat'[74]) T.P. laid down the paper's political programme, but Home Rule by no means came first. On the contrary, domestic reforms took precedence. Some of these were of a familiar political hue, such as an end to plural voting and reform of the House of Lords. Of a more striking nature were the social measures which *The Star* promulgated. These included the improvement of working class housing, particularly in the cities, and 'vast' land reform, which would ease urban overcrowding by restoring people to the soil, especially where land lay unused. To these would soon be added a call for progressive taxation. "Our statesmen...must make a step in advance," said O'Connor, "and face boldly and soon the terrible problem of hopeless poverty, unhealthy homes and overwork or want of work among the masses of the people."[75] The welfare of the 'charwoman' of St Giles would be *The Star's* touchstone when judging politics. It was only after such declarations that Home Rule was urged. It was followed in turn by London local government reform. There was an urgent need for action in this area and so

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[72] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.75-9; Brady, *T.P.O'Connor*, pp.111-2; Koss, *John Brunner*, pp.116-22; *Daily News*, 23 Sept. 1887.
[73] Shaw to O'Connor, 9 Feb. 1888, in Laurence (ed.), *The Collected Letters of G.B. Shaw, 1874-97*, pp. 183-4.
[74] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, p.255.

The Star took up the cause of the metropolis from the outset. In his first leader T.P. stressed the desire that existed in the capital for a strong and effective local council. This new body should take control of monopolies like gas, water and the markets and also be allowed to tax ground rents. It would then be able to improve housing conditions and sanitation. Following the 'Bloody Sunday' riot at Trafalgar Square in November 1887, *The Star* was also zealous in its defence of Londoners' liberties. "Our first concern is for the people of London," it said on 18 January. A shift in priorities had been manifested.[76]

O'Connor's aim was therefore clear. The commitment to Home Rule would remain total. For example, out of twenty-seven publication days in January 1889, nineteen of them carried Irish news or comment on the front page and on ten of these nineteen occasions Irish concerns were discussed first. But, simultaneously, he was trying to enlarge the scope of the Irish-Radical alliance, to make Home Rule take its place within a broader programme of change which would embrace England as well as Ireland. Unlike the *Daily News*, *The Star* was pushing radical reform forward in both countries. Being based on the verdict of the majority, Home Rule fitted neatly onto this wider democratic canvas. Of course, T.P. was well aware of the new political departure that he was making. Addressing what it called the 'social problem' in November 1888, *The Star* admitted:

> We might have run away from it. We might have contented ourselves with working the rich vein of noble and disinterested sentiment which the Irish people and their leaders had touched. But we decided otherwise. We found there were wrongs in England as well as Ireland; that London groaned, being burdened with landlordism and its kindred evils, as well as Galway and Clare.[77]

Accordingly, throughout its first year the paper called for social amelioration in addition to Irish Home Rule. "A fair wage for the workman - fair hours - a fair chance for body and mind," it said in January 1889, "are causes not less important than the return of Mr Gladstone to power at the head of a conquering legion of Home Rule champions." Statements like this offered a direct challenge to the Liberal leadership and its policy of concentration upon Ireland. Neither the call for a wider reform programme nor the social nature of those reforms was especially welcome to the Liberal front bench. They did not want the 'moral' politics of Home Rule replaced by T.P.'s state sponsored social politics. O'Connor was trying to Radicalise the Liberals, to make their policies reflect the change in the party's composition that Home Rule had provoked. The Whig exodus provided an opportunity to adopt a full Radical programme that could not be missed. Notwithstanding

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[75] *The Star*, 17 Jan. 1888.
[76] Ibid, 17, 18, 19 Jan. 1888; Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p.98. Similarly, on 18 February 1888 the paper said: "We are concerned for Ireland, but we are more concerned for England".
[77] *The Star*, 3 Nov. 1888.

its editor's great respect for Gladstone, *The Star* was, as Koss has said, "conducted with a mind to lead official Liberal opinion, not follow it."[78] And, unlike the impression given by Brady, this was an aim which, as shown above, O'Connor held from the very outset. It not would be an altogether unsuccessful one.[79]

First, however, it is necessary to examine the reasons behind O'Connor's reform programme. Before looking at T.P. himself, the external factors will be considered. Most obviously, by the late 1880s there was a growing interest throughout the country in 'the social question.' Publications like *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* by Andrew Mearns, which appeared in late 1883, had revealed the extent of the deprivation suffered by the poor. A Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes had followed in 1884 and public anxiety was then intensified by the riot of the unemployed through Pall Mall in early 1886. This developing interest in social matters meant that there was a danger that the Irish-Radical alliance could lose crucial support by neglecting such issues.[80] This was particularly the case in view of where the Liberals' electoral base was now assumed to reside. Both before and during the 1886 election Gladstone had described the Home Rule battle as the 'masses versus the classes.' The election did little to dispel such a notion, for it brought a sharp decline in upper and middle class support for the party (this mirrored the aristocratic defection inside Parliament). This trend was especially true in London. As a result, the recently enfranchised working classes appeared more than ever to hold the key to a Liberal recovery.[81] Subsequent by-elections victories, such as Brunner's at Northwich in 1887, seemed to confirm this pattern.[82] An appeal to working class concerns thus had obvious attractions for the Gladstonians. The wider reform programme (and particularly the emphasis on housing) was designed in part to secure the allegiance of those considered the new bulwark of Liberalism. A distinct electoral motive was built into *The Star's* social crusade. "It set out...to be the paper of the London working classes," says Paul Thompson, whilst *The Star* itself asserted that an "appeal to the country on

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[78] Ibid, 17 Jan. 1889; Koss, *Political Press*, I, p.387.

[79] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.111-17. Brady portrays *The Star* as only becoming a challenge to the Liberal front bench by late 1889 and that because of Massingham's zeal for a Miners' eight hours day.

[80] John Davis, *Reforming London, the London government problem, 1855-1900* (Oxford, 1988), p.88; Pelling, *Origins of the Labour Party*, p.42; Stephen Inwood, *A History of London* (London, 1998), pp.534-6; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.198. That *The Star* had such precedents in mind is clear from its demand (18 Jan. 1888) that any London council be a "real engine" for tackling 'Outcast London'.

[81] Gladstone, *Speeches on the Irish Question in 1886*, pp.176-7, 286-93, 303, 311; Gladstone, *Special Aspects of the Irish Question*, pp.23-4; Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, pp.90-111; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.89-90.

[82] Koss, *John Brunner*, pp.108-14. "The enthusiasm and devotion of the working men gave me the greatest delight", Brunner told Gladstone. Brunner certainly saw his victory as one of the 'masses over the classes'.

Ireland alone would...be a great tactical blunder."[83] Naturally, to realise its goal of working class backing the paper had to first reach such an audience, but, as we have seen, the combination of the 'new journalism' and a low price helped it achieve this.

This need to court the working classes was increased by the pressure emanating from other political quarters, both inside and outside the Liberal party. The most immediate threat was Chamberlain, who had sponsored the original 'Radical Programme' of 1885. Social issues baulked large in this, Chamberlain having taken up the subject in 1883 (in part due to the 'Bitter Cry' episode) and then given it renewed vigour in early 1885 following the passing of the Reform Act. His proposals covered those later dear to *The Star*, such as land reform (including the multiplication of smallholdings and the taxation of urban ground landlords), the improvement of working class housing and progressive taxation. In this way Chamberlain had hoped to win over the new working class voters at the 1885 election. Like T.P., he had sought to Radicalise the Liberal party, to direct it towards social politics, but his plans had been shouldered aside by Gladstone's adoption of Home Rule.[84] Nevertheless, there was a clear risk for the Liberals in ignoring domestic issues, for it could allow Chamberlain to win working class support by claiming to uphold 'true' Radicalism in that his priority was the welfare of the British masses rather than the alien importation of Home Rule. Certainly, this was the nub of his letter to the *Baptist* in February 1887 and although his Radical credentials were weakened by his acquiescence in coercion he remained a danger, as he continued to promote land and local government reform. To prevent the new voters from identifying 'true' Radicalism with Chamberlain, the Home Rule alliance had to deal with the questions he had raised so controversially in 1885.[85] In effect, *The Star* was an attempt by the Gladstonians to wrestle control of the 'Radical programme', and its attendant social concerns, from Chamberlain. The fact that he was the Unionist best able to contest T.P.'s political strategy helps explain - along with his role in the defeat of the Home Rule Bill - why *The Star's* attacks on Chamberlain were especially pointed. They were an acknowledgment of the threat he posed.[86]

Another group pushing O'Connor towards a wider reform programme were the socialists. Shaw's claim that the Fabians 'collared' *The Star* and so were behind its

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[83] Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p.97; *The Star*, 12 Dec. 1888; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.198.

[84] *The Radical Programme* (London, 1885), pp.60-61, 86-125, 218-32; Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.199-210; Garvin, *Joseph Chamberlain*, I, pp.376-407, 459-87, 531-74; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.1-53; Hamer, *John Morley*, pp.188-90, 225-6.

[85] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.87; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.152-3; *Truth*, 23 June 1887.

progressivism was a clear falsehood. Not only this boast but also many other supposed triumphs of Fabian 'permeation' have been dismissed by more recent historiography.[87] Yet this does not eradicate the existence of that socialist pressure itself. Hyndman, Shaw and Sidney Webb all assured T.P. and his staff that Home Rule alone was insufficient and that the social deprivation afflicting the country would have to be tackled ("Home Rule can only be carried in London by tying it on to the tail of London social reform," Webb told Clement Shorter in March 1888).[88] Consequently, whilst the socialists were in no way responsible for O'Connor's reform campaign, he was mindful of their presence and wished, if possible, to bring them on board. He wanted to see them join the broad Radical front he was trying to create. "Our aim has been to include all sections of the democratic army," said *The Star* in January 1889. "Come one, come all ...has been our cry. Thanks to our efforts the stupid ostracism of socialists has come to an end."[89]

Of greater weight with O'Connor than the socialists was the pressure coming from within the Liberal ranks. By 1888 'New Liberals' like R.B. Haldane were calling for the party to embrace other policies besides Home Rule. More significantly, London Liberals and Radicals were especially keen for the party to enlarge its horizons. John Morley, who disliked what he considered the impatience and extremism of London Radicalism, recognised this as early as November 1886. "The London members are very anxious that we should have some other immediate aim of policy before us besides Ireland", he told Gladstone.[90] London Liberals naturally wanted the party to show some interest in the capital. Although most Liberals recognised the need for London local government reform, this feeling was understandably strongest amongst the metropolitan MPs. Even a devoted Home Ruler like Charles Russell was well aware of the London question, telling the Eighty Club in November 1886 that there was "a great harvest of Liberal opinion to be gathered in London" if the Gladstonians would take up the cause of London municipal reform.[91] The desire within London Liberalism and Radicalism for better metropolitan government was well established, the Municipal Reform League having campaigned for a central London body since 1881. The Tories made some progress in 1888 when they

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[86] *The Star*, 18 Jan. 1888; Brady *T.P. O'Connor* p.113.
[87] See Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, pp.97-8, 141-3; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.144.
[88] Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.144; Clement Shorter Papers: Webb to Clement Shorter, 3 Mar. 1888.
[89] *The Star*, 17 Jan. 1889; Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p.98.
[90] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 255, fol.128: Morley to Gladstone, 15 Nov. 1886; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.180; Hamer, *John Morley*, pp.249-53; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.198.
[91] *Daily News*, 30 July 1887; St Deiniols Library, Pamphlets (Ireland) 5/J/5: Sir Charles Russell, Speech at the 'Eighty Club', 23 Nov. 1886.

created a London County Council (LCC), but London Liberals pressed for further reform, since, like *The Star*, they wanted a Council which could control the police and important resources such as gas and water.

At the same time, as John Davis has shown, London Radicalism had a deep interest in social issues, for nearly all the 'social movements' of the 1880s – such as the 'Bitter Cry' controversy and the unemployed riots of 1886-7 – had been "centred in London." "Social questions permeated metropolitan Liberal and Radical politics in the 1880s," he says. Moreover, in 1883-4 the Municipal Reform League had linked the foundation of a London council to an improvement in working class housing, a move which, again, was inspired by the 'Bitter Cry' episode.[92] It was the wishes, then, of London Liberals and Radicals that *The Star* was also accommodating when it constructed a programme that highlighted both the full reform of metropolitan government and the welfare politics that would follow in its train. After all, T.P. was probably well acquainted with such wishes, as James Stuart, who had helped him launch *The Star*, was a leading figure in London politics.[93] By making the Irish-Radical alliance appeal to all its parts rather than just one, O'Connor sought to consolidate the new combination. The risk of alienating London Radicals would be averted. In 1886 Labouchere had seen T.P. as someone who could help fasten the Irish to the Liberals. Now, O'Connor was showing that he was equally adept at maintaining Radical support for the alliance.

Another external reason for T.P.'s new departure was that it helped make Home Rule more acceptable to the English public. Unionists claimed that Home Rule was dangerous and unconstitutional, a break with precedent that would lead to separation.[94] To them, Balfour's coercion policy and the "Parnellism and Crime" series demonstrated the illegal, subversive nature of the Home Rule movement. By showing it was commensurate with a full Radical programme *The Star* aimed to prove Home Rule was not a clandestine threat of separation but a safe, legitimate aspiration, since it was part of a coherent and democratic reform drive throughout Britain. This approach also helped establish Home Rule's validity as a Liberal policy in the face of Liberal Unionist assertions that it was a deviation from 'true' Liberalism. For both reasons, Home Rule's affinity with English

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[92] Davis, *Reforming London*, pp.71-7, 117-21; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.138-44; Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p.99.

[93] James Stuart, *Reminiscences* (Private, 1911), pp.252-5; Havighurst, *H.W. Massingham*, p.21. Stuart was chairman of the London MPs and secretary of the London Liberal and Radical Union. At the National Liberal Federation conference of 1889 O'Connor supported Stuart's resolution calling for greater powers for the LCC (see *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Council of the National Liberal Federation*, second session, 4 Dec. 1889).

demands was therefore emphasised, not its distinctiveness. The most striking way that this idea was pursued was through the parallel offered by the need for London local government reform. It was a link that T.P. made from the start. "Ireland wants Home Rule not much worse than the people of London", he said in his first leader. Analogies were made between coercion in Ireland and the attempts by Sir Charles Warren, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, to prevent public meetings in Trafalgar Square. London landlords like the Duke of Bedford were compared to Irish counterparts like the Marquis of Clanricarde.[95] The fullest delineation of this theme came in late January 1888:

> Liberty is as precious to Londoners as to Irishmen, and it has been as flagrantly outraged in Trafalgar Square as in Mitchelstown. We have our 'Castle' in Scotland-yard; we have our prisoners who are no criminals...Every blow for Home Rule for Ireland ought to beat time with a stroke for Home Rule for London...Ireland has its Clanricardes; we have our Bedfords and Westminsters.[96]

Through such parallels T.P., as well as rousing popular Radical feeling on London issues, could bring Irish realities home to his English audience, could make the nationalist cause more understandable. And, as seen in his treatment of the Irish land issue in 1880-1, the latter process was something at which he excelled.

Having considered the outside factors, we now turn to what were, in the final analysis, the two crucial influences behind *The Star*: O'Connor and, to a lesser extent, Labouchere. Taking O'Connor first, it is his politics and beliefs that provide the chief explanation for the paper's wider reform programme. It was an approach entirely consistent with his background and history. Before 1882 he had been an earnest Radical as well as a nationalist. He had promoted some of the causes he was advocating now, such as English land reform, the improvement of London government and reform of the Lords. Most important of all, in 1880-1 T.P. had, as we have seen, tried to create the same kind of mutual reform combination as he was advancing in 1888. He had attempted to broaden the Irish agrarian agitation, to create an Irish-Radical democratic alliance that would pursue land reform in England as well as Ireland. Unfortunately, the task had proved too great. But the vision remained and by the end of the decade things were different. His desired Irish-Radical alliance had come into existence through Gladstone's Home Rule initiative. Matters were easier than they had been in 1880-1. Yet, whilst O'Connor was quick to associate himself with the new democratic combination and reassert his

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[94] Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-98*, p.561.
[95] *The Star*, 17 Jan., 7, 15, 16 Feb. 1888
[96] Ibid, 31 Jan. 1888.

Radicalism, the situation in 1886 had still been rather tentative. He had not looked then to dictate the nature of the alliance.

By 1888 O'Connor was ready to do just that. The establishment of his own paper gave him the chance to develop his ideas in a more comprehensive and sustained fashion. He therefore returned to the political aspirations of 1880-1 and again tried to enlarge the Irish agitation into a wider programme of change affecting both countries. He once more made the British working classes the heart of his reform alliance, taking up their cause even more forcefully than he had been able to do in 1880-1 and seeking to alleviate the social distress first encountered in the 1870s. English land reform was accordingly again a central plank in his platform, with T.P. recovering his anti-aristocratic strain. The image of a common aristocratic enemy in Ireland and Britain was resurrected. What had proved largely unsuccessful at the start of the 1880s was finally being brought to fruition. It meant that T.P. struck a personal note when he wrote in July 1888 of how "the great reconciliation" had been postponed from 1880 to 1886.[97] He, for one, was only too aware of this. Essentially, then, it is unnecessary to look beyond O'Connor for the source of *The Star's* new departure. The paper's campaign to make Home Rule part of a broader democratic programme had its roots in his past Radicalism. It was similar to the kind of alliance he had attempted to forge before and there was nothing new about many of the British reforms he was forwarding. Rather than being a surprise for a Parnellite MP, *The Star's* policy was in keeping with T.P.'s deepest political convictions. It is these facts that are overlooked when the paper's policy is ascribed to Fabian 'permeation.'[98]

That he was consciously resurrecting his earlier plans is shown by how in 1888 he again called the Irish-Radical alliance a 'union of the two democracies'. Although he had first returned to this idea at the close of *The Parnell Movement*, it was with the advent of *The Star* that this theme was fully worked. In February 1888, for example, John Morley and the Marquis of Ripon were enthusiastically received in Ireland, prompting the paper to declare: "[For] the first time...the Irish democracy are united amongst themselves... [For] the first time they are united heart and soul with the democracy of England." This was followed soon after by a reception in London for William O'Brien and T.D. Sullivan

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[97] Ibid, 5 July 1888.

[98] John Goodbody, for example, (see note 42 above) completely disregards O'Connor's influence even though he was editor. Goodbody is totally unaware of T.P.'s Radical credentials and simply accepts the Shaw line that *The Star's* programme was due to Fabian influence, leading him to mistakenly claim it represented fully-fledged socialism. Brady, meanwhile, certainly does not make this error, but, having underestimated the extent and real nature of O'Connor's earlier Irish-Radical alliance, he does fail to note how *The Star's* conception of a mutual reform alliance had its foundation in 1880-1.

after their release from prison. *The Star* hailed this event as "further proof of the closeness of the union between the democracies of the two countries."[99] The phrase, 'union of the two democracies', captured perfectly the idea of a combined Irish and English reform programme, the most succinct embodiment of this combination being the twinning of Irish Home Rule and Home Rule for London. As in 1880-1, it provided the counterpart to O'Connor's identification of a shared landlord enemy, expressed the fact that his main aim was to enlist the British working classes and set forth the concept of a 'new' Union of popular consent (as the Gladstonian 'Union of Hearts' slogan was also now doing).

However, if there was a close similarity between T.P.'s two initiatives, there was a clear difference too. In the first instance, the Liberals had set their face against Parnellism and so, by 1881, the democratic union had become an alternative political combination to both Liberals and Tories, with O'Connor advising Irishmen to back only independent labour candidates. Following the Liberal acceptance of Home Rule, though, the 'union of the two democracies' had to be worked through them, not against them. As a result, T.P. no longer promoted labour as an independent political force.[100] It would again have to operate under the aegis of 'advanced Liberalism.' To further this end, O'Connor helped persuade the socialist H.H. Champion not to stand as an independent labour candidate at the Deptford by-election of February 1888.[101] But for this umbrella strategy to work effectively the Liberals had to satisfy the desires of labour, and for T.P. this meant not only improving Lib-Lab representation, something he understandably encouraged, but also pushing social measures. As *The Star* said in 1888: "What we do hope to witness is the natural...alliance between the cause of labour and the party which has no other claim to existence than its resolve to compass the social as well as the political salvation of the people." Through its own programme, *The Star* was trying to achieve this process. It also gave organised labour strong support in its struggle for better wages, most notably during the Match-girls and dock labourers strikes of 1888-9. On the former occasion the paper declared: "there shall be at least one journal which will...get fair play for the workers."[102]

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[99] *The Star*, 2, 11 Feb. 1888. See too 24 Jan., 14, 16, 25 Feb., 1 Mar. 1888 and 17, 19 Jan. 1889

[100] Davitt's career is marked by a similar change. Having supported independent labour representation in the early 1880s, Gladstone adoption of Home Rule caused him to swing behind the Liberals so that, like T.P., he now looked to channel labour interests through them (Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement 1882-1906", pp.65-9).

[101] *The Star*, 20 Feb. 1888; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.114-16. When, in March-April that year, Keir Hardie stood as a labour candidate against the Liberals at the Mid-Lanark by-election, the O'Connor controlled INLGB opposed such a move. Its annual report ran: "The Executive will have no hesitation in throwing all its weight in all such disputes on the side of the unity of the Liberal party" (*United Ireland*, 1 Sept. 1888).

[102] *The Star*, 5 Sept., 18 July 1888.

Having seen the Liberals accept the aspirations of the Irish democracy, O'Connor sought, through *The Star*, to make them embrace the wants of the British democracy too.

Hitherto, we have treated *The Star's* policy in terms of 1880-1, but it is also worth remembering the Bright-Dillon alliance of the 1860s, for if T.P. followed their example in the early 1880s, then he inevitably did so again in 1888. It was their template – Irish-Radical, anti-aristocratic, mutual reform - that he was still employing, and the 'new' Union of liberal-democratic sentiment he was looking to create between Ireland and Britain was something they had pioneered (with Bright's "real and thorough working union for freedom" anticipating 'the union of the two democracies"). Thus, although Bright himself opposed Home Rule, he did much to lay the foundations for the Home Rule democratic alliance of the 1880s and especially O'Connor's version of it.[103] Further, in his anti-aristocratic rhetoric and land reform proposals T.P. was reaching back not only to his 1880-1 alliance and Bright but the whole framework of earlier Radical politics.[104] These links to the past show that whilst *The Star* was challenging the Liberal leadership through its endorsement of state intervention in social issues and support for organised labour, the themes and language of its campaign still owed much to established Radical ideas, even where its social reforms were concerned (the same can consequently be said of Chamberlain's 'Radical Programme'[105]). Similarly, despite its confrontational tone the 'union of the two democracies' was not intended to evoke any modern sense of 'class struggle'. Rather, it reflected a situation where, as seen, Liberal backing was primarily, but not exclusively, working class. Here, *The Star* echoed the front bench, as Gladstone's cry of the 'masses against the classes' also trumpeted the Liberals' reliance on working class support without expressing any narrow sense of class identity.[106]

Besides its links with the past, both recent and more distant, *The Star's* reform programme obviously revealed just how much O'Connor had renewed his Radicalism in the present. Later, he wrote: "I devoted my pen and the new paper which I had brought into being almost as much to the Radical as to the Irish cause." Anyone perusing *The Star*

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[103] Trevelyan makes the broader point in *Bright*, pp.169, 388-93.
[104] *The Star's* desire to ease urban problems by restoring people to the land was a long established Radical objective, its proponents including Bright (see pp.73-4 above, and *The Public Addresses of John Bright*, ed. Thorold Rogers, pp.135-8, 186-7). The paper's focus on wasteland was also familiar (and had been accepted at Bradlaugh's 1880 conference), whilst even the taxation of urban ground rents, which until the 1880s was a less widespread idea, can be traced back to Mill's Land Tenure Reform Association of the early 1870s (Finn, *After Chartism*, pp.267-71; Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp.185-91).
[105] In Chamberlain's case much of his 1885 programme stemmed from his own mid-1870s 'Free Schools, Free Land, Free Church' campaign (Jenkins, *Gladstone, Whiggery and the Liberal Party*, pp.199-210).
[106] Biagini, *Gladstone*, p.72.

would certainly not doubt this. It showed that Radicalism was a vital and enduring part of T.P.'s political make-up. Grave disappointment and party demands had temporarily restricted its expression to basic liberal-democratic values, but within the congenial context of the Home Rule alliance this suppressed Radical side had re-established itself. After the Liberal-Parnellite friction of 1881-5, this must have been a great relief to O'Connor. It made nonsense of Shaw's depiction of him as "merely a Home Ruler."[107] Instead, the dual identity with which he entered the decade had been recovered and it was perhaps at this point in T.P.'s career that this dual identity, this balance of Radicalism and nationalism, was at its zenith. Indeed, so strong was O'Connor's regained Radicalism that it almost seemed as if it had eclipsed his nationalism. After all, *The Star* opened by stating it was a 'Radical journal' and Home Rule had not been first on its political agenda. This impression was reinforced by how T.P. often submerged Irish nationalism within the broader framework of democracy in general and British democracy in particular. This was implicit in the 'two democracies' approach as a whole, but at times was especially striking. In February 1888, for instance, *The Star* declared that Home Rule was "but a means to an end" before continuing:

> The tremendous leverage of the Irish question has given a real impetus to the cause of democracy on this side of the water...Ireland is the solvent of many world problems; and not the least of her services to mankind will be that when she gets her own she will have seated not one but two democracies in power.[108]

Another demonstration of this process was the tendency to make the Parnellite MPs part of a larger democratic force. The same month, for example, *The Star* referred to the "Democratic party in the House – for we shall cease to make any distinction between the Irish and English sections of it." Similarly, it also spoke that month of the 'people's party (as opposed to the 'party of privilege', a dichotomy which further illustrates *The Star's* debt to older Radicalism and Bright), whilst in February 1889 it described the Liberal and Irish MPs as the 'united Radical party.'[109]

O'Connor's growing absorption in Radicalism is also highlighted by his commitment to London local government reform. As well as supporting the struggle in *The Star*, he played an active role as an orator, speaking both on Ireland and 'Home Rule for London' during the West Southwark and Deptford by-elections of February 1888. Then, in 1889, T.P. took a leading part in the first LCC election, making frequent speeches in support of the Progressive candidates. On 11 January, for instance, he was at Bethnal Green Vestry

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[107] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, p. 255; Shaw to Jules Magny, 6 Dec. 1889, in Laurence (ed.), *The Collected Letters of George Bernard Shaw 1874-97*, p.233.
[108] *The Star*, 3 Feb. 1888.

Hall, where he complained of police tyranny in London, advocated fairer taxation and described the Tory-created council as "a great weapon" for "making war on the evils of drink, poverty and unsanitary dwellings." Significantly, he also referred to 'we Radicals' and spoke of the 'great Liberal party.' On another occasion he addressed three different meetings in one night. Given such strong adhesion to the cause, it is not surprising that he was asked to become an Alderman on the LCC.[110] This revival of his Radicalism once again highlights O'Connor's emigrant status, underlining how his identity had a strong local dimension and was a product of both English and Irish political culture. The policy of *The Star* and his involvement in the LCC issue vividly reflected the fact that, by the late 1880s, he had been living in London for nearly twenty years. His new paper allowed him to fully express the lesson taught by emigration: that the causes of British democracy and Irish nationalism were one. And, because his commitment lay with the Liberal Home Rule campaign in Britain rather than the renewed agrarian struggle in Ireland, T.P.'s emigrant status was still apparent even when promoting the nationalist cause. Besides his journalistic and platform work in London, he spoke across Britain. "His peculiar field of energy has been...Britain," said *United Ireland* of O'Connor in 1887. The same could be said of McCarthy, who likewise addressed Home Rule meetings throughout Britain.[111]

Underpinning these nationalist labours was naturally their emigrant belief in British popular support for the Irish cause. As seen above, whilst the electoral advantages of catering for the working classes were not lost on T.P., his main motive in taking up their interests had been personal conviction. It did not stem from a fear that the British democracy no longer sympathised with Ireland. Instead, this faith remained very much intact. Having survived the setback of 1881, O'Connor's confidence in the British people was enthusiastically reasserted following the Irish-Liberal Home Rule alliance. He voiced it in Parliament as well as *The Parnell Movement* in 1886, and told the INLGB in late 1887: "If the working classes of England had to decide this question it would be settled in one hour in a way that would satisfy the aspirations of every Irish Nationalist." This faith was often evident in *The Star* as well.[112] McCarthy's long-standing belief in the Irish

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[109] Ibid, 9, 17 Feb. 1888, 9 Feb. 1889.

[110] Ibid, 16 Feb. 1888, 12, 16, 26 Jan. 1889. O'Connor's interest in the LCC was also evident in his dealings with Morley (Rosebery Papers, MS 10045, fols.115-19: Morley to Rosebery, 27 Jan., 1 Feb. 1889).

[111] *United Ireland*, 10 Sept. 1887. For some of T.P.'s Home Rule speeches in Britain, see *The Star*, 12 Jan. 1889 and *Daily News*, 13, 15, 18 July, 13 Aug. 1887. For McCarthy's speeches, see *Our Book of Memories*, pp.116, 126, 130, 136-41 (which details an extensive lecture tour he undertook in Britain during late 1887), 205-25, 309. See too his Diaries for the years 1887 and 1889 (McCarthy Papers, MS 3702, MS 3704).

[112] *Hansard*, 3rd Series, 1886, cccvi, 884; *United Ireland*, 5 Nov. 1887. On 14 February 1888, for example, *The Star* declared: "How splendid are the masses of the people...It was very touching yesterday to see those

sympathies of the British people was reasserted in equally vigorous fashion after 1886, whilst for Davitt it simply continued his post-1882 approach.[113] By late 1888 they could all supplement the initial popular Radical support for Home Rule by pointing to Liberal by-election victories like Spalding and Northwich, both of which were fought entirely on Ireland.[114] Their faith was also bolstered by Gladstone's repeated insistence, through his 'masses against the classes' cry, that the working classes backed the 'moral' cause of Home Rule. It appeared the confidence of emigrant Irishmen like T.P., McCarthy and Davitt would be justified: a rationalist appeal to the British democracy looked set to secure Home Rule. As a result, O'Connor's faith began to be expressed as gratitude for what was already achieved. In July 1888, for example, with Ireland seemingly on the verge of Home Rule, T.P. vowed at an INLGB dinner that Irishmen would never be forgetful "of the assistance of the masses of the British people."[115]

Sentiments like these made O'Connor a leading exponent of the 'Union of Hearts' ethos. With his confidence in the generosity of the English masses, his Radical affiliations and his promotion of a 'union of the two democracies', he was one of its foremost representatives. So, understandably, was McCarthy. He had advocated this kind of grand democratic combination since the Bright-Dillon alliance of the 1860s and had effectively believed in it even longer. For him, it represented the glorious fulfilment of hopes nourished since the early 1850s, not just since 1880-1.[116] He therefore eagerly embraced the 'union of hearts/democracies' theme, frequently celebrating the close and unprecedented bond that the Home Rule alliance had forged between the two countries.[117] In O'Connor's case, this sense of a political watershed is particularly strong in his biography of Parnell. There, hostility between England and Ireland is a thing of the past. It has been replaced by a new era of understanding and affection.[118] This conviction helps show why T.P. went against Parnell during the split of 1890-1. In his attempt to play on

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English toilers passing through the drear streets in the bitter cold in sympathy with a cause which, after all, is not directly their own."

[113] For McCarthy, see "The Tory Leaders and the Irish Party" (Hull United Liberal Club, 15 Dec. 1887), pp.10, and *Ireland's Cause in England's Parliament*, pp.103-4. For Davitt, see *United Ireland*, 9 Apr. 1887.

[114] Koss, *John Brunner*, pp.98-103; *Daily News*, 4, 15 July 1887.

[115] *The Star*, 12 July 1888.

[116] In 1888 McCarthy wrote: "Mr Gladstone has...reconciled the English and Irish people. How many of us through years and years longed and prayed for such a reconciliation, but hardly dared hope for it...And now...it has come to pass" (*Ireland's Cause in England's Parliament*, pp.104-5).

[117] *Daily News*, 21 July 1887; McCarthy, "The Tory leaders and the Irish Party" (Hull United Liberal Club, 15 Dec. 1887), p.8; McCarthy, *Ireland's Cause in England's Parliament*, pp.104-5.

[118] O'Connor, *C.S. Parnell, A Memory*, pp.54, 70, 117.

historic Irish fears of English betrayal Parnell was in direct conflict with O'Connor's whole concept of an Irish-Radical reform alliance and a 'union of the two democracies.'

The last factor to be considered in this examination of *The Star* is the role played by Henry Labouchere. As we have seen, Labouchere began pressing for an Irish-Radical mutual reform alliance soon after entering Parliament in 1880, seeing it as the best way to implement the Radical programme because it would allow the Radicals to overwhelm their Tory-Whig opponents. Accordingly, he had declared his support for Home Rule and urged his fellow Radicals to do the same. As the election approached, he had increased his efforts, looking to Chamberlain to broker the desired alliance. By October 1885, however, it was clear that Chamberlain would not play ball. Not only did he refuse to swallow Home Rule but, unlike many others, he felt it was unpopular with the working classes and so did not want Radicalism burdened with it. Although not giving up on Chamberlain entirely, Labouchere turned instead to Gladstone.[119] In touch with Herbert Gladstone and T.M. Healy, he and the latter tried to secure, both before and after the November election, a Gladstone led Irish-Liberal alliance which Parnell would be forced to accept.[120] Whilst Labouchere firmly believed in Home Rule, he remained alive to the wider implications of any Irish-Radical pact. "Successful politics are conducted on the 'You scratch me and I'll scratch you' basis," he wrote in January 1886. "The Irish want drastic Radical legislation for Ireland, and the Radicals want drastic Radical legislation for England. United, say the Irish, we can both get what we want."[121] His own scheming proved fruitless, but it was only natural, once the alliance was in place in mid-1886, that, like O'Connor, he should try and mould it into the broader form he had always desired.[122] With the Whigs gone, the chance to Radicalise the Liberal party had finally arrived. Indeed, the adoption of a full Radical programme would ensure they could never return.

There were two main ways in which Labouchere tried to achieve this process. Firstly, there was *Truth*. Dismissed as a light journal of society gossip, *Truth* was in fact an

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[119] Thorold, *Labouchere*, pp. 248-62, 278-9, 289. As late as 31 March 1886 Labouchere was still pleading with Chamberlain to join the emerging Irish-Radical alliance.

[120] For full details of the Labouchere-Healy initiative, see Callanan, *T.M. Healy*, pp.114-50. Both men felt Parnell was reluctant to treat with the Liberals due to caution and a resentment of Gladstone. Prior to the election, T.P.'s preference for a Tory alliance would have stopped Labouchere trying to work through him.

[121] *Truth*, 21 Jan. 1886. In a letter to *The Times* of 26 December 1885 Labouchere had advised his fellow Radicals that for the Radical 'chariot' to advance they had to accept Home Rule, as the alternative to this was coercion and this meant a Tory government (Thorold, *Labouchere*, p.269).

[122] Thorold is wrong to suggest (*Labouchere*, p.235) that Chamberlain's secession ended Labouchere's hopes. Just because he had parted company with Chamberlain did not mean Labouchere had to stop trying to have the Radical programme adopted.

important vehicle for Labouchere's political aims. By the late 1880s the political section was the only part that he wrote himself and so it was here that his campaign for a wider Radical programme took shape.[123] "Ireland must be an important plank in our platform, but not the only plank", he declared in July 1886. "The democracies of the two islands must be welded together in the fight by the bonds of common interest." Later that month he repeated this conviction: "We must have a Radical platform, of which Home Rule will be but one plank. The democracies of the two islands must give each other the hand."[124] In addition to the public campaign in *Truth*, Labouchere expressed his views to leading Liberals in private. Writing to Herbert Gladstone in the aftermath of the Liberals' 1886 election defeat, he said a reason for the rout was that "justice to Ireland" had not been "accompanied by some radical sops for England." "We can win if Mr G will throw himself upon the Radicals," he added, "Ireland must be sandwiched between a few Radical measures for England." It was an opinion that he also voiced to Sir William Harcourt at this time.[125] Labouchere continued this call for a wider Radical platform, both in public and private, throughout 1886-91.[126] Whilst the tactical slant of Labouchere's private letters has led historians to present his desire for a Radical programme as simply an electoral device, the corresponding campaign in *Truth* and the long-standing nature of his commitment to a joint reform alliance show that it was a matter of conviction too.[127]

The parallel with O'Connor and *The Star* is obvious. Both men wanted the Liberals to take up measures of English reform and the rhetoric being employed was identical, with Labouchere utilising in *Truth* the idea of the 'two democracies'. As with T.P., Home Rule would act as a tributary to the larger stream of British democracy. Moreover, the measures that the two men had in mind were also extremely similar. In his *Fortnightly Review* article of 1884 Labouchere had included alongside 'political' reforms such

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[123] Thorold, *Labouchere*, pp.455-60. Labouchere's disposition," wrote R.A. Bennett, a later editor of *Truth*, "was always to use his own journal as an aid to his schemes...in Parliament, never his parliamentary position for the advantage of his journal."

[124] *Truth*, 15, 29 July 1886.

[125] Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46,016, fols.93: Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, 9 July 1886; Harcourt Papers, MSS Harcourt dep. 87, fols.7-8: Labouchere to Harcourt, 11 July 1886.

[126] See, for example, *Truth*, 15 Mar. 1888, Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, 31 March 1888 (Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 46,016, fols.129), and Labouchere to Harcourt, 2 Jan. 1891 (Harcourt Papers, MSS Harcourt dep. 87, fols.47-50).

[127] At this point it is worth recalling O'Connor's comment in Thorold's *Labouchere* (p.471): "Labby was a...far more serious, far more effective politician than his own persiflage would allow people to think." Labouchere also had good reasons for couching his letters in electoral terms. In Harcourt's case, his approach to politics was essentially tactical anyway. He tended to judge issues according to party advantage (Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.173). As for Herbert Gladstone, Labouchere probably did not want to appear to be undermining his father's insistence on the primacy of Home Rule, especially as Gladstone was

subjects as urban land reform, improved housing and fairer taxation. The latter were all part of his *Truth* campaign. In this Labouchere advocated, among other things, local government for England 'of a strongly Radical character', rural land reform (especially the provision of allotments), land purchase in towns so as to facilitate the construction of better housing and a progressive income tax.[128] This programme was clearly close to *The Star's* and shows that Labouchere was not, as has been made out, an 'archaic' Radical, hostile to social reform and only stirred by bugbears like the Lords and public grants to the Royal Family.[129] Later on, Labouchere's view of the LCC was again familiar: the acquisition of gas and water supplies, the 'erection' of markets, control of the police and "a proper taxation of ground rents."[130]

Given their identical political visions, his lengthy friendship with O'Connor, and the vital role he had in creating *The Star*, it is inconceivable that Labouchere did not also play a part in the formation of *The Star* programme. Whilst the central influence rested with T.P., Labouchere surely had a hand both in pushing him towards a wider reform package and in delineating the nature of those reforms. He can only have encouraged O'Connor's own convictions. And yet, although Labouchere's role in the paper's foundation is noted, his contribution to its politics has been overlooked.[131] Further, the important political reason why, in the summer of 1887, Labouchere backed T.P.'s plans for an evening paper rather than Morley's is now clear. Whereas Morley's public commitment to the primacy of Home Rule did not suit Labouchere's purposes at all, O'Connor's political ambitions matched his own. An O'Connor edited paper offered Labouchere the chance to forward his aim of Radicalising the Liberal party through a full reform programme. That he should see T.P. in this way confirms the force with which O'Connor's Radicalism had returned. It also shows just why T.P.'s journalistic skills were so crucial to Labouchere. They promised to advance not only Home Rule but the whole Radical programme.

Thus, as well as pushing the pace himself, O'Connor was doing so in conjunction with Labouchere. Together, they were trying to set the agenda for the Liberal party. They were finally harmonising ideas that both had held since 1880-1. Their shared vision of an Irish-Radical reform alliance was at last being put into effect. Labouchere took the initial

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unenthusiastic about the Radical programme. Hence, in his 1886 and 1888 letters that programme is presented as a way to win Home Rule, not as a desirable end in itself. It had to be carried via the back door.

[128] *Truth*, 15 July, 2 Dec. 1886.

[129] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.173-5. Barker restricts his focus to Parliament, but, as this study shows, by examining Labouchere's wider activities a rather different picture emerges.

[130] *Truth*, 26 July 1888.

[131] This is true of Fyfe, Koss, Brady and, less surprisingly, Goodbody.

steps with *Truth*, but the advent of the mass circulation *Star* constituted a significant increase in momentum. Such political collaboration was nothing new for the two men; since mid-1886 they had frequently co-operated in the Commons. In fact, parliamentary skirmishes are normally seen as the height of Labouchere's achievements.[132] But, as his and T.P.'s journalistic campaigns show, outside Parliament his plans were conceived on a far grander scale (given the size of the Unionist majority, they were wise to work outside Westminster). There, they sought nothing less than a major reassessment of Liberal policy. The question that remains is how successful was their attempt to force the party to incorporate Home Rule into a broader and more socially conscious Radical programme?

Certainly, by the end of 1888 signs existed that the Liberals were moving in the direction that *The Star* desired. At its annual conference in November that year the NLF adopted resolutions calling for the construction of better housing for the working classes and the taxation of mining royalties and ground rents and values. This "step in advance", said *The Star*, was "partly, we have been vain enough to think, under the pressure from this journal."[133] Nor was it the only step. Gladstone himself had also peered above the Home Rule parapet. As well as rallying the faithful on Ireland, his speech before the NLF in November included a strong statement in favour of 'one man one vote.' He followed this up by speaking in London in December on the 'urgent need' for an initiative on the related subjects of 'urban land reform' and working class housing.[134] Even John Morley began to veer from the Home Rule path. In December 1888 he spoke at Clerkenwell on the importance of social reform in the capital. On the day of his speech *The Star* reminded Morley that it did not "want him to speak this evening on Ireland alone; we London Liberals want to hear something about London." He did not disappoint.[135] However, the actual value of these apparent advances was questionable. In Morley's case he continued to insist, as seen earlier, that Home Rule was the 'dividing line' between the two parties, whilst at heart Gladstone remained unenthusiastic about state sponsored social reforms and was not about to let Home Rule become submerged within a Radical programme.[136]

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[132] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.171-2. For O'Connor-Labouchere co-operation in Parliament, see Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 46,016, fol.121: O'Connor to Labouchere, 21 Aug. 1886, and *Hansard*, 3rd Series, 1887, cccix, 596-8.

[133] *The Star*, 3, 9 Nov. 1888; *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Council of the National Liberal Federation* (Birmingham, 6, 7 Nov. 1888); Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.174.

[134] Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.176; *The Star*, 9 Nov. 1888; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.198. Gladstone also spoke that year in favour of payment of members (Hamilton Papers, ADD MS 48, 649: Hamilton Diaries, 7 July 1888).

[135] *The Star*, 12 Dec. 1888; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.198; Hamer, *John Morley*, pp.252-3.

[136] Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.349, 487-8; Biagini, *Gladstone*, p.108; Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, pp.509, 560.

Nevertheless, *The Star* hailed these various developments as proof that the Liberal party was gravitating towards its Radical platform of social reform. The "*Star* programme has been to a large extent adopted by the Liberal party," said the paper in January 1889. "On the whole the Democratic movement, the shifting of...power from the right to the left wing of Liberalism, has been as remarkable as it is unexpected. And here again, the influence of the *Star* has been paramount."[137] There was doubtless an element of exaggeration in this last line, for other factors besides *The Star* had been involved in the Liberals' move towards 'social' politics. 'New Liberals' like Haldane, for example, had helped push Morley in the direction of domestic reform. By late 1889 backbenchers such as Atherley-Jones and F.A. Channing were also pressing for Home Rule to be linked with English social issues.[138] Even so, that *The Star* played a notable part is almost certain. Its profile was high and its politics were clear, whilst its record sales suggested that the latter had strong popular support.[139] This move towards a wider, more socially aware, platform culminated in 1891 when the frontbench accepted the various resolutions of the NLF at Newcastle as its programme for the next general election (Gladstone only reluctantly agreed to this). Home Rule remained the first priority, but the social reforms that the Federation had endorsed since 1888, such as land reform and improved housing, were now official policy too, as were 'one man one vote' and the payment of members.[140]

Needless to say, the immediate impulse behind the 'Newcastle Programme' was the Parnell divorce crisis of late 1890. By imperilling the electoral viability of Home Rule, it prompted the Liberal leadership to look for alternative measures of English reform.[141] Michael Barker points out that attention to domestic Radicalism was also necessitated by the government's switch from repression to constructive Unionism in 1890-1, for this meant that the old cry against coercion no longer sufficed.[142] Again, however, this should

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[137] *The Star*, 17 Jan 1889.

[138] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.180; Haldane Papers, MS 5903, fols.205-10: Haldane to Algernon West, 6 Aug. 1892; Atherley-Jones, *Looking Back*, pp.54-5; Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.487-8. In August 1889 Jones published an article entitled 'The New Liberalism' in the *Nineteenth Century*.

[139] See Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform* (pp.27-8) for the contention that for a newspaper to maintain its circulation its politics had to enjoy a large degree of support from the readership.

[140] *The Star*, 3 Nov. 1888; Matthew, *Gladstone*, p.560; Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.174, 201-3; Biagini, *Gladstone*, p.108; Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.507-9.

[141] A good example of the impact of the Parnell divorce crisis can be seen in the leaflets of the Liberal Publication Department. Leaflet 1552 ("Liberalism, Past and Future') was issued during the winter of 1890-1 and was an outline of the Liberal programme. The first version (labelled the 'notorious leaflet' in the Bryce Papers) included all the main Radical goals, but omitted Home Rule entirely, presumably as a consequence of the Parnell episode. In the second version, however, Irish self-government once more headed the programme, something that was surely a response to the embarrassment of the first leaflet (Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 322, fols.19-29).

[142] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.75-6, 86.

not detract entirely from the role of *The Star*. Although the Liberal leaders may have adopted the Newcastle Programme mainly for reasons other than *The Star*, they had still come to recognise the strength of the paper's argument. They had accepted both the need for social reform and, equally importantly, strikingly endorsed the idea of a full Radical programme as opposed to focusing on Home Rule. As has been written, the Newcastle Programme "must be regarded as the final triumph of the new approach for which the *Star* had called since 1888."[143] Events at Newcastle therefore showed how an Irish journalist such as O'Connor could, in harness with a Radical associate like Labouchere, not only promote Home Rule but help determine the way that the Liberals handled it.

By the time of the Newcastle departure, though, O'Connor was of course no longer editor, having departed the previous summer. He had consistently carried out the purpose for which *The Star* was created, making sure that Ireland was always to the fore. Home Rule had been championed, coercion continually denounced and the proceedings of the Parnell Commission treated in exhaustive detail.[144] But he had achieved this through the medium of a full Radical programme. For the paper's sponsors this was an unexpected approach and as a result there was division among them. Some found T.P.'s zeal for social reform acceptable enough. Brunner, for example, whilst utterly committed to Home Rule, was happy to see it integrated with advanced domestic measures. The financial backing he gave T.P. was a good indication of his support for *The Star's* programme.[145] Other directors, such as J.J. Colman, were less approving of the paper's Radicalism and in this they represented the wealthy capitalist elements of Liberalism that were sceptical about extensive social reform. What particularly disquieted middle class businessmen like Colman was the support that *The Star* gave organised labour during such disputes as the London dock strike of 1889. They also forced O'Connor to reverse *The Star's* backing for the Miners Eight Hours Bill in the winter of 1889-90. Much of the strident labour politics came from Massingham, but, as seen above, T.P's labour sympathies were also strong.[146]

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[143] Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p.106.

[144] In January 1889, for instance, the paper was still running a column entitled 'Thermometer of Coercion' even though that month saw the first elections for the LCC.

[145] Koss, *John Brunner*, pp.114, 132, 158; Koss, *Political Press*, I, pp.309-10; Brunner Papers, Section VII, fol.18: O'Connor to Brunner, 25 Oct. 1890. The two men remained on good terms after O'Connor's departure and, as Koss points out, there is no evidence that Brunner continued his own connection with *The Star* after T.P. had left.

[146] Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.152-6; Fyfe, *Sixty Years of Fleet Street*, pp.44-6; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.114-17. Colman told O'Connor in 1889: "I cannot conceal from myself, nor can I conceal from you, the strong dissatisfaction which is felt by a section of the Liberal party as to the line which the paper has taken" (Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.152). Edward Hamilton was another who found *The Star's* Radicalism unsatisfactory,

Accordingly, many of the directors began pressing for O'Connor's resignation on the grounds of his 'excessive Radicalism'. Other factors were involved here, such as the paper's lively style, which Nonconformists like Colman found 'vulgar', and T.P.'s habit of hiring friends. More damaging still was a memorandum circulated by Massingham accusing O'Connor of not fulfilling his editorial duties. Even so, T.P.'s Radicalism remained a central difficulty and it is rather ironic that it was British politics where O'Connor, the Irish nationalist MP, gave his Liberal sponsors the most anxiety. Far from overreaching himself in the promotion of Home Rule, T.P.'s treatment of Irish issues was eminently palatable to *The Star* board. Such an outcome only reinforces what has been apparent throughout: that O'Connor's politics ranged far beyond the confines of Irish nationalism. Under increasing pressure to resign, T.P.'s departure was secured when, in 1890, he was offered £15,000 to leave. It was too much to turn down, although he had to agree not to launch a rival evening journal for three years.[147] Massingham succeeded him, but his Radicalism was as 'excessive' and unshakeable as O'Connor's, and so he had also left by early 1891. Thereafter, the paper qualified its Radical agenda, particularly with regard to labour politics. As Koss has noted, it was a further irony that at the very moment *The Star's* three-year campaign was bearing fruit in the shape of the Newcastle Programme, the paper itself was curtailing its commitment to social reform.[148]

Later, O'Connor looked back on his rather brief editorial tenure with a sense of failure and frustration.[149] After all, he had created an enormously successful newspaper only to be forced out within two and a half years. Yet his *Star* legacy was not simply one of unmixed disappointment. On the contrary, it contained an impressive record of political achievement. As well as *The Star's* influential role in pushing the Liberals towards a Radical programme, there was the striking electoral success to which the paper contributed. In January 1889, for example, the Progressives won an outright majority in the first LCC election. Whilst the heart of their campaign was the Liberal and Radical Associations of the capital, *The Star* was also a crucial factor in their triumph. It had urged municipal reform from the outset and its programme understandably corresponded closely with the Progressive one. The paper published lists of which candidates to vote for and was in constant touch with London Liberal leaders like J.B. Firth. The Progressive

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writing that it was not 'conducive' to "the propagation of sound Liberal doctrines" (Hamilton Papers, ADD MS 48, 647: Hamilton Diaries, 18 Jan. 1888).

[147] Fyfe, *T.P.O'Connor*, pp.152-6; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.114-17; Havighurst, *Massingham*, pp.30-32; Fyfe, *Sixty Years of Fleet Street*, pp.44-6; O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, p.270.

[148] Koss, *Political Press*, I, p.310; Massingham, *The London Daily Press*, p.190.

victory was a clear endorsement of the social measures on which they and *The Star* had fought. Writing to Brunner shortly after the LCC triumph, T.P., unsurprisingly, had no doubt about *The Star's* role: "Haven't we worked things well in London – all the Aldermen ours but one; and the National Protest conceived and worked in our office. I think at last London is beginning to be on our side."[150]

Indeed, it did seem this way, for three years later the Liberals made a vastly improved showing in London at the general election, capturing twenty-four seats. Moreover, it was a success largely based on working class support. Of twenty-two predominantly working class constituencies, the Liberals won seventeen. A major factor in this success had been the trade union expansion of the late 1880s (especially the 'new unionism' connected with unskilled labour), which the London Liberals, by embracing labour interests, had turned to their advantage.[151] But *The Star*, with its unprecedented sales, had again made a significant contribution. Unlike the LCC victory, the 1892 election took place when O'Connor was no longer editor, but the results were still arguably a vindication of his Radical programme of social reform. In 1888 he had sought through this programme to consolidate the working classes behind the Liberals and four years later this had been achieved to a considerable extent. The 'union of the two democracies' was not simply a rhetorical device. T.P. had thus helped fulfil one of the basic purposes behind the creation of *The Star*: the desire to start recapturing London from the Unionists. He had shown Charles Russell's 1886 judgement – that London would respond to Liberal efforts – to be a sound one. More strikingly, in 1887 Labouchere had backed O'Connor's plans for an evening paper not only because T.P. shared his political vision but because he also saw him as someone capable of ensuring that the new journal, by being popular and dynamic, would realise that vision, would be influential too. By 1892 it was clear, given the advance of the Radical programme and the Liberals' electoral success, that, in spite of the relatively short-lived nature of his editorship, T.P. had done just that. Dilke's earlier claim that a halfpenny evening paper was 'never a power' had been emphatically disproved.

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[149] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, pp.267-71.
[150] Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, pp.99-100; Davis, *Reforming London*, p.119; Brunner Papers Section VII, fol.15: O'Connor to Brunner, 6 Feb. 1889.
[151] Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, pp.96-106.

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"Not a Parnellite": R. Barry O'Brien and the Liberal Home Rule campaign, 1886-93

Barry O'Brien's role in the Liberal campaign for Home Rule provides an interesting mixture of parallels and contrasts with the part played by O'Connor. Like T.P., O'Brien's participation stemmed from and reflected both the Liberal influences of his youth and the Liberal party connections - Russell, Bryce and Gladstone - he had more recently acquired. Similarly, it was driven by the fact that he possessed exactly the kind of Irish political expertise that the Liberals needed to revive their fortunes. These factors combined to make him an obvious target for recruitment by the bruised Gladstonians in 1886 and so, like O'Connor, O'Brien found himself drawn more fully into the political and social world of Liberal London, including its higher circles, though for him the latter development had begun before 1886. Further, this dual process of entrenchment and ascension took in Fleet Street, where, just as T.P. had done, O'Brien profited from Liberal needs to obtain an important editorial position on a Liberal paper. He is thus another example of the beneficial effect that the Home Rule alliance had on the Fleet Street status of Catholic-nationalist Irish journalists on the political press.

But crucial differences also existed between the two men. O'Connor of course supplemented his nationalism with strong Radicalism, and, whilst he had come into contact with the front bench after 1888, his Radical links had predominated. O'Brien was, in terms of political issues, a single-minded nationalist, and, given the Liberal contacts he had already made, his post-1886 Liberal links were understandably mainly with the front bench and its associates. These differences in outlook and connections, evident since the early 1880s, now manifested themselves in the contrasting nature of their Home Rule politics. Whereas T.P. spearheaded a backbench Radical attempt to make Home Rule part of a wider reform programme, O'Brien was a leading member of a front bench literary campaign naturally dedicated to the Irish issue alone and to ensuring it remained the Liberals' first priority. And nowhere was this contrast more apparent than in Fleet Street. Here, the *Speaker*, on which O'Brien became assistant editor, effectively represented a front bench reply to *The Star*, seeking to safeguard the primacy of Home Rule in the face of the O'Connor-Labouchere bid to merge it with a Radical programme. One further point remains. O'Brien's prominence in the Gladstonian Home Rule crusade emphatically

underlines something noted earlier: that he was far from being the unalloyed Parnellite that many commentators assume. In 1880-5 he had enjoyed links with both the Irish Party and the Liberals and had been positioned somewhere between them. But after 1886 his close involvement with the Liberals meant that, whilst retaining his Parnellite links, he became almost exclusively associated with the former. His support for Parnell during the split of 1890-1 was therefore a striking reversal of his political ties of the previous four years and not the confirmation of an existing Parnellite identity. It caused considerable dismay within Gladstonian ranks and the following chapter will show why this was so. It will restore O'Brien to that Liberal London world of which he was so much a part.

As seen earlier, Gladstone's avoidance of a public Home Rule plan in 1885-6 had maintained Liberal unity and allowed a Liberal government to be formed, but had left little scope for educating the party. Consequently, the Liberals - in and out of Parliament - were almost wholly unprepared for the Home Rule Bill when it was introduced in April 1886. The process of enlightenment was, ironically enough, not initiated until after Home Rule had been defeated in the Commons and the country in June-July 1886. There was much ground to be made up, both within the Liberal party and the nation. Recognising this, Gladstone published *The Irish Question*, a personal defence of Home Rule, in August 1886. By then he had also set in motion a more ambitious scheme of political education.[1] The man that Gladstone chose to co-ordinate this literary campaign was Bryce. He was well qualified for the task, since, besides having the intellectual credentials and Irish political pedigree, he had helped organise a similar literary initiative during the Reform struggle of the 1860s.[2] On 8 July Gladstone asked Bryce to superintend the publicising of Home Rule, outlining two approaches: 'history' and 'the outlook beyond these shores.' He went on: "Could not you, Thorold Rogers, Barry O'Brien (possibly Lefevre), and such like men meet to consider this...J. Morley would I think help."[3] This letter shows that O'Brien was enlisted in the front bench Home Rule campaign from the outset. Although the fact that he knew Bryce was important here, the Knowles project was clearly instrumental. It had made O'Brien a known and trusted figure to Gladstone, so that it was no longer a case of "there was an O'Brien, I think Barry O'Brien".

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[1] Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98* pp.488-90, 508; W.E. Gladstone, *The Irish Question* (London, 1886). Bryce later complained about the fact that the party had not been educated sufficiently prior to the introduction of the Home Rule Bill (Fisher, *James Bryce*, I, pp.216-17).
[2] Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, pp.129-33.
[3] *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. XI*, ed. Matthew, p.585.

What is also clear from this letter is Gladstone's pre-occupation with the historical aspect of the Home Rule case. This interest was not new, having been amply illustrated the previous autumn by the first article of the Knowles series. He had also begun to increase his Irish history reading at this time.[4] This concern with the Irish past had deepened. In March 1886, for example, Bright noted in his diary a "long interview" with Gladstone at which the latter gave him a "long memorandum, historical in character, on the past Irish story."[5] Despite this growing absorption in Irish history, however, Gladstone claimed that he was reluctant during the parliamentary debates on Home Rule to really develop the historical part of the question because he was conscious of the pitfalls it involved (e.g. the stirring of old animosities). Writing to the Unionist academic, A.V. Dicey in November 1886, Gladstone said of the 'historical argument': "I was sensible, from the first, of the disadvantages inseparable from its introduction. Accordingly, I think you would find...that I scarcely touched it in the early stages."[6] This reluctance probably also stemmed from the fact that he was still acquiring knowledge of the subject. Although Gladstone had intensified his Irish historical reading in late 1885, it was not until the spring of 1886 that the serious study began.[7]

Following the defeat of his Home Rule Bill Gladstone's attitude with regard to employing Irish history changed completely. It was time to use the 'historical argument' as the situation was urgent and it was too vital a weapon to be discarded. "Now we must go forward with it", he told Dicey later, "we cannot dispense with any of our resources." As a result, like many an Irish nationalist past and present, Gladstone's speeches and writings were, from the 1886 election onwards, heavily infused with Irish history. He began to draw upon the knowledge garnered during the past year, making the 'historical argument' a vital part of his Home Rule armoury. The next six years would witness what has been called "the most sublime example in constitutional democracy of a history lesson applied to politics."[8] Inevitably, there were several elements to his historical

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[4] Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.379-80; Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, p.546.
[5] *The Diaries of John Bright*, ed. R.A.J. Walling (London, 1930), p.536. Lord Derby had a similar experience at this time (Vincent, *Gladstone and Ireland*, pp.222-3).
[6] Loughlin *Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question*, pp.178-9; Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 499, fol.162: Gladstone to Dicey, 12 Nov. 1886. As he told Dicey, there were moments in Parliament when Gladstone touched upon Irish history. For example, in the speech with which he closed the second reading debate he made his first public reference to the 'dreadful story of the Union' (*Hansard*, 3rd series, 1886, cccvi, 1230). He also briefly mentioned the history of the Irish land question during his opening speech of 8 April (see pp.173-4 below).
[7] Matthew, *Gladstone 1809-98*, pp.546-7. I am grateful to Mary Louise Legg here for letting me see her work on Gladstone's Irish reading.
[8] Gladstone to Dicey, 12 Nov. 1886; Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister 1865-1898*, p.515.

approach. Later on, for instance, Gladstone would see in the eighteenth century Irish Parliament evidence of the beneficial effects that could be expected to flow from a Home Rule government. This was because in his opinion the reforming activities of the semi-independent Parliament of the 1780s and 1790s showed how the spirit of nationality could conquer religious and class divisions. It also demonstrated that Irish autonomy could be combined with Imperial loyalty, a fact he did refer to in Parliament in 1886.[9]

At first, though, Gladstone was more concerned with highlighting what he considered the past wrongs suffered by Ireland at the hands of England. In particular he drew attention to two areas: how the Union was carried in 1800, the infamy of which was without historical parallel in his opinion, and the subsequent failure of the Imperial Parliament to legislate justly or effectively for Ireland. These historical misdeeds were a constant theme of Gladstone's election campaign. In his letter to the London constituencies on 1 July, for example, he spoke of the "fraud, bribery and intimidation" which accompanied the passing of the Union, whilst at Liverpool on 28 June he said that there was "no blacker or fouler transaction in the history of man than the making of the Union between England and Ireland." In each case he continued by providing an account both of the Union and of the dismal Irish legislative record of the Imperial Parliament. At Liverpool he cited the broken promises over Catholic emancipation, the enacting of coercion laws, the postponement of relief measures, and the surrendering to force rather than justice. This was a "deplorable narrative", said Gladstone.[10]

By unfolding this shameful historical story Gladstone hoped his audiences would see the rationale behind Home Rule. They would realise that Ireland had legitimate claims against England and that England should make reparation for the past. Instead of seeming an 'unnatural' or unnecessary tampering with the constitution, Home Rule would become an act of wisdom and justice. As Matthew has written, the Home Rule policy was in part "a recognition of an historical and therefore an empirically demonstrable grievance" rather than "an abstract argument about a perfectible constitution."[11] Getting this grievance across to the public was thus crucial. It would confer "moral and intellectual credentials" upon the Home Rule cause.[12] Nor would the benefits of learning this history

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[9] For Gladstone's reading of eighteenth century Irish history, see p.176 below, and Loughlin, *Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question*, pp.57-8, 172-96. Gladstone touched on the Imperial loyalty of 'Grattan's Parliament' in his speech of 8 April (*Hansard*, 3rd series, 1886, ccciv, 1045).

[10] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 458, p.106: Letter Books, 1885-6; Gladstone, *Speeches on the Irish Question in 1886*, pp.302-11.

[11] Matthew *Gladstone 1809-98*, p.561.

[12] Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, p.380.

lesson be confined to Ireland. What the latter gained materially, England would obviously gain in terms of its reputation, for, like Butt and others, Gladstone's saw England's treatment of Ireland as the one black mark in an otherwise noble past. The granting of Home Rule to the sister island would remove that mark. At Liverpool, Gladstone said:

> And now I make a plea to you for the honour of England...for the wiping away of those old and deep stains that are not yet obliterated, but deface and deform the character of an illustrious nation in the face of the world...and with which now at last, at this late moment, we seek effectually to deal.[13]

The 'historical argument' having helped awaken his own Home Rule faith, Gladstone now looked to make the English people undergo the same process of enlightenment, a process that would unite rationalist instruction with religious feeling. His Evangelical background had given Gladstone both an 'acute' awareness of sin and the "accompanying urge to bring others to the truth and salvation."[14] After 1886 he wanted the country to follow him in recognising and repenting England's sins in Ireland, particularly the Union.

Through its emphasis on historical justice for Ireland, then, Gladstone's Home Rule campaign quickly assumed a strong moral-religious flavour (it was a 'holy' struggle, he said in June 1886). It was an attempt to recreate the 'virtuous passion' of the Eastern Campaign of the late 1870s, to pursue the kind of 'moral politics' that he and others, like Bryce, favoured.[15] And, with his confidence in working class support for such 'moral' politics, Gladstone was sure that, as in 1876-80, the 'masses' would bring him victory over the 'classes', who again scorned him. Whilst Gladstone no doubt sincerely believed that morality and Christianity were on his side, his fervent historical crusade was arguably also a response to the scale and severity of the attacks being made upon him over Home Rule. Not only was he criticised for breaking up the Liberal party but he was also charged with attempting to shatter the Empire, of, in the words of Randolph Churchill, seeking to "plunge the knife into the heart of the British Empire." Faced with accusations like this, both from Tories and outraged Liberals, Gladstone needed to reply in kind and expose the iniquity of his opponents. Similarly, when, as noted earlier, dissentient Liberals were claiming to be the 'true' Liberals because Gladstone had violated Liberal 'moral politics'

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[13] Gladstone, *Speeches on the Irish Question in 1886* p.308. In "Notes and Queries on the Irish Demand" (Feb. 1887) Gladstone wrote of his confidence that the British people would recognise "that the one deep and terrible stain upon their history, a history in most respects so noble, is to be found in their treatment of Ireland" (Gladstone, *Special Aspects of the Irish Question*, p.63). For Butt, see his Home Rule speech of June 1874, where he speaks of the Union as a "dark spot in the history of England" (*Hansard*, 3rd series, 1874, ccxx, 700-717).

[14] Biagini, *Gladstone*, pp.9-10; Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.356-7, 370-80; Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, p.561.

by yielding to crude democratic pressure in order to gain office, it is not surprising that he should present Home Rule as instead the very incarnation of Liberal 'moral politics'.[16]

Unfortunately for Gladstone, his historical appeals during the election did not have the desired impact, leading him to express his astonishment "at the deadness of vulgar opinion to the blackguardism and baseness...which befoul the...history of the Union."[17] But the remedy for defeat was clear. The historical approach must be intensified, for the people had not rejected it. Rather, there had simply not been enough time to convey it effectively. As he told Bryce in the above letter (8 July): "The whole iniquities of the Union, and the subsequent English history which is shameful though less profoundly and unmixedly shameful, must be laid bare & become common property. The people do not know the case."[18] What Barry O'Brien had repeatedly claimed, and what Gladstone himself had begun to realise the previous year, had been painfully confirmed: Irish history was uncharted waters for the British people. This situation had to change. Embarking on this task, Gladstone was always conscious that, although his knowledge of Irish history had grown (he later told O'Brien he "did not know as much about the way the Union was carried when I took up Home Rule as I came to know afterwards"), his grasp of the subject had its limits, telling Dicey in November that he was "far from having mastered" it.[19] Given this, and the daunting challenge ahead, it was understandable that he should have turned to Bryce for help in taking the 'historical case' to the British people.

But, as that letter shows, whilst Gladstone looked chiefly to Bryce, he had identified other sources of support as well. He had already contacted one of them, Professor Thorold Rogers, encouraging him to publish a popular pamphlet on the Union which would illustrate the "abominable means used to enact it." Rogers had spoken on the subject during the Commons debates on Home Rule.[20] Another whom Gladstone wrote to in early

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[15] Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.444, 515. Home Rule "was a good and righteous cause", Bryce told his uncle in May 1886. "I never felt more strongly that the Christian principles which ought to underlie all statesmanship dictate this course to us" (Fisher, *James Bryce*, I, pp.202-3).

[16] *Speeches by Lord Randolph Churchill*, ed. L.J. Jennings (2 vols., London, 1889), II, pp.12-13; Dunne, "Les trahison des clercs: British Intellectuals and the first home rule crisis", *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii (1982-3), pp.134-73; Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, p.229. E.W. Hamilton wrote in July 1887 of how Gladstone's every utterance was portrayed as "inciting the disruption of the Empire" (Hamilton Papers, ADD MS 48, 646: Hamilton Diaries, 5 July 1887).

[17] Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, p.447.

[18] *Gladstone's Diaries, Vol. XI*, ed. Matthew, p.585.

[19] R. Barry O'Brien, *England's Title in Ireland* (London, 1905), p.6; Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 499 fol.162: Gladstone to Dicey, 12 Nov. 1886.

[20] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 458, pp.107-8: Letter Books, 1885-6, Gladstone to Bridges, 4 July 1886, Gladstone to Thorold Rogers, 7 July 1886; St Deiniols Library, Pamphlets (Ireland) 5/D/14: J.E. Thorold Rogers, "The Irish Parliamentary Union and the Whigs of 1799-1800"; Loughlin *Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question* pp.191-2.

July was the Positivist J.H. Bridges. And, of course, also numbered among them was Barry O'Brien. This was unsurprising. Having been deeply impressed by his books, and having utilised his knowledge in the Knowles project, Gladstone was well aware that O'Brien was perfectly qualified to join his historical crusade. Indeed, on 7 July Gladstone wrote to O'Brien to thank him for his recent pamphlet, "Articles on Ireland", saying:

> In my opinion, one of the main subjects for consideration...by the friends of self-government in Ireland should be the means...of supplying the people of Great Britain with the historical information, in which their 'titled' & 'educated' leaders are so woefully deficient. You have already done much & may do more.[21]

For O'Brien, 'doing more' would soon mean helping the Bryce literary project. For now, this letter illustrates vividly how O'Brien was brought into the Gladstonian Home Rule campaign by his Irish expertise as well as his Liberal connections. He could provide that Irish historical knowledge on which Gladstone set such a premium, but which most Liberals lacked. Moreover, just as in Fleet Street, the demand for Irish intellectuals like O'Brien stemmed from external as well as internal weakness among the Gladstonians, for, like the marked loss in press support, the majority of intellectuals and historians were Unionist. Lecky, Dicey, Seeley and Goldwin Smith, for example, all came out against Gladstonian Home Rule, prompted by those fears of Imperial disintegration and democratic pressure noted above. This represented a reversal of the 1860s, when intellect had been overwhelmingly Liberal.[22]

A final set of points must be made. Although O'Brien advised Gladstone on eighteenth century Irish history (in July 1886 he sent him a paper on the United Irishmen), his main strength was clearly nineteenth century history and Westminster's treatment of Ireland.[23] Gladstone knew this from O'Brien's books and the first Knowles article, and so, whilst O'Brien was recruited to assist with the 'historical case' as a whole, Gladstone no doubt hoped that he would prove especially useful with regard to the second part of his record of Irish historical grievances. After all, Gladstone had clearly drawn on O'Brien's work in constructing that record in the first place. His election accounts of Westminster's dismal performance in Irish affairs strikingly reflected his reading of *The Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question* and *Fifty Years of Concessions*. O'Brien's first Knowles article effectively provided him with a ready-made text from which to preach. Earlier, Gladstone

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[21] *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. XI*, ed. Matthew, p.584; R.B. O'Brien, "Articles on Ireland", *Freemans Pamphlets, No.8* (Dublin, 1886).
[22] Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.320-1; Dunne, "Les trahison des clercs: British Intellectuals and the first home rule crisis", *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii (1982-3), pp.134-73; McCartney, *Lecky*, pp.114-36; Harvie, "Ideology and Home Rule: "James Bryce, A.V. Dicey and Ireland, 1880-87", pp.298, 310-14.
[23] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 498, fol.164, 176-8: O'Brien to Gladstone, 8, 10 July 1886.

had demonstrated his study of O'Brien's books in Parliament. Both in the speech with which he introduced the Home Rule Bill in April and the speech with which he closed the debate on the second reading in June, he referred to the Imperial Parliament's failure to legislate constructively for Ireland, saying that Irish reforms had been repeatedly blocked and even when passed it had been with a "grudging spirit" or under the "influences of fear". On the first occasion, he cited in particular the "sad tale" of the Irish land question These points were in response to those who queried the need for an Irish Parliament when Westminster had frequently demonstrated its willingness to deal with Irish problems.[24]

What all this shows is that Gladstone's Irish historical sources were greater than is often supposed. James Loughlin, for example, focuses on the eighteenth century in his study of Gladstone's historicism and notes how dependent he was on Lecky. Certainly, the eighteenth century was a central feature of Gladstone's historical thinking and here Lecky was not only the dominant figure but early in his career he had treated the period in a nationalist vein. Consequently, Gladstone's debt to him is understandable. It was from Lecky's work on the Irish Parliament of the 1780s and 1790s that he developed his vision of the benefits that Ireland could expect under a Home Rule government, both in terms of religious-social harmony and Imperial loyalty. Lecky was also the main inspiration for Gladstone's condemnation of the Union. In the second edition of his influential *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland* (1871) Lecky had strengthened his criticism of this measure and Pitt's role in it, describing it as a "great crime."[25] However, an undue emphasis on the eighteenth century and Lecky distorts the picture, for it obscures how the failures of the nineteenth century also baulked large in Gladstone's mind (he told O'Brien he was "deeply moved by the Parliamentary history of...Irish Land"), and so overlooks the fact that he also utilised O'Brien and his Irish historical work.[26] Thus, Loughlin omits both the nineteenth century and O'Brien from his study of Gladstone's historicism.[27] Restoring the role of O'Brien shows that Gladstone's 'historical argument' was more wide-ranging than has been allowed and that the sources on which he drew were by no means limited. Donal

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[24] *Hansard*, 3rd series, 1886, ccciv, 1079-80; *Hansard*, 3rd series, 1886, cccvi, 1231-2. See also Gladstone's *The Irish Question* (in *Special Aspects of the Irish Question*, p.9), where he writes of how O'Connell and Melbourne's attempts to pass Irish reforms in the 1830s were consistently sabotaged by Parliament.

[25] Loughlin, *Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question*, pp.179-85; Gladstone, "Lessons of Irish History in the Eighteenth Century", in Bryce (ed.), *Handbook of Home Rule*; McCartney, *Lecky*, pp.4-25, 57-64, 142-3.

[26] O'Brien, 'The Government of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century', in Morgan (ed.), *The New Irish Constitution*, pp.328-9.

McCartney has written that if one single man can be considered to have 'converted' Gladstone to the idea of historical justice for Ireland, then Lecky, with his work on the Union in *Leaders*, was that man. This may be so, but Barry O'Brien was not far behind.[28]

O'Brien soon had the opportunity to put his expertise to the test, for the Bryce literary campaign had begun to take shape. Bryce responded quickly to Gladstone's request, writing on 10 July that he would "endeavour to communicate with Lefevre, B O'Brien, Bridges and one or two others on the subject." More worryingly, he added: "It will not, I think, be hard to get capable writers to combine for the purpose. I feel rather more in doubt as to the means to employ for securing that they will be read." Nevertheless, they pressed forward, with Gladstone sending Bryce a more detailed plan a week later of the two main areas to be tackled. On the one hand, obviously, was history, especially from Grattan's Parliament onwards. On the other was the 'political argument', by which Gladstone meant such things as colonial experience, foreign opinion, Ireland's democratic verdict and the lack of constructive alternatives to Home Rule. Bryce promised to prepare a plan along these lines, but first wished to convene a preliminary meeting of "seven or eight persons likely to give useful counsel." By early August that consultation had taken place and, although no names are mentioned, it is almost certain Barry O'Brien was involved. The result of this meeting was the expansion of Gladstone's original outline into a more detailed plan, covering additional matters like parliamentary obstruction and Irish social order. As to presenting these and other arguments, the decision reached was that two or three volumes of essays should be published, each essay being by a different writer. A committee was then formed to consider this scheme further, consisting, Bryce told Gladstone, of himself, O'Brien, Shaw Lefevre, Charles Russell, Malcolm MacColl, Edward Russell and John Morley. At first progress was good, as Bryce informed Herbert Gladstone in mid-September that they had "had many meetings...on the matter."[29]

Yet, by early October their original idea had run aground, with Morley in particular doubting the success of such volumes. Instead, their efforts were divided in two. The 'political' aspects would be covered, Bryce told Gladstone, "in a series of magazine

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[27] When O'Brien is mentioned (p.175) it is in reference to his *Nineteenth Century* article of November 1885. But the intention here is to show Gladstone's interest in Irish history rather than his employment of O'Brien's historical expertise.

[28] McCartney, *Lecky*, p.143.

[29] Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 11, fol.143-6, 148-51: Bryce to Gladstone, 10, 26 July, 2 Aug. 1886; MSS Bryce 10, fol.66: Gladstone to Bryce, 17 July 1886; Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 46, 019 fol.12: Bryce to Herbert Gladstone, 19 Sept. 1886; O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.404-5.

articles which might be subsequently reprinted in a volume." This series would not be a regular one, for this had proved difficult to arrange. Rather, individual writers would publish where and when they could.[30] At the same time the historical side of the case would require "more systematic treatment", said Bryce, who then added:

> [we] are therefore arranging for four or five historical essays by eminent writers to appear in a book, dealing with Irish history from 1689 till now. At present Mr B O'Brien and I are in communication with the proposed writers to settle their respective periods and subjects.[31]

O'Brien was swiftly moving onto his expected ground. Meanwhile, the first of these projects, the 'political' articles, were, as anticipated, ultimately collected together in a single volume, which was published in October 1887. Entitled the *Handbook of Home Rule*, it included contributions from Morley, Gladstone, Bryce, O'Brien and E.L. Godkin (the former Crimean War journalist, who had moved to America in 1856 and was a friend of Bryce's), many of which had already had periodical publication. Bryce was the editor, a fact that emphasises his central, supervisory, role in the literary campaign. Gladstone provided 'Lessons of Irish History in the Eighteenth Century.' As the title suggests, it was here that he began to develop his ideas on the old Irish Parliament, seeking to show how nationalism had acted as a unifying force in Ireland during the previous century. Gladstone's conclusion was that a similar level of social and religious cohesion would follow the creation of a Home Rule Parliament in Dublin.[32]

For his part, O'Brien helped oversee the printing process whilst Bryce was on holiday in September. Equally importantly, he contributed "The 'Unionist' Case for Home Rule", which, unsurprisingly, was historical in approach. It took Unionist intellectuals such as Lecky, Dicey and Goldwin Smith and showed how their accounts of Irish history ran counter to their Unionism. This, argued O'Brien, was because their works showed both the corruption associated with the passing of the Union and the subsequent failure of that institution. Even when written by Unionists, therefore, Irish history could only point towards Home Rule. In the case of Lecky, quoting the great historian against himself was something O'Brien had already done the year before. Since then many other nationalists and Liberals had adopted the same tactic.[33] O'Brien's essay seems to have been rather

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[30] Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 11, fol.152-4: Bryce to Gladstone, 8 Oct 1886.
[31] Bryce to Gladstone, 8 Oct. 1886.
[32] Bryce (ed.), *Handbook of Home Rule* (London, 1887); Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 11, fol.178-81: Bryce to Gladstone, 11, 20 Sept. 1887. Gladstone returned to the theme of Irish religious harmony in 1782-95 during the debate on his second Home Rule Bill in 1893 (Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, p.543). In the early 1880s Bryce had written for the New York *Nation*, the paper founded and edited by Godkin (Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism*, pp.201-2).
[33] McCartney, *Lecky*, pp.136-42; Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, pp.9-11.

hastily written, for it mainly consists of extracts from the Unionist writers. Nevertheless, it had the merit of setting forth Irish historical grievances, both in their eighteenth and nineteenth century aspects, so that O'Brien was beginning to carry out the task for which Gladstone had chosen him. It also showed that O'Brien was not only engaging more closely with the world of intellectual and academic liberalism through political colleagues like Bryce but through his choice of adversaries as well. As for the *Handbook*, it had, with the aid of the NLF conference in October, sold 8000 copies by early November. It "has given great satisfaction", Bryce told Gladstone, "many of our best people declaring ...it contains just that calm presentation of solid arguments which they wished to have...in permanent form."[34] Absent in 1886, this literary education was finally being provided.

Unfortunately, the historical side of that education was taking longer to appear. Firstly, Bryce informed Gladstone in November 1886 that assembling a "really capable team" of historical writers had proved more difficult than he expected, but that "in a day or two more I hope to...send you their names and the outline of the scheme which Mr O'Brien and I have prepared for the proposed book." In the event, it was not until late December that Bryce began to outline their plans. The last two hundred years of Irish history were to be divided into five separate sections (1691-1782; 1782-1800; 1800-29; 1829-48; 1848-70), each one being dealt with by a different writer. Gladstone approved of these proposals and even sent Bryce a few suggestions of his own regarding the voting on the Union in the old Irish Parliament. Then, in January 1887, Bryce gave Gladstone a list of the authors involved. These included two Irishmen: Dr W.K. Sullivan, the President of the Queens College, Cork, who was to treat the period from 1691 to 1782, and Dr George Sigerson of the Royal University, Dublin, who was to tackle the shorter, but more intense, epoch of 1782 to 1800. The rest of the book was to be written by four Englishmen: J.H. Bridges, J.R. Thursfield, a journalist and former fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, G.P. MacDonnell, a barrister, and Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice.[35]

As matters proceeded, the Irish part of the team became O'Brien's remit. He first wrote to Sigerson in September 1886, telling him that it "was in contemplation by some men of consequence here to publish...four essays on Irish history for English readers." Then, over the following winter, both he and Bryce wrote to Sigerson and Sullivan in

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[34] Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 11, fol.178-9, 182-5: Bryce to Gladstone, 11 Sept., 5 Nov. 1887; Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 46, 019 fol.22: Bryce to Herbert Gladstone, 16 Oct. 1887; Heyck *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, p.181.

order to unfold the plan in greater detail, including who the other contributors were. It was shortly after this that delays began and unfortunately for O'Brien, it was Sigerson and, to a lesser extent, Sullivan who were responsible. The manuscripts were meant to be with the publisher by March 1887, but it was only in June that Sullivan told Bryce that his essay was on its way. The reason had been ill-health. "When I had all or practically all my material together," he wrote, "I got prostrated with an attack of gout which quite incapacitated me for doing anything, even writing a note."[36] Sigerson, though, offered no explanation at all for his tardiness. Writing to him on 18 June, O'Brien said: "I feel much embarrassed at not hearing from you. I am naturally looked to as responsible for the Irish contributors, and do not know what to say when I am asked if you are ready yet. You actually are stopping the way." Indeed, so vexed were he and Bryce that nine days later O'Brien wrote again to say he was contemplating crossing to Dublin to discover what had occurred. "I do not think you appreciate our embarrassment & mine especially," said O'Brien. However, the next month O'Brien received an explanation from Gavan Duffy: "Dr Sigerson...is...completing the university examinations, and it will take him a week...to read the papers. After that...he will work steadily at the Irish [essay] and he is determined ...not [to] be an impediment to the publication of the volume at the period you name."[37]

In response to this Bryce told Sigerson that he was "glad to hear that you propose now to devote yourself entirely to finishing your contribution to the Irish History." Yet, Sigerson failed to fulfil such expectations. The original publication date of May 1887 had been put back to the end of the year, but even this revised schedule was beyond him. Returning from the continent in early October, Bryce heard "with the greatest regret and alarm" that Sigerson's work was still not with the publishers, for he feared any further postponement would seriously impair the book's prospects. Again, the reason for the delay was not especially clear. Bryce asked Sigerson to send his essay "at once", but it was not until March 1888 that O'Brien finally had all his proofs "to hand" (they were in effect a year late). Even then O'Brien had had to correct some of them himself. "I assure you, you & Dr S have give me more trouble than I believe either of you think," he told

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[35] James Bryce (ed.), *Two Centuries of Irish History* (London, 1888); Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 11, fol.155-65: Bryce to Gladstone, 29 Nov., 22, 28 Dec. 1886, 19 Jan. 1887; MSS Bryce 10, fol.75-6: Gladstone to Bryce 28 Dec. 1886.

[36] NLI, Sigerson Papers, MS 8100(3): O'Brien to Sigerson, 6 Sept. 1886; Sigerson Papers, MS 10, 904 (9): O'Brien to Sigerson, 21 Sept. 1886, 12 Jan. 1887; MS 10, 904 (2): Bryce to Sigerson, 29 Dec. 1886; Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 279, fol.1-2: Sullivan to Bryce, 26 June 1887.

[37] Sigerson Papers, MS 10, 904 (9): O'Brien to Sigerson, 18, 27 June 1887; Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 279, fol.13-14: Duffy to O'Brien, 13 July 1887.

Sigerson in January 1888. It was not surprising, therefore, that O'Brien, writing to Sigerson in March, should have confessed that it was a "comfort...to have you off my hands," although he did concede that Sigerson's work was "first rate."[38] With these problems overcome, the book eventually appeared in October 1888. Called *Two Centuries of Irish History*, it was introduced by Bryce and edited by him and O'Brien. As Bryce left for India just before the book was published, O'Brien made the final arrangements. Writing to Bryce on 3 November, he said: "I sent the very first copy that came from the printers to Mr G... Copies shall be sent to the persons you name in your Port Said letter; & generally I shall do all I can to push the book."[39]

Whilst *Two Centuries of Irish History* was part of the Home Rule campaign, its editors ensured it was written and presented as a piece of dispassionate liberal historiography. It reflected their shared belief that history writing should seek to establish an impartial record of facts and elucidate the long-term patterns which emerged from them. Accordingly, in his introduction Bryce acknowledges that contemporary politics had quickened interest in the topic, but says that the spirit of the book was "scientific inquiry" rather than "partisanship". A "concise and impartial narrative of Irish history" was being offered.[40] This claim was underlined by the contributors, who, though Home Rulers, were mainly academics rather than politicians. Bryce then asserts how, through the "indisputable facts" it supplied, history was a means by which the "allegations of passion and prejudice may be tested and the underlying truth be discerned." And it was of course from these underlying patterns, or 'truths', that statesmen could draw valuable political lessons.[41] Unlike O'Brien's works, *Two Centuries* does not spell out the political lesson at its close, but, as the book's origins show, it was assumed to be of a Home Rule nature. This was because the 'underlying truth' taught by *Two Centuries* was naturally the one advanced by Gladstone (and O'Brien's earlier works): that the Irish claim against Britain was historically legitimate. Bryce hoped that Gladstone would find "it a valuable contribution to the Irish question, in showing English people what are the causes which have produced and so largely justified the alienation of Ireland."[42] In March 1887 he had

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[38] Sigerson Papers, MS 10, 904 (2): Bryce to Sigerson, 18 July, 6 Oct. 1887; MS 10, 904 (9): O'Brien to Sigerson, 31 Jan., (n.d.) Mar. 1888.
[39] Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 12, fol.10-11: Bryce to Gladstone, 19 Oct. 1888; MSS Bryce 112, fol.7-8: O'Brien to Bryce, 3 Nov. 1888.
[40] Bryce (ed.), *Two Centuries of Irish History*, pp.v-xi. It was "in no sense as a political argument that it has been written", Bryce told Gladstone a few days before publication (Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 12, fol.10-11: Bryce to Gladstone, 19 Oct. 1888).
[41] Bryce (ed.), *Two Centuries of Irish History*, pp.xii-xiii.
[42] Bryce to Gladstone, 19 Oct. 1888.

echoed Gladstone's lament that the British people were ignorant of these historical causes ("the facts are not known here", he told Sigerson).[43] The latter were finally available in substantial literary form and, with the 'iniquities of the Union' and the legislative failures which followed 'laid bare', the electorate had before them a major part of the reasoning behind Home Rule.

This examination of the Bryce literary project illustrates a number of points. Most clearly, it shows how O'Brien not only markedly strengthened his links with the Liberals after 1886 but, more specifically, how he became associated with the Liberal front bench. Initiated by Gladstone, who then subsequently monitored developments, and organised by Bryce, the literary project in which O'Brien enroled was strictly a front bench enterprise. His ties with Bryce must have become especially close considering the protracted struggle to bring out *Two Centuries of Irish History*, an episode which reveals just how deeply O'Brien was involved in the project. After Bryce, he was arguably the most active and important figure. He helped oversee the production of the two books and, more significantly, through his contribution to the *Handbook* and the planning and editing that he carried out for *Two Centuries of Irish History*, he provided that valuable historical expertise which Gladstone desired. The Bryce project also constituted a striking demonstration of O'Brien's mixed political and cultural identity. The front bench commitment to Home Rule which it embodied fitted with his own dominant nationalism, whilst, besides its obvious rationalist values, it emphasised, through *Two Centuries of Irish History*, his intellectual place within British liberal historical studies.

The Bryce literary campaign was not the only way after 1886 that O'Brien served the Home Rule cause and the Gladstonian historical crusade which accompanied it. He also continued to produce his own works in these years. In mid-1886 the *Freemans Journal* brought out his "Articles on Ireland", a pamphlet consisting of eight essays. The following year he issued another set of essays, but this time in book form. Entitled *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies*, it contained, as the title indicates, his *Nineteenth Century* articles of 1885-6. The rest of the volume consisted of various pieces written since 1881, including some of those in "Articles on Ireland". Then, in 1890, he published *The Home Ruler's Manual*, a compact summary of the arguments in favour of Irish self-government. Gladstone received copies of all these works. As before, he responded in glowing fashion.

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[43] Sigerson Papers, MS 10, 904 (2): Bryce to Sigerson, 1 Mar. 1887.

This is hardly surprising, as, in addition to their perceived quality, they all detailed the historical background so dear to him. O'Brien's favourite ground - the legislative failure of the Imperial Parliament - was always prominent.[44] These works also reveal how there were personal advantages for O'Brien from his role in the Bryce project, for the publisher of both *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies* and *The Home Ruler's Manual* was Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., the same company that issued the two Bryce volumes, and with whom O'Brien, owing to his involvement in the production process, had close dealings.[45] He evidently reaped the benefits of this personal contact when it came to publishing his own work. Of these 1886-90 pieces, only one requires closer examination here.

This is "Mr Lecky on Home Rule" (published in "Articles on Ireland"), O'Brien's mid-1886 riposte to Lecky's recent pronunciations against Home Rule, both in the press and on the platform. One of Lecky's central contentions was that comparisons between 'Grattan's Parliament' of the late eighteenth century and a future Home Rule Parliament were invalid, since, in contrast to the propertied, Protestant and "indisputably loyal" members of the former assembly, the democratic, Catholic, 'Fenian' agitators of the latter would inevitably strive for separation (this accorded with his belief that history did not provide ready-made solutions).[46] It was this assertion which O'Brien sought to combat. To him, Lecky's distinction was unfair and he responded by constructing a twofold historical case. Firstly, he argued that the community which the old Irish Parliament had represented had, on the contrary, not always been "indisputably loyal." As evidence, he pointed to the Volunteer demonstrations for legislative independence in the 1780s and the Protestant membership of the United Irishmen. Secondly, he said that the bulk of the Irish people in fact valued the link with Britain as long as their wishes were respected. "The history of Ireland since the Revolution", wrote O'Brien, "proves that the Irish people are disposed to be loyal to the English connection if their just demands are satisfied."[47] It was English misgovernment which drove the Irish people towards separation, not their natural inclinations. He then provides historical evidence to justify this claim (e.g. that the Young

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[44] O'Brien "Articles on Ireland", *Freemans Pamphlets, No.8* (Dublin, 1886); O'Brien *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies* (London, 1887); *The Home Ruler's Manual* (London, 1890); Gladstone Papers, ADD MSS 44, 509, fol.73: Gladstone to O'Brien, 21 June 1890; *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol.XI*, ed. Matthew, p.584, and *Vol.XII, 1887-91*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew (Oxford, 1994), p.28.

[45] In his letter of 3 November 1888 (MSS Bryce 112, fol.7-8), for instance, O'Brien tells Bryce: "I called on Paul immediately after my return to town. I saw both him and Trench...I found both men friendly & hopeful at the success of the book" [i.e. *Two Centuries of Irish History*].

[46] In particular Lecky contributed "A Nationalist Parliament" to the April *Nineteenth Century*, the same month as it carried O'Brien's "Three Attempts to Rule Ireland Justly" (McCartney, *Lecky*, pp.114-20).

[47] O'Brien, "Mr Lecky and Home Rule", in O'Brien, *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies*, pp.167-86.

Ireland and Fenian revolts only occurred after the previous constitutional campaigns had failed). The granting of Home Rule would thus lead to contentment and a feeling of goodwill towards England.

Such a tradition of latent loyalty coupled with forced rebellion no doubt appealed to Gladstone, who was trying to develop a constitutional pedigree for Irish nationalism.[48] More significantly, the essay on Lecky further illustrates O'Brien's importance to the Liberals' 'historical argument.' Whilst, in Gladstone's opinion, Lecky's works on eighteenth century Irish history lent weight to his historical campaign, the sight of Lecky himself coming out against Home Rule was far less congenial. The very fact that such a leading authority on Irish history opposed Home Rule could only threaten to undermine the Liberals' 'historical case'. It was worse when, as above, he actually contested that case and cited the past against Home Rule. Lecky also dismissed Gladstone's concept of 'historical justice' to Ireland.[49] It was therefore crucial to the Gladstonian historical campaign that Lecky be challenged. He was too weighty a figure to be ignored. Through his 1886 essay, which was republished the next year in *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies*, O'Brien helped show that the Home Rulers were up to the mark. Later that year he continued the process with his attempts, in the *Handbook of Home Rule*, to turn Lecky's historical writings against him. By performing the critical task of tackling Lecky, O'Brien underlined the vital role he was playing in Gladstone's historical crusade. He was arguably the Home Rule publicist who came closest to matching Lecky's knowledge of Irish history and his high standards of scholarship. He may even have seen himself as the Gladstonian/nationalist 'Lecky'. Certainly, his admiration for Lecky had not deterred O'Brien from challenging Lecky's interpretation of Irish history.

The most substantial work O'Brien produced in 1886-92 was one which appeared to lie outside the Home Rule controversy. This was his biography of Thomas Drummond.[50] In 1884 O'Brien was introduced to Drummond's widow by Bright and, having struck up a friendship with her, he was asked a few years later to consider writing a new life of Drummond after Mrs Drummond discovered some fresh letters among her husband's papers. O'Brien had already shown his interest in Drummond in an 1881 essay and so he readily accepted this offer, enjoying "the advantage of many conversations with Mrs

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[48] See Loughlin, *Gladstone, Home Rule and the Ulster Question*, pp 181-4, 289-90.
[49] McCartney, *Lecky*, p.142.
[50] R. Barry O'Brien, *Thomas Drummond, His Life and Letters* (London, 1889). The Drummond biography was again published by Kegan Paul. This was due not only to O'Brien's links with the publisher but the fact that Kegan Paul also knew Mrs Drummond (C. Kegan Paul, *Memories* (London, 1899), pp.348-9).

Drummond" in the writing of the biography.[51] Others to help him included Gavan Duffy (who met Drummond as a young man) and Earl Spencer, who gave O'Brien access to his family papers (Drummond served for a time as Lord Althorp's private secretary), a fact which illustrates the range of Liberal contacts that O'Brien built up in these years.[52]

Although not a polemical work, *Thomas Drummond* still served as an addition to the Gladstonian historical campaign. This was because of the striking contemporary relevance of the lessons it taught. One of the main themes was how Drummond eschewed coercive measures whilst Irish Undersecretary in the 1830s, and governed by the ordinary law alone. As a result, he won the confidence of the Irish people. Referring to Drummond's predecessors, O'Brien writes: "They had coerced. He conciliated...They relied on bayonets and gibbets; he on a just administration of the law, and the removal of grievances. They failed. He succeeded."[53] In drawing this picture O'Brien clearly had the repressive Irish policy of the Unionist government in view. He must have hoped that, with the example of the noble Drummond before them, his readers would perceive the bankruptcy of Balfour's coercive regime. As Gladstone jotted at the back of his copy of *Thomas Drummond*: "But Ireland is to be gov[erne]d by coercion."[54] Drummond had illustrated a plain truth, but it appeared to be lost on the Unionists. "He proved", said O'Brien, "that by justice and fair play, the Irish people might be made loyal to the English connection."[55] That principle was just as applicable in the 1880s as it was in Drummond's day. Only the means had changed. 'Justice' and 'fair play' now meant Home Rule rather than simply a 'just administration of the law.' Loyalty to the English connection would then follow. It showed that Drummond and his Gladstonian successors were the 'real unionists', not their opponents, whose policies only drove the two countries apart.

And this last point returns us to O'Brien's 1886 article, "Three Attempts to Rule Ireland Justly". Like that essay, *Thomas Drummond* was an attempt to place Gladstonian Home Rule within a Liberal tradition of conciliating Ireland, of trying to unite Irish and British sentiment, for Drummond's work as Undersecretary was part of the second of O'Brien's 'Three Attempts': the Melbourne government of 1835-41. Moreover, this theme, implicit in all that was said of Drummond, was sometimes made explicit. The

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[51] O'Brien, *John Bright*, p. 15; O'Brien, Preface to *Thomas Drummond*. See also O'Brien's *Life of Lord Russell* (p.224), where he mentions dining with Russell and Mrs Drummond in 1889. His 1881 essay, entitled "Thomas Drummond: A Political Sketch", was republished in *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies*.
[52] O'Brien, *Thomas Drummond*, Preface and p.378.
[53] O'Brien, *Thomas Drummond*, p.244.
[54] Gladstone's copy of the Drummond biography is housed at St Deiniols Library, Hawarden.
[55] O'Brien, *Thomas Drummond*, p.354.

following quote from Lord John Russell, for example, is included. Defending the government's Irish policy in Parliament in 1839, Russell said: "We have been ready to endeavour to unite by affection, to unite by goodwill and love, the people of this country and the people of Ireland...if the Ministry should fall, it will fall in an attempt to knit together the hearts of Her Majesty's subjects."[56] This statement, marked by Gladstone in his copy of the book, could easily have been a description of his Home Rule policy and its 'Union of Hearts' rhetoric. Through such precedents, O'Brien presented Gladstonian Home Rule as a natural extension of the Liberals' past, not a sharp break with it. It was the Liberal Unionists who, through their acquiescence in coercion, had abandoned the party's heritage. If statements like Russell's demonstrated that the 'true' Liberal party had indeed always been 'unionist', then the Gladstonians, not the dissentient Liberals, had the best claim to both these titles according to O'Brien's *Thomas Drummond*.

Whilst O'Brien's involvement in the Bryce literary project provides the main evidence of his increasing integration into Liberal circles after 1886, other indications of this process exist. His *Life of Parnell*, for instance, reveals that he was at some of the more notable Liberal Home Rule events of these years. In May 1888 he attended the Eighty Club dinner at which Parnell condemned the Plan of Campaign. Bryce, Charles Russell, McCarthy and O'Connor were also there. Later that year O'Brien was present at Bingley Hall, Birmingham, when Gladstone spoke passionately on Ireland to the annual conference of the NLF.[57] The year before he had encountered Gladstone in less dramatic circumstances: a political meeting at Bryce's house. A more important event was O'Brien's appointment to the committee of the Liberal Publication Department in 1888. The committee consisted of men like James Stuart, Percy Bunting, the editor of the *Contemporary Review*, and T. Wemyss Reid, the former editor of the *Leeds Mercury*. Considering the depth of his Irish knowledge, it made sense to enlist O'Brien, but his appointment was aided by the fact that Bryce was chairman of the committee.[58] The benefits of the post were clear. For a start, it gave O'Brien a hand in the Department's output, so that some of its leaflets reflect his historical predilections. O'Brien's new position also gave a push to his own works, for titles like *The Home Ruler's Manual* were

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[56] Ibid p.336.

[57] O'Brien, *Life of Parnell*, pp.430-1, 433-4; St Deiniols Library, Pamphlets (Ireland) 5/J/14: "The Irish Question", Speeches by C.S. Parnell & John Morley, 8 May 1888, Eighty Club circular; *The Gladstone Diaries, Vol. XII*, ed. Matthew, pp.51-2.

[58] *The Star*, 28 Jan. 1889; NLI, O'Leary Papers, MS 5927: O'Brien to John O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891; T. W. Heyck "Home Rule, Radicalism and the Liberal Party, 1886-95", in Alan O'Day (ed.), *Reactions to Irish Nationalism* (London, 1987), p.271; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.115.

advertised in the Department's catalogues.[59] Given developments since 1886, it is no wonder that Gavan Duffy should write to George Sigerson in 1889 of how O'Brien was "in close connection with the Liberal leaders."[60] By that year O'Brien's links with the Liberals as a whole, and the front bench in particular, were abundantly clear.

The extent of O'Brien's intimacy with the Liberals was demonstrated conclusively in the winter of 1889-90 when he became assistant editor of the *Speaker*, a political and literary weekly designed to be the Liberal Home Rule rival to the Unionist *Spectator*. The first issue appeared on 4 January 1890. The editor-in-chief was Wemyss Reid and, as with *The Star*, the paper's main backer was John Brunner. In Koss's words, Bryce was also "instrumental in getting the *Speaker* started." In fact, Reid had hoped that Bryce would become editor rather than him. Bryce had declined, but he still provided help in a way that Reid could "neither forget nor repay."[61] The involvement of Bryce and Reid shows that O'Brien again had the Liberal connections to facilitate his appointment. However, his new post was of course also due to the Liberals' need for his Irish political and historical knowledge. It was understandable that they should want their new paper to utilise the type of expertise O'Brien had displayed in the last four years, especially during the Bryce literary campaign, a project that must have consolidated his reputation in Liberal circles. O'Brien's "intimate knowledge of the trend in Irish politics was invaluable", wrote Reid's brother, Stuart Reid, in 1905.[62] Clearly, O'Brien is another example of the advantageous effect that the Home Rule alliance had on the Fleet Street position of Irish Catholic-nationalist journalists on the political press. As we have seen, this alliance brought a collapse in Gladstonian press support and the Liberals, lacking suitably qualified journalists, had required help in establishing newspaper backing for Home Rule. This situation had enabled O'Connor to become editor of *The Star* in 1888. When, two years later, the Liberals sought to further strengthen the Home Rule presence in Fleet Street, they again turned to an Irishman for help. Like T.P., O'Brien had the right combination of Irish political credentials and Liberal contacts and associations. Consequently, he too benefited from Gladstonian shortcomings and secured a valuable position on the Liberal metropolitan press.

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[59] Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 322, fol.2, 54. Leaflet 1516 (c.1889-90), "Home Rule and English Labour", outlined how Ireland had prospered under the old Irish Parliament, the implication being that a Home Rule Parliament would have the same effect, thereby ending the influx of cheap Irish labour into Britain.
[60] Sigerson Papers, MS 8,100 (5): Gavan Duffy to Sigerson, 16 Aug 1889.
[61] Koss, *Political Press*, I, p.130; Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 123, fol.180-3: Reid to Bryce, 6 Dec. 1889.

Indeed, O'Brien's rise is more marked even than O'Connor's. Whereas T.P. had had considerable experience as a journalist before becoming an editor, O'Brien's ties with the London press were limited prior to 1890. He had contributed articles to the periodical press, but had not had any formal connection with an English journal. Hitherto, his closest links had been with the *Freemans Journal* in Dublin.[63] In comparison to O'Connor, therefore, O'Brien's elevation owed little to journalistic reputation and much to the above factors. Elsewhere, O'Brien's earlier front bench links made the post-1886 ascent within Liberal London less dramatic for him than for O'Connor, but in Fleet Street it was O'Brien whose rise was the most spectacular. And, like T.P., it was an opportunity he turned to the advantage of other Irishmen, although O'Brien does not appear to have secured full-time posts for Irishmen in the way that O'Connor did. The most likely candidate here was T.P. Gill, the former Irish MP, who worked on the paper during the mid-1890s. O'Brien knew Gill from their mutual involvement in the newly founded Irish Literary Society and, in the wake of the Parnell split, Gill had Parnellite leanings that would have commended him to O'Brien.[64] But there is no concrete evidence that O'Brien was responsible for his appointment. One Irishmen whom O'Brien almost certainly did not hire was George Moore (Moore wrote a regular series of art reviews for the *Speaker* from March 1891 onwards), as O'Brien intensely disliked his 1887 book, *Parnell and His Island*.[65] More generally, as assistant editor, O'Brien's scope for hiring Irishmen would have been more limited than O'Connor's, the editor-in-chief. O'Brien may also have been more scrupulous about such a practice.

Instead, where O'Brien's influence registered itself was in the impressive roster of Irish contributors that the *Speaker* boasted during the early 1890s. Among them were literary figures like Wilde, Yeats and Katharine Tynan. They supplied the paper with critical reviews and fiction. Whilst there is no record of a connection with Wilde, O'Brien was undoubtedly behind the recruitment of Yeats and Tynan. They began to write for the paper in 1892-3.[66] Like Gill, they had had contact with O'Brien through the Irish Literary

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[62] *Memoirs of Sir Wemyss Reid, 1842-1885*, ed. Stuart J. Reid (London, 1905), p.xviii.

[63] This connection, however, came to an abrupt end in mid-1889 when O'Brien fell out with the new editor over pay (Sigerson Papers, MS 8, 100 (5): Duffy to Sigerson, 16 Aug. 1889). The *Speaker* was thus a welcome opportunity from a personal as well as a political standpoint.

[64] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.120; *CL*, ii, pp.100-1.

[65] See p.246 below for more on this book and O'Brien and Moore. For Moore's articles on art, see, for example, the *Speaker*, 21 March 1891.

[66] Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol.1*, p.96; *CL*, i, pp. 301-4, 360. For an article by Wilde, see the *Speaker*, 8 Feb. 1890. Beginning in January 1892, fictional and critical pieces by Tynan appear throughout 1892-5.

Society and the fact that they were both committed Parnellites in the 1890s was a factor too. As Tynan wrote later of O'Brien and the *Speaker*: "Like a good friend and brother-Parnellite, he roped me in."[67] Yeats's recruitment stemmed as well from his friendship with the old Fenian John O'Leary, who had returned to Ireland after exile in 1885. O'Leary's influence had already secured newspaper work for Yeats elsewhere and he probably helped put Yeats in touch with O'Brien, who was also a friend of his.[68] Other Irish contributors whom O'Brien is likely to have been responsible for include McCarthy and Davitt, both of whom he knew personally, although, given the prominence of Irish issues and their recognised status within Liberal London, they were obvious choices for a Liberal paper.[69] Another friend of O'Brien's who wrote for the *Speaker* during its early months was Gavan Duffy. Unfortunately, the somewhat testy Duffy became annoyed when the paper failed to publish an article of his, and refused to contribute further.[70] Even so, like O'Connor, O'Brien clearly made sure that the Home Rule alliance not only benefited him but other Irish journalists and writers too.

Yet, this is where the parallel with O'Connor and *The Star* effectively ends. In most other respects the two papers were markedly different. The root of this contrast lay in the paper's origins. In O'Connor and Labouchere, *The Star* had been hatched by two men who were simultaneously Radicals and popular journalists, but, as the close involvement of Bryce shows, the *Speaker* was linked to the Liberal front bench and intelletual liberalism. Gladstone was kept abreast of matters by Reid, who wrote to him in October 1889 to remind him of the paper's imminent appearance and to enquire whether he would be prepared to contribute. Gladstone consented and an article from his pen graced the *Speaker* within its first month. Other Liberal figures who wrote for the paper included John Morley, Dilke, E.L. Godkin, E.A. Freeman and, unsurprisingly, Bryce.[71] These associations with the front bench and intellectual liberalism led to acute differences with

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Yeats's first *Speaker* article was published on 22 July 1893. For Yeats's contributions to the *Speaker*, see *Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats, Vol. 1, 1886-1896*, ed. John P. Frayne (London, 1970).

[67] Katharine Tynan, *Memories* (London, 1924), p.325. See Chapter Six below for details of O'Brien and Yeats's involvement in the Irish Literary Society.

[68] Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol.1*, pp.41-5; *CL*, i, pp.44, 301-4. Through the offices of Stephen Gwynn, O'Brien had subscribed for Yeats's 1889 book of poems, *The Wanderings of Oisin*. O'Brien's friendship with O'Leary went back at least to 1886 (Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 213, fol.95: O'Leary to Bryce, 9 Apr. 1886).

[69] For Davitt, see, for example, the *Speaker*, 18 Jan., 19 Apr. 1890, 28 Apr. 1894, See O'Brien's *Parnell*, pp.404-5, for his links with Davitt. William O'Brien (e.g. 22 Feb. 1890, 7 May 1892) also wrote for the paper, but there is no sign of a close tie with Barry O'Brien, though the latter may still have recruited him.

[70] The *Speaker*, 25 Jan., 1 Mar. 1890; Sigerson Papers, MS 8, 100 (5): Duffy to Sigerson, 12 June [1890?].

The Star in terms of style, audience and politics. Through its development of the 'new journalism', especially the personal approach, *The Star* had tapped into a large working class audience. The *Speaker*, though, eschewed the 'new journalism' ("I am sure you know that the personal style of journalism is as abhorrent to me as it is to yourself", Reid told Herbert Gladstone in late 1889) and looked to a more 'exclusive', middle class, readership.[72] It would be a "first class weekly" which would "emulate the *Saturday Review*" in its literary criticism, said Reid.[73] It was an attempt to re-establish Gladstonian Liberalism among those educated-intellectual classes who had turned against it in 1886.

More significant was the political difference between the two papers. Since 1888 *The Star* and others had challenged the Liberal leadership's concentration on Ireland, inserting Home Rule into a wider Radical programme of social reform. In response, Gladstone had conceded some ground, touching on social issues in late 1888. But, as we have seen, social reforms did not really appeal to him and he had no intention of allowing Home Rule to be obscured by them or of burying it inside a full Radical programme. Ireland would continue to come first.[74] Bryce of course shared these sentiments. His literary campaign had helped assert the primacy of the Irish question and he had originally embraced Home Rule in part as an alternative to Chamberlainite state sponsored social reform. He and Reid now ensured that the new journal upheld Gladstone's Irish priorities. The *Speaker* insisted that Home Rule came before all other reforms. It was therefore not just a contrast to *The Star* but can be seen as a front bench riposte to T.P.'s paper. The *Speaker* sought to lift Home Rule out of the uncongenial Radical programme in which *The Star* had placed it and reassert its primacy. Having seen Gladstonian 'moral politics' outflank Chamberlain's 'social politics', Bryce did not want the former to be lost amidst O'Connor's 'social politics'. "The stupid people who are ascribing to us an intention of being milk and water on [Ireland] will not get much satisfaction out of the *Speaker*", wrote Reid in late 1889.[75] In making this vow Reid knew that he had the full support of his assistant editor. O'Brien's nationalism and his involvement in the Bryce literary project meant that his front bench links were impeccable and that his commitment to its

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[71] Reid to Gladstone, 11 Oct. 1889; Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 509, fols. 10, 243: Reid to Gladstone, 3 Jan. 1890, 10 Mar. 1890; Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 123, fols.180-3: Reid to Bryce, 6 Dec. 1889; The *Speaker*, 4, 11, 18, 25 Jan. 1890, 19 Apr. 1890.

[72] Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 041, fol.119: Reid to Herbert Gladstone, 8 Dec. 1889; Koss, *John Brunner*, p.159.

[73] Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 44, 508, fol.58: Reid to Gladstone, 11 Oct. 1889.

[74] Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister*, pp.487-8, 507-9; Matthew, *Gladstone*, p.560.

[75] Viscount Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 46, 041, fol.124: Reid to Herbert Gladstone, 27 Dec. 1889.

Home Rule priorities was unquestioned. His intellectual liberalism likewise meant that he was well suited to the *Speaker's* style and tone. These qualities would have further offset his lack of journalistic experience and make his appointment even more understandable.

The *Speaker* naturally took little time to spell out its position. On 25 January, for example, it ridiculed those who imagined "that some social question, not the great political problem which confronts us now with immovable features, will be that which the United Kingdom will...be called upon to solve." It went on to praise Gladstone for not being diverted from Ireland by "irresponsible advisers" or the lure of trying "something novel, something more likely to tickle the palates of the political quidnuncs of London." Instead, he reiterated "in terms which none can misunderstand, that one great question by which...the present Ministry will be judged."[76] Later that year, we again find the paper lauding Gladstone for his fidelity to Ireland, describing the latter as that "great moral and political problem which stands first for solution among the many problems which await the attention of our statesmen." "Above and before all other questions", said the *Speaker*, "still looms that Irish problem."[77] Such declarations constituted a firm rebuttal of *The Star's* claim that social issues and Home Rule were of equal status and that a "fair wage for the workman" was just as important as the needs of Ireland. The primacy of Home Rule was evident even when the *Speaker* was discussing other issues. In July 1890, for example, Sidney Webb contributed a series of articles on the familiar London Liberal topic of enlarged powers for the LCC. Interestingly, his first piece closes in the following manner: "Home Rule for London comes second in urgency only to Home Rule for Ireland."[78] This recognition of Ireland's supremacy is unlikely to have come from Webb, who was 'lukewarm' on Home Rule and who, as seen earlier, resisted its dominance of political affairs.[79] Rather, it was either a concession by him to the paper's editorial line or something insisted upon by Reid to ensure that line was not blurred by Webb's alternative focus. Certainly, it placed Webb's municipal enthusiasm within a Gladstonian framework of subordination to Ireland. The contrast with *The Star* was again pointed: London local government reform should not 'beat time' with Home Rule in the *Speaker's* view.

Another way that the *Speaker's* Irish priorities manifested themselves was in the space devoted to Irish issues. From the start the paper launched a vigorous campaign against coercion. In May-July 1890 this subject preoccupied the paper, with editorial

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[76] The *Speaker*, 25 Jan. 1890.
[77] Ibid, 9 Aug. 1890.
[78] Ibid, 12 July 1890; Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour*, p.145; Koss, *John Brunner*, p.160.

pieces on Ireland for six weeks out of eight.[80] These included several articles entitled 'Balfourism', which exposed the arbitrary nature of government in Ireland (and were designed to counter the 'Parnellism and Crime' series in the *Times*). As his Irish remit would suggest, O'Brien was at the heart of the 'Balfourism' campaign (this is confirmed by how the articles at times closely follow his published works[81]). These articles bear examination. Their main contention is that the 'British' rights of the Irish people are being abrogated. The legal and constitutional safeguards taken for granted in England (e.g. trial by jury, separation of judiciary and executive) are being brushed aside in Ireland. In 'Balfourism III' (19 July), for example, the *Speaker* says of 'shadowing' in Ireland: "The enforced companionship of uniformed policemen advertises him as a suspected criminal, and robs him of that sacred privacy which is the privilege of every British subject not charged with crime." Earlier, in 'Balfourism' (28 June), the paper had declared that the "British public…do not...realise how completely Mr Balfour has trodden under foot in Ireland all the traditions of English justice."[82] This strategy of comparison with hallowed British principles was a way of bringing Irish realities home to the British public. There was also the implication that such despotic practices might seep into Britain. More immediately, they not only produced injustice in Ireland but also made a mockery of the idea of a 'Union'. Despite being part of the British state, Ireland was being treated as something altogether different. Unionist policy was not matching the party name. The 'Unionists' once again stood revealed as anything but.

In developing this theme of 'British' rights and the hollow 'Union', O'Brien and the *Speaker* were not taking a novel line. Many Liberal politicians exploited these points in their assault upon coercion, and the *Daily News* had employed this approach after the Mitchelstown massacre, describing how the British people felt that the victims were "their fellow citizens, with the same rights as themselves."[83] In fact, this theme was effectively as old as the Union itself, for, although Ireland had been part of the United Kingdom since 1800, it had rarely been seen as such. Two of the leading critics of this habit of simply paying lip service to the Union were Bright and Isaac Butt (O'Connor had

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[79] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.148.
[80] The *Speaker*, 31 May, 14, 21, 28 June, 12, 19 July 1890.
[81] Compare, for instance, the first 'Balfourism' article (28 June 1890) with *The Home Ruler's Manual* (pp.14-17). In both places O'Brien highlights how very few Irishmen (and no Catholics) had been either Irish Viceroy or Chief Secretary since the Union.
[82] The *Speaker*, 19 July, 28 June 1890.
[83] *Daily News*, 13 Sept. 1887.

attacked it in 1881 as well[84]). Anticipating the Gladstonian rhetoric of the 1880s, both men had pointed out in earlier decades how coercion in Ireland violated the 'English' rights of the Irish people. Butt had also noted, in 1849, how the 'Union' had similarly not operated during the Famine, with Ireland bearing most of the financial burden.[85] The Gladstonian campaign against Balfour thus owed something to figures like Bright and Butt. Considering Bright's impact on him and his personal links with Butt, this was surely true of O'Brien more than most. His *Speaker* campaign against 'Balfourism' and its disregard of the 'British' rights of the Irish people may have reflected contemporary Liberal strategy, but it also stemmed from the influence of these two men. Moreover, this campaign (and its connection with Bright) brings us back to the fact that O'Brien himself had accepted the British constitution. That he should be upholding the rights conferred by that constitution strikingly illustrates how his nationalism had come to rest within its legal, rationalist parameters. Indeed, the *Speaker* campaign shows just how far O'Brien had travelled since the Fenian ideas of his youth. Rather than contesting the legitimacy of the British constitution in Ireland, he was defending it from Unionist encroachment.

If the *Speaker's* commitment to the primacy of Home Rule demonstrated the front bench's desire to resist *The Star's* attempt to merge it with a full Radical programme, then the new paper also yielded further evidence of how the front bench had still made concessions to *The Star* by 1890. Like the discussion of social questions by Gladstone and Morley in late 1888, the *Speaker's* coverage of other issues, such as London government, underlined how, following the efforts of *The Star* and others, the Liberal leadership and its press allies could no longer focus solely on Ireland. Ireland might still top the Liberal agenda, but the 1887 claim by the *Daily News* that "the electoral question is now simply the Irish question" was no longer true. And, just as *The Star's* call for a wider, more socially aware, programme gained even more ground with the front bench in 1890-2, so both the 'social question' and the idea of a 'Liberal programme' grew in importance on the *Speaker*. Whilst still insisting, like Gladstone did at Newcastle in 1891, that Ireland came first, the paper also strongly supported those social and constitutional reforms which he and the front bench had accepted there. For the *Speaker*, social issues

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[84] See p.89 above.

[85] Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.342. For Bright on 'English' rights in Ireland, see *Speeches by John Bright MP*, ed. Thorold Rogers, I, pp.350, 366, and for Butt, see his Home Rule speech of June 1874, where he speaks of how "in Ireland every principle of the English constitution appeared to be studiously violated" (*Hansard*, 3rd series, 1874, ccxx, 700-717).

now came a close second to Ireland rather than being the preserve of London 'political quidnuncs'. In May 1892, on the eve of the general election, it declared:

> The coming election will be fought, not upon any minor questions, but upon the burning question of Ireland ...But behind Home Rule lie many great measures of social and legislative reform...to which not only individual members of the Liberal party, but the party as a whole, are definitely and finally pledged. These measures include many for which the...'Social Reform wing' of the party are now contending, and they will have the first place in the Liberal programme after the demands of honour have been satisfied.[86]

As this confirms, the significance of the *Speaker* goes beyond providing a stark contrast with *The Star* or representing a front bench initiative to preserve Irish priorities under pressure from *The Star's* Radical aspirations. In the final analysis the *Speaker* also supplies another telling index of how O'Connor's paper helped shape Liberal policy.[87]

It also, of course, highlights the political differences, both in identity and connections, between O'Brien and O'Connor, and this in turn fixes attention on an intriguing feature of the period: the lack of personal contact between them. Few, if any, links are discernible. Whilst their political differences account for much of this, there was, as noted earlier, a social gulf between them in the late 1870s and early 1880s. O'Connor inhabited a bohemian, working class, literary-political world of which O'Brien presumably knew little from his Temple law chambers. Then, in the late 1880s, they operated somewhat as competitors in the same Liberal London circles of politics and journalism. In addition, T.P.'s loose Catholicism and his identification with the 'personal' approach of the 'new journalism' may have made him morally dubious in O'Brien eyes. Although the Church's anti-Parnellite stance during the split disgusted O'Brien (so that it is a fitful presence in his *Life of Parnell*), his Catholicism endured and found expression in his biography of Charles Russell, where he made Russell's strong Catholicism a prominent theme. A final, important, factor to be remembered is that O'Brien and O'Connor were on opposite sides during the Parnell split. Whatever the main source of the division, it was real enough, and was evident when O'Brien wrote his *Life of Parnell* in the 1890s. O'Brien interviewed several members of the Irish Party for the book, but T.P. was not among them. Further, when the book appeared it only worsened matters, as T.P. was angered by its portrayal of his role in the infamous Galway by-election of 1886.[88] The O'Connor-O'Brien gulf is

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[86] The *Speaker*, 7 May 1892; Koss, *John Brunner*, p.160.

[87] The feeling that the *Speaker* embraced the 'Newcastle Programme' largely through force of circumstances is increased by how the paper, now attached to Rosebery, quickly jettisoned that programme after the Liberals' heavy defeat at the 1895 election, saying that it had been thrust on the party without proper discussion and that its lack of focus was behind the Liberals' defeat. The party should instead rally around a 'great cause' (The *Speaker*, 27 July, 10, 17, 24 Aug., 26 Oct. 1895).

[88] What O'Connor objected to was O'Brien's claim (*Parnell*, p.382) that he crossed to Ireland with the intention of opposing Captain O'Shea at the by-election, and so, by implication, opposing Parnell too. T.P.

emphasised by the fact that O'Brien was friends with McCarthy and interviewed him for his *Life of Parnell*. Even though he shared T.P.'s Radicalism, McCarthy, with his stricter Catholicism, social respectability and front bench connections, was a more appealing figure for O'Brien.[89] Yet, as this study shows, for all their differences and lack of personal ties O'Brien and O'Connor exhibited many similarities in their careers, not least that they both played a crucial part in the Liberal Home Rule campaign on the London press and were easily the two most important Irishmen in that campaign.

Unfortunately for O'Brien, shortly after establishing himself on the *Speaker*, he had to face the catastrophe of the Parnell divorce case and the subsequent 'split' in the Irish Party. His loyalty to Parnell throughout the troubled final months of his life (Nov 1890-Oct 1891) was unswerving. He told Parnell at the outset: "I shall stick to you in this fight to the end of the battle." O'Brien's reasoning was clear: Parnell was indispensable to the Home Rule cause. He was "the only man who can carry Home Rule", O'Brien told fellow Parnellite John O'Leary, in March 1891, and if he went "Home Rule was lost for a generation." (As this implied, O'Brien's confidence in Parnell's lieutenants was limited; this no doubt included O'Connor, and certainly included Dillon). O'Brien also felt that it was his duty, as an Irishman, to remain loyal to his leader.[90] Shortly after the divorce court verdict against Parnell, he aired these views publicly in a letter to the *Freeman's Journal* (24 November). In this O'Brien simply asked: "what is best for Ireland?" To him, the answer was for Parnell to stay at his post, as his "public service" was "essential to the welfare of my country." Moreover, given his past achievements Parnell was entitled to fidelity from his followers. He should not be abandoned at his "moment of trial."[91] In the week after the court verdict O'Brien regularly visited the Irish Press Agency and tried to rally support for Parnell among the Irish MPs that he met there, especially following the publication of Gladstone's letter (26 November). This document, advising Parnell to retire in order to save Home Rule and raising the prospect of Gladstone's resignation if he did not, sparked consternation in the Irish Party, with a majority of the Irish MPs

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in fact at first issued a writ to restrain the circulation of O'Brien's book, but withdrew it after O'Brien and his publishers, having apparently received assistance from Healy (whom O'Brien did interview for the biography), stood firm (O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, p.103; Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day*, I, p.276).

[89] For evidence of McCarthy's co-operation with O'Brien for the biography, see O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.176, 301-2, 327-9, 373, 424-5, 473, 487, 546, and McCarthy Papers, Diaries: 25 July, 28 Oct. 1895 (MS 3705).

[90] NLI, O'Leary Papers, MS 5927: O'Brien to O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891; O'Brien, *Parnell* p.478. Speaking of Dillon in 1898, O'Brien said: "it is a wonder the Irish people haven't found out what a....fool he is" (*Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. James Pethica, pp.135-7). For more on his views on the Irish Party, see p.198 below.

[91] *Freemans Journal*, 24 Nov. 1890.

eventually repudiating Parnell's leadership. Even when Parnell broke irrevocably with the Liberals through his manifesto of 28 November, O'Brien did not flinch. He then agreed to stand as a Parnellite candidate at the Kilkenny by-election in December 1890. In the event Vincent Scully was adopted, but O'Brien still travelled to Kilkenny and campaigned vigorously for Parnell.[92]

Along with the later biography, it is this strong support for Parnell during the split that has led to O'Brien's image as a consistent and unequivocal Parnellite. This has already been challenged and in the light of the current chapter such a view clearly cannot be sustained. O'Brien himself began his *Freeman's Journal* letter by stating that he wrote as "one who is not a Parnellite." Considering his activities over the past four years, this was a valid declaration. He had made his mark as a close associate of the Liberal front bench, not of Parnell or his party. Thus, when he came out for Parnell in 1890 he was going against his existing political ties rather than expressing an established Parnellite identity. It was a dramatic break with the political persona he had acquired since 1886. "I am in a new character in a sort of way," O'Brien told O'Leary in March 1891, illustrating his own awareness of how the split had transformed his political identity. Referring to his earlier refusal to become a Home Rule MP, O'Brien told Parnell at the time of the Kilkenny by-election: "When your star was in the ascendant, I did not come to join your forces. Things are now changed and I do come."[93] Although O'Brien had known Parnell since 1880, it was only during the turbulent period of 1890-1 that he became the committed Parnellite and close confidant of the 'chief' for which he is almost exclusively remembered. The situation did not lack irony. O'Brien, the nationalist historian, had gone with Parnell, who was ignorant of Irish history, and against Gladstone, who was preoccupied with it.

How did others react to his change of face? Unsurprisingly, the Liberals were filled with a mixture of anger and dismay, especially after O'Brien's involvement at Kilkenny became known. "Some of the Party though are incensed against me," he told O'Leary, "and Bryce tells me that I have no idea of the difficulties he has in fighting for me. Mr G was much surprised and would scarcely believe what I had done."[94] The Liberals did not expect to see O'Brien in the Parnellite fold. He was assistant editor of a leading Liberal paper, a political associate of Reid, Bryce and Gladstone, and a trusted colleague in the struggle for Home Rule. They were shocked to suddenly find him on the opposite side.

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[92] O'Brien to O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891; O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.477-8, 505-19.
[93] *Freemans Journal*, 24 Nov. 1890; O'Brien to O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891.
[94] O'Brien to O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891.

Indeed, it seems likely that O'Brien is the 'X' referred to at this juncture in Morley's *Life of Gladstone*. Upon hearing that a certain individual was a known Parnellite authority at the impending Kilkenny election, Gladstone proclaimed: "What X a Parnellite! Are they mad then? Are they clean demented?"[95] Given his strong Liberal ties and the fact that he was at Kilkenny with Parnell, O'Brien is almost certainly the 'X' mentioned here, particularly in view of his own account of Gladstone's astonishment. Moreover, Gladstone and the Liberals were not the only ones taken aback by O'Brien's actions. The Irish MPs that he confronted were equally surprised. Demonstrating his awareness of how his nationalism had assumed an increasingly 'collaborative' character, O'Brien wrote: "As they always thought me a whig, bound up for ever with the Liberal party, I astonished some of them and they all listened to me." To him, it was such 'collaboration' with the Liberals which had undermined the Irish Party, for the anti-Parnellite majority had lost their 'Irish' anchor. They failed to see that, as Irishmen, they should not discard their leader at the behest of an Englishman, even if it was Gladstone. Accordingly, for a spell during the stormy days of 1891 O'Brien looked to the moral force of Fenianism, which was solidly Parnellite, to save the country. Having the 'real nationalists' behind Parnell showed that to support him was to be truly 'Irish'.[96]

The disbelief which greeted O'Brien's emergence as a Parnellite underlines just how close he was to the Liberals and how utterly unexpected his Parnellite stance was. But, significantly, that stance did not result in O'Brien cutting his ties either with the *Speaker* or Liberal London as a whole, though at times in 1890-1 this looked likely. On the *Speaker* Reid and Bryce were at first sympathetic towards Parnell, displaying, said O'Brien, "a width and generosity that was admirable." In it first issue after the court verdict (22 November), the paper took a line that O'Brien called "cautious, but fair, and all that could be expected."[97] This was because, although admitting it was best for British Liberals that Parnell should retire, the *Speaker* said that the Irish could hardly be blamed if they stayed loyal to their leader after the services he had rendered them. By the next week the paper's line had stiffened. With the depth of Liberal feeling against Parnell now clear, and with Gladstone having published his 'necessary' letter, the *Speaker* said that

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[95] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, II, p.518.
[96] O'Brien to O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891; O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.478, 537. When the Irish MPs at the Irish Press Agency heard that O'Leary was for Parnell, one of them remarked: "that does not prove we are right." O'Brien replied: "no, but it does prove that we are right in our morals. He can show us what is Irish, though he may not show us what is expedient." "The country is going to the D. now", O'Brien told O'Leary. "Can Fenianism save it again? That is the question we have to face."
[97] O'Brien to O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891.

the Irish people must recognise that they had to sacrifice their leader for the sake of Home Rule. But it was the appearance of Parnell's manifesto, attacking Gladstone and the Liberals, which inevitably erased any lingering *Speaker* sympathy for him. Reid now turned the paper against Parnell, defending Gladstone from his strictures.[98] This obviously left O'Brien in a very difficult position. Nevertheless, his friendship with Reid survived. They simply "agreed to differ", said O'Brien, with each man respecting the other's loyalty to his leader. "The best fellow I have ever known" is how O'Brien described Reid. When O'Brien submitted his resignation before leaving for Kilkenny, Reid refused to accept it, and when other Liberals objected to a Parnellite candidate continuing as assistant editor of a Liberal weekly, he stood by O'Brien. So did Bryce, thereby showing just how strong their friendship was by 1890.[99]

What probably helped O'Brien's relations with Reid was the nature of his support for Parnell. He had backed him out of loyalty and a belief that he was vital to the Home Rule cause. He had done so from the start, making his views public before Gladstone's letter. He was not motivated by anti-Liberal or anti-English feelings; his Parnellite stance was not fuelled by a sense of English dictation (unlike O'Leary, who only came out for Parnell after Gladstone's intervention[100]). Although O'Brien felt Gladstone's letter struck at the "honour of every Irishman", he did not believe this was intentional. "I have nothing to say against Reid," he wrote, "nothing...against Bryce, nothing against the Liberals." O'Brien tried to dissuade Parnell from issuing his anti-Liberal manifesto and later urged him to refrain from personal attacks on Gladstone. It was the Irish MPs who had deserted Parnell following Gladstone's letter for whom he reserved his disgust.[101] This choice of targets raises the question of whether O'Brien was looking to protect his position on the *Speaker* and his place in Liberal London. However, given his unwavering support for Parnell even after the manifesto, not to mention his readiness to leave the *Speaker* and stand at Kilkenny, such a consideration does not appear to have influenced him. Another factor in O'Brien's favour at the *Speaker* was that Reid had had a similar experience. His political hero had formerly been Forster, whose biography Reid had published in 1888.

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[98] The *Speaker*, 22 Nov. ("Mr Parnell"), 29 Nov. ("Mr Gladstone's Letter"), 6 Dec. ("Mr Parnell Unmasked") 1890.
[99] O'Brien to O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891.
[100] O'Brien, *Parnell*, p.477.
[101] O'Brien to O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891; O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.478, 538-9. "The baseness, the villiany, the scoundrelism", O'Brien told O'Leary, "are all to be found among the Irishmen who acted like rank cowards in deserting their leader because an Englishman said 'I won't work with him.' Oh, the infamy of this thing."

Like Parnell, Forster had clashed with Gladstone (over the 'Kilmainham treaty' of 1882) and this possibly helped Reid understand O'Brien's position and sympathise with him.

Once it was clear that O'Brien was not standing at Kilkenny, the situation at the *Speaker* would have eased. Whilst retaining his post, O'Brien was naturally "shut out" from Irish politics by Reid. Even so, he was occasionally allowed to "meddle a bit about Ireland, but not of course P[arnell]." O'Brien's Liberal links persisted elsewhere too. The Liberal Publication Department committee, for example, also refused to accept the resignation he submitted before starting for Kilkenny. This state of things was repeated on a more informal level. "I keep up friendly relations with the Liberals", wrote O'Brien, "later our relations may become more strained, but all my Liberal friends perfectly understand that I shall stick to P. to the end." The one event that would have shattered O'Brien's place in Liberal London was if he had stood against Maurice Healy in Cork, as Parnell at one point desired.[102] But this contest did not happen and O'Brien's Liberal ties stayed intact. For the rest of the decade he maintained this dual allegiance, keeping both his Parnellite affiliation and his place in Liberal London, including the *Speaker*. In fact, he acted as something of a link between the Parnellites and the Liberals during Gladstone's last government, providing John Redmond, the Parnellite leader and an increasingly good friend of his, with a useful private channel to the Liberal front bench. In July 1893, for instance, we find O'Brien dining with Reid, Algernon West (the head of Gladstone's secretariat) and Reginald Welby, and discussing the kind of concessions that would quell Parnellite unrest over the Home Rule Bill. O'Brien's influence also secured space for Parnellite views in the *Speaker* despite its hostility to that cause, Redmond contributing an article on the Home Rule Bill in February 1893.[103] O'Brien would remain on the *Speaker* until 1899, when, with the paper changing hands, both he and Reid left.[104]

Having effectively dismantled the image of O'Brien as an unqualified Parnellite, it is time to return to the biography largely responsible for that image. Two main points are considered here. Firstly, there is the context in which the book was written. On 21 April 1894 O'Brien told Redmond: "I have made up my mind to write the Life of Parnell...I have thought very carefully over the whole subject, and I think I see my way to make the

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[102] O'Brien to O'Leary, 13 Mar. 1891.
[103] *The Private Diaries of Algernon West*, ed. H.G. Hutchinson (London, 1922), pp.172-5; The *Speaker*, 25 Feb. 1893.

Life a good book."[105] By then the second Home Rule Bill had been thrown out by the Lords and Gladstone had resigned, with the Cabinet refusing to back his opinion that they should dissolve over the Lords' actions. He was succeeded by Lord Rosebery, whose commitment to Home Rule was suspect. A year later and the Liberals had been routed at the polls. Only John Morley included Home Rule prominently within his programme. Meanwhile, Reid and the *Speaker*, hitherto firmly wedded to the Irish cause, had, true to their front bench associations, attached themselves to Rosebery and this, along with the 1895 electoral disaster, saw a softening of the paper's Home Rule faith. To the *Speaker*, the principle of Home Rule, of 'justice to Ireland', was still a vital part of the Liberal creed (unlike much of the 'Newcastle Programme'), but Ireland could no longer claim precedence nor were the Liberals tied to the details of past Home Rule Bills.[106] The Liberal Home Rule alliance as pursued by the bulk of the Irish Party - and for which Parnell had been sacrificed - had reached a feeble, demoralising end. O'Brien's political allies had run out of steam. By the time his *Life of Parnell* appeared in 1898 matters were even worse, with Rosebery's resignation two years earlier having ushered in a period of internal chaos. The Liberal 'ship', O'Brien told Bryce, is "entering the wood with a...disorganised 'crew', and no 'captain', and no 'chart'." The Irish MPs, split between Parnellites, anti-Parnellites and Healyites, were in a similar mess. O'Brien felt there was "no chance" of Home Rule "until all the present members" were "swept off the board".[107]

Given the abject state of Liberal and nationalist politics in 1894-8, the heyday of aggressive Parnellism in the late 1870s and 1880s must have acquired an even greater lustre in O'Brien's eyes as he composed his *Parnell*. If so, the portrait of a masterful, uncompromising, Parnell that many commentators have noted in his book surely owed something to the circumstances in which O'Brien wrote, as well as his reading of historical fact.[108] In a climate of political failure O'Brien was no doubt quick to fasten upon these qualities of Parnell's and how, through them, he turned the Irish MPs into an effective unit for the first time and forced British Liberals to recognise the need for Home

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[104] Letters from O'Brien to Bryce in 1898-9 (Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 112, fol.24: O'Brien to Bryce, 18 Aug. 1899; NLI, Bryce Papers, MS 11, 010: O'Brien to Bryce, 4 Dec. 1898) were still being written from the *Speaker* office, showing that O'Brien stayed at the paper until Reid's departure in October 1899.

[105] NLI, Redmond Papers, MS 15, 211 (2): O'Brien to Redmond, 16 Apr. 1894.

[106] The *Speaker*, 10, 17, 24 Aug., 7 Dec. 1895. "I have not met a single man", Reid told Rosebery in May 1896, "who does not agree that Home Rule of the type of Mr G. is dead" (Rosebery Papers, MS 10056, fol.37: Reid to Rosebery, 14 May 1896).

[107] NLI, Bryce Papers, MS 11, 010: O'Brien to Bryce, 30 Nov. 1898; *Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. James Pethica, p.97.

[108] See above pp.30-31 for recent interpretations of O'Brien's *Parnell*.

Rule. But it was not just a question of nostalgia. Such a portrait was clearly intended to improve present politics, not just condemn them. Most obviously, it was a vivid reminder for nationalist MPs of the powerful, disciplined, party they had once been and would need to be again if Home Rule was to be won. It also provided guidance and inspiration for those showing signs of being Ireland's next 'chief'. The figure whom O'Brien had in mind here was, surprisingly, Horace Plunkett, the agricultural reformer. In the late 1890s he saw Plunkett as the man to revive Irish nationalism. This view was shared by others, most notably Yeats and Lady Gregory, who hoped Plunkett would be the Ascendancy successor to Parnell that they desired; someone who would not only re-unite nationalists but restore their class to its rightful position of national leadership. Through Lady Gregory, whom he came to know in the mid-1890s, O'Brien met Plunkett for the first time in 1897 and urged him to push himself forward. He no doubt shared Yeats's view of his *Parnell* as expressed to Lady Gregory in 1898: "It is a useful book right now, and may affect the actions of men like Plunkett".[109] And it was not just Irish politicians who could learn from O'Brien's book. With its praise of Gladstone and depiction of how, through him and Parnell, they took Home Rule to heart, it looked to reattach the Liberals to the Irish cause that they had seemingly abandoned, to return a floundering party to its historic mission of 'justice to Ireland'. Bryce certainly saw things this way, calling the book a "powerful argument" for Home Rule.[110] Through the sharp lessons it taught Liberals and nationalists alike, O'Brien's *Parnell* was, in part, an attempt to revive the waning fortunes of Home Rule.

The second main point in regard to O'Brien's biography is the idea of an alternative narrative. Away from the central Parnellite focus, a different picture emerges, one which brings O'Brien's place in Liberal London into view. There are, for example, the interviews with Gladstone and Bright, the stories and comments from the likes of Morley, Dilke, Spencer, and James Stuart, and the numerous quotes from unidentified Liberal politicians.[111] O'Brien also utilises the private correspondence of Liberal statesmen, such

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[109] *CL*, ii, p.299; *Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. James Pethica, pp.97-9, 125, 134-7, 142; John Kelly, "Parnell in Irish Literature", in Boyce & O'Day (eds.), *Parnell in Perspective*, pp.242-309. Another figure whom they possibly had in mind as a national leader was Lord Castletown. He had made a strong speech on the financial exploitation of Ireland in December 1896.

[110] NLI, Bryce Papers, MS 11, 010: O'Brien to Bryce, 30 Nov. 1898.

[111] O'Brien, *Parnell*: Gladstone (pp.555-63), Bright (pp.397-402), Morley (p.421), Dilke (p.177), Spencer (p.311), Stuart (p.475), unidentified Liberals (pp.466, 475, 489). The latter were most likely Reid and Bryce. For Morley, see too *Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. James Pethica, pp.135-7.

as the Lord Cowper-Gladstone letters of 1880-2.[112] As a known figure in Liberal London, O'Brien had access to these sources, both at the time and later. They lend his biography depth and scope, providing a wide range of perspectives on Parnell. The participation of Gladstone was of course particularly important. By concluding his book with Gladstone's assessment of Parnell, O'Brien gives it weight and authority, helping to establish its classic status. O'Brien's personal association with Gladstone had born fruit in a valuable way. At times in the book O'Brien's Liberal links are quite clear. Confronting the Irish MPs during the split, for instance, he says: "I think I am better affected towards Mr Gladstone and the Liberal party than any of you." And, as seen earlier, his attendance at notable Liberal occasions of the late 1880s is also mentioned. Thus, for those willing to look even his *Life of Parnell*, the very fountain of his Parnellite reputation, furnishes considerable evidence of O'Brien's close ties with Liberal London and so of the Liberal side to his political and cultural identity. After all, along with Gladstone ("the only Englishman worthy of his [Parnell's] steel"), the other figure who appears at the end of the book is O'Connell, "the greatest Irishman of the century."[113] Together, these two men serve as a closing reminder that if O'Brien was a committed nationalist, it was a nationalism which, for most of his career, operated in a thoroughly Liberal, constitutional context rather than a combative Parnellite one.

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[112] O'Brien, *Parnell*: Cowper-Gladstone (pp.194-205), Bright-Hartington (pp.178-9); NLI, Bryce Papers, MS 11, 010: O'Brien to Bryce, 2 Dec. 1898; Gladstone Papers, ADD MS 56, 449, fol.137: O'Brien to Gladstone, 15 July 1896.
[113] O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.478, 552.

6

'Old Fogeyism': W.P. Ryan, R. Barry O'Brien and the Irish Literary Society, 1891-1906

In 1893 the *Speaker* paid the following tribute to the political and journalistic success which T.P. O'Connor (now editor of the *Weekly Sun*) had enjoyed in London since 1886:

> There were those who were heard to resent the notion of this expansive Irishman coming over, like a Goth to old Rome, and making London his toy...But all that was before T.P. was understood as well as he is now; or rather, to put it better, it was before he conquered us. We are conquered now. It would be as hard now to imagine our House of Commons and our Press without their 'Tay Pay' as it would be to conceive them without their Labby.[1]

It was appropriate that the *Speaker* should bracket O'Connor with Labouchere given that it was their Radical campaign that the paper had resisted. Still, the *Speaker* was generous enough to acknowledge what this campaign had amply demonstrated: that T.P.'s political success was not confined to Irish nationalism but had a strong local dimension as well. "A good deal might be said of him as a politician, and as an English as distinguished from an Irish politician", declared the paper. "With his founding of *The Star*, his was certainly the first big trumpet-blast to awaken the dormant Liberalism of London."[2] But if T.P. had undoubtedly made his mark on the English capital, then the same could be said of McCarthy and Barry O'Brien. They too had left their imprint on the metropolis (albeit to a lesser extent than O'Connor). By the early 1890s the achievements of all three men were there to be seen in the spheres of politics, journalism and literature. Each one had become firmly established within Liberal London. Yet, within a few years the choices they had made and the success they had obtained would be increasingly questioned. The long-standing pattern of Irish literary emigrant integration into British life that they represented would soon be challenged by an opposing force.

This force was provided by the 'Revival' generation of Irish literary emigrants. Reaching London in the late 1880s, this younger generation - men like W.P. Ryan and D.P. Moran - was influenced over the next twenty years by the Irish revival rather than British Liberalism (in Ryan's case this process began even before he left Ireland). They were active in the Southwark Irish Literary Club, the Irish Literary Society and the Gaelic League. They saw the key to Ireland's national identity as cultural rather than political. The process of 'Anglicisation' had to be halted and the cultural union that seemed to have

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[1] The *Speaker*, 11 Feb. 1893.
[2] Ibid.

accompanied the political one reversed. In time this would mean the development of a new national literature, the spread of Gaelic customs, the revival of the Irish language and the fostering of Irish industry. The Revival generation looked to galvanise their fellow countrymen, not the larger British audience. "We are working for a new Irish civilisation, quite distinct from the English," said Ryan in 1902.[3] As a result, when, from the 1890s onwards, the 'Revival' group came into close contact with a 'Home Rule' generation that did not appear to share this vision, they were not impressed by what they saw. To the later arrivals, Irishmen like O'Connor, O'Brien and McCarthy - with their Liberal links and identities, their attachment to Bright and Gladstone, their newspaper interests and their demonstrable social success - had embraced the English way of life rather than promoting the Irish alternative. Their cultural focus was London when it should be Ireland, and they wrote for British readers instead of their own land. Prolonged residency in London had, in the eyes of the Revival zealots, Anglicised this previous generation. T.P. may have 'conquered' London in the *Speaker*'s view, but, to Ryan and Moran, London had 'conquered' O'Connor.

Thus, whilst for the Home Rule writers emigration led, in varying degrees, to adaptation and assimilation, for their Revival successors it resulted in a more acute sense of Irishness. The way that these two contrasting generations of literary emigrants confronted each other in 1890s London will be examined in the next two chapters. First of all, the struggle between Ryan and Barry O'Brien for influence within the Irish Literary Society will be detailed. The collision that took place there between O'Brien's intellectual liberalism and Ryan's revivalist zeal was a microcosm of the generation conflict occurring outside. This will be followed by an exploration of the experiences of Ryan and, to a lesser extent, Moran in Fleet Street, where they both worked under O'Connor's editorship and so were able to observe T.P. at close hand. Delineating these personal contests and encounters among the emigrant writers is important because it reveals just how direct and immediate the generation clash between Home Rule politicians and revival activists was. Although this clash has been treated in broad terms, highlighting the gulf between the Irish Party's secular, liberal values and the Gaelicists 'native' ones, the fact that the two generations often met in this face to face fashion has not been stressed.[4] Consequently, what is also overlooked is how the cultural nationalism of emigrants like Ryan and Moran was itself stimulated by their personal contact with the Home Rule

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[3] *United Irishman*, 22 Feb.1902.

writers. This is because the earlier generation, and especially O'Connor, acted as a stark cultural 'warning' for the Revival group. A desire to avoid sharing their Anglicised fate helped propel Ryan and Moran into revival activities. This was particularly true of Ryan. Conflict with O'Brien and exposure to the unsavoury example of T.P. contributed greatly to his move into the Gaelic League in 1899. Commentators have noted how in their cultural nationalism Ryan and Moran were both responding positively to the appeal of the 'Irish-Ireland' vision and recoiling from perceived English materialism and decadence, and these two factors, to a large extent interdependent, will be evident here too, principally in relation to Fleet Street.[5] But to them is now added the cultural 'warning' that emanated from the Home Rule writers. In T.P.'s case he had seemingly embraced the very English materialism that the Revivalists were reacting against. The gulf between the two generations would receive its strongest illustration in the early 1900s when the revival faith of Ryan and Moran took them back to Ireland, thereby reversing the trend of a century and breaking that London magnetism which the Home Rule writers typified.

Born into a Catholic peasant family in County Tipperary in 1867, W.P. Ryan moved to London in November 1886 (he was just over nineteen). From the outset, he wished to try his hand at journalism, but his first employment was as a clerk in the offices of the Pearl Assurance Company. He described his early years in London as "studious and scholarly", for he spent much time in the Guildhall Library studying literature and exploring ancient Irish lore.[6] Fortunately, an antidote to this social and intellectual isolation presented itself in the form of the Southwark Irish Literary Club. Founded by F.A. Fahy in January 1883, the Club was the first sign - either in Britain or Ireland - of what would become the Irish cultural revival. Its avowed object was to "spread among adults a knowledge of Irish History, language, art and literature and to serve as a medium, of social and intellectual intercourse for Irish people of both sexes."[7] It grew out of the Southwark Junior Irish Literary Club, which had been established in 1881 in order to teach London-born Irish children something of the history and literature of their native land. Following the success of this enterprise, the decision was taken to transfer the same educative spirit to the adult sphere. Before its lapse in 1890-1 the Southwark Irish Literary Club would attract a

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[4] See pp.22-3 above.
[5] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.66-78; Maume, *D.P. Moran*, p.8; Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, pp.239-42.
[6] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.1-11.

number of notable Irishmen to the 'cut-throat lane' where it was situated. Barry O'Brien, McCarthy, Edmund Downey, John Redmond and John Augustus O'Shea all addressed the Club between 1884 and 1887, whilst on the night of McCarthy's lecture Gavan Duffy was in the chair. Wilde and Yeats also had connections with the Club.[8]

However, such occasions tended to be the exception rather than the rule ("We did not...rely solely on those great names to fill our bill," said Fahy[9]). The real basis of the club was the committee, whose members organised the society's weekly activities. In the early years this included Fahy (President), John T. Kelly (secretary), J.S. Cronin, J. Finnerty and P.J. Keawell. Something of what they achieved can be gleaned from *The Irish Programme*. Issued from Liverpool, the paper's remit was the political and cultural affairs of the Irish in Britain. The founder and editor was John Denvir, the Irish nationalist publisher, writer and political organiser. Denvir was closely associated with the Southwark project, having issued a series of *Child's Irish Song Books* on behalf of the Junior Irish Literary Club in the early 1880s. In 1884 he published the *Irish National Reciter*, a small booklet of Irish songs compiled by members of the adult club.[10] His paper provided detailed accounts of the new literary society. "The members came to look upon the *Nationalist* as their own special organ," Denvir wrote later.[11]

The picture that emerges from *The Irish Programme* is certainly an energetic one. By the early months of 1885 Fahy and his associates had developed a varied range of cultural activities. There were Irish historical lectures and debates, Irish concerts, 'Penny Reading Nights' and 'Authors' Nights.' At the latter an address would be given on the life and work of a distinguished Irish writer.[12] Of greater significance were the 'Gaelic Nights' and the 'Original Nights.' On the former occasions all the "contributions, songs, stories and sketches" had to be in the Irish language. The first of these events took place in June 1884.[13] The most popular evenings, though, were the monthly 'Original Nights,' at which members would showcase their own songs, poems and sketches. These nights were "looked forward to with much interest", the only stipulations being that each piece had to

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[7] "Francis Fahy's 'Ireland in London - Reminiscences' (1921)", ed. Clare Hutton, in Chapman and Gould (eds.), *Yeats Annual, No.15*: *Yeats's Collaborations*, p.248; Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.16.
[8] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.24-33; Fahy, "Ireland in London", p.249; Mark Ryan, *Fenian Memories*, pp.157-9; *The Nationalist and Irish Programme*, 29 Nov. 1884). Yeats first visited the Club in March 1888. See *CL*, i, 54-7, 68, 71 for his dealings with it. O'Brien lectured at Southwark on "Political Evolution in Ireland" in November 1884.
[9] Fahy, "Ireland in London", p.250.
[10] Ibid, p.13; *The Irish Programme*, 2 Feb., 29 Mar. 1884.
[11] Denvir, *The Life Story of an Old Rebel*, p.257.
[12] *The Irish Programme*, 8, 15 Mar., 15 July, 2, 16 Aug., 20 Sept., 1, 8 Nov. 1884.

be "Irish in character and occupy no more than fifteen minutes." Fahy, who (along with Kelly and Cronin) was always active on 'Original Nights', wrote of how "many of our members discovered their literary vein on these nights and were able to test on a small circle of friendly critics productions, grave and gay, that appeared later in the Irish press."[14] One of the Southwark members' favourite haunts was understandably Denvir's *Irish Programme*.

This was the environment that Ryan encountered. Whilst being cultural in content, it was, unsurprisingly, nationalist in spirit, with the Young Ireland era of the 1840s a vital source of inspiration. J. Finnerty observed, for instance, that the Young Ireland newspaper, the *Nation*, was 'an example' of what a club like the Southwark could be. It could 'make up' for the 'deficiencies' of the Irish education system. In other words, it could provide a suitably nationalist education. The link with Denvir further underlines the nationalist atmosphere at Southwark.[15] More specifically, this atmosphere was Home Rule rather than Fenian, for the Southwark Club was essentially a consequence of the "intellectual optimism" and confidence generated by the Land League and the Parnellite movement. Fahy, for example, was an active member of both the Southwark Home Rule Association and the Southwark branch of the NLLGB between 1880 and 1882.[16] According to him, Southwark was one of the most dynamic Irish political centres in Britain. His later reminiscences show how this political energy was then carried forward into the cultural sphere. "The time came," he said, "when the younger members felt the need for work outside political limits," the result of which was the foundation of the Junior Irish Literary Club followed by its adult counterpart.[17] This sequence is important, for, as noted elsewhere with regard to the Contemporary Club in Dublin, it suggests that the cultural revival began as an outgrowth of 'triumphant constitutional nationalism' during the 1880s rather than as a conscious (and, by implication, separatist) alternative to that nationalism after its collapse in 1890-1, as Yeats later claimed.[18]

Ryan at least believed that this was the case. For him, the Land League had been the catalyst not only for Southwark but for a more widespread cultural awakening as well. Discussing the beginnings of the Irish literary revival, he wrote in 1894:

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[13] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.21; *The Irish Programme*, 12 Apr., 31 May, 21 June 1884.
[14] *The Irish Programme*, 5 Apr. 1884; Fahy, "Ireland in London", p.251.
[15] *The Irish Programme*, 23 Aug. 1884.
[16] Van De Kamp, "Whose Revival? Yeats and the Southwark Irish Literary Club", in Van de Kamp and Liebregts (eds.), *Tumult of Images, Essays on W.B. Yeats and Politics*, p.160.
[17] Fahy, "Ireland in London", p.247.
[18] Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life, Vol.1*, p.41.

> When all is said and done you must go back to the Land League for its origin. The Land League…thrilled Ireland at the outset. Generous and educated young men...had dreams of a new and picturesque National struggle…on Young Ireland lines...Their lyrics and letters in the popular papers showed it...Southwark was simply a centre where a band of typical young men of this class was gathered. In many Irish villages...there were...such materials as might have made many Southwarks. Unfortunately, too many of the National leaders had no sympathy with their ideals, and most of these scattered elements lost heart.[19]

Ryan himself had been one of these 'young men.' Growing up in Tipperary, he had been inspired by the "romance and picturesqueness" of the agrarian movement and by the age of sixteen had contributed verse to local and national papers.[20] He was to make the period and the feelings it evoked the subject of his 1893 novel, *The Heart of Tipperary*. Thus, to the central character, Frank O'Reilly (a contemplative poet, who obviously echoes Ryan), the Land League campaign is very much a beginning, not an end. It will spark an intellectual rebirth in Ireland; a spiritual and cultural revival will follow the successful agrarian-constitutional movement. O'Reilly, who edits a Land League paper, frequently invokes the tradition of Young Ireland and speaks of how a "new soul had come into the country." Fenianism is seen as a regressive force, whilst the romance of 'our storied old mountains' is more important than material triumphs.[21] Writing to his friend Edmund Downey in August 1892, Ryan said that he had tried to capture "the spirit of the period, and…show…there was more soul in the movement than hireling leaderwriters gave it credit for."[22]

With such an outlook even before reaching London, Ryan naturally responded positively to the work of Fahy and his colleagues. Within its own humble surroundings, the Southwark Irish Literary Club was attempting to foster that Land League spirit which he would later celebrate in *The Heart of Tipperary* (he must have also appreciated its Young Ireland influences). In a modest way it was trying to initiate the kind of cultural resurgence envisaged by O'Reilly. To Ryan, the Southwark society was accordingly "a centre of vigorous Irish life and talent." When exactly he made contact with the club is unclear, but it occurred shortly after his arrival in London and by 1888 he had joined Fahy, Kelly, D.J. O'Donoghue and J.G. O'Keeffe as one of the Club's most energetic workers.[23] D.P. Moran, who had arrived in London the previous year, was another who

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[19] *United Ireland*, 28 Apr. 1894.
[20] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.6-7.
[21] W.P. Ryan, *The Heart of Tipperary* (London, 1893), pp.62, 73-8, 121.
[22] NLI, Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 21 Aug. 1892.
[23] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.12; Van de Kamp, "Yeats and the Southwark Irish Literary Club", p.164; Fahy, "Ireland in London", p.256; Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.29. Reports of the Southwark Club appearing in *United Ireland* in 1886-8 illustrate the predominance of these men. For lectures by Ryan, see, for example, 25 Feb. and 30 June 1888. O'Donoghue's prominence is also shown by the fact that he was responsible for ensuring Yeats lectured at the Club in June 1888 (*CL*, i, 68).

had become prominent in the society by this time.[24] Ryan himself went on to draw a detailed and sympathetic portrait of the Club in his 1894 book, *The Irish Literary Revival.* Here, he pays tribute to Southwark by claiming that its spirit was present in many of the more recent cultural developments. "The early eighties," says Ryan, "saw the beginning of an Irish literary movement whose full result and force are being felt today. It did not arise in the Ireland at home, but in Southwark."[25] Just as he does in *The Heart of Tipperary*, therefore, Ryan makes the point that the revival had its first stirrings during the triumphant eighties rather than the embittered nineties.

Ryan's treatment of the Southwark society may be over generous, but there is no doubting his personal debt to the Club (something which may explain any generosity on his part), for it yielded other benefits besides the prospect of a nationalist cultural revival. Most obviously, it gave him the sort of friendship and companionship he had lacked. "We were rather a Happy Family over there in Southwark", says Fahy, whilst Ryan himself spoke of the Club's "kindly associations and clinging friendships."[26] The fact that such contact was with his fellow countrymen probably provided an extra layer of comfort to young Ryan after leaving home for the first time. That many of the members, including Fahy, had a similar social and religious background to him - Catholic lower bourgeois - must have also helped. In addition, Ryan, unlike O'Connor and O'Brien, had not enjoyed a university education. The National Schools system had been the limit of his formal learning. As a result, the Southwark Club may have acted as something of a substitute, providing him with the kind of intellectual stimulus he would have received at university (Foster has said this of Yeats and the occult societies he joined).[27]

Of course, in contrast to the classical education O'Connor received at Galway, Ryan's 'education' at the Southwark club was thoroughly Irish.[28] It meant that from his first years in London he was expressing a sense of his separate Irish cultural and national identity. The Club kept "warm a Gaelic spirit," he wrote later. Certainly, it gave him an early exposure to the Gaelic tongue, a language he would later return to with gusto. However, at this stage two other distinguishing features of the Club must be highlighted. Firstly, literary creativity was a central concern of the Southwark society. As well as being the Club's most popular evenings, the 'Original Nights' were regarded as its most

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[24] Ryan notes Moran's role at the club by 1888 (*The Irish Literary Revival*, p.29) and *United Ireland* (11 Feb., 10 Mar., 19 May, 20 Oct. 1888) carries ample evidence of Moran's involvement during that year.
[25] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.11.
[26] Fahy, "Ireland in London", p.252; Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.36.
[27] Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life, Vol. 1*, pp. 46, 106.

important. A half-yearly report in July 1884 distinctly recommended the "development of individual talent", whilst, to *The Irish Programme*, the 'Original Nights' were crucial because they were the "real test" of how successful a society had been at "developing literary habits and bringing out local talent." This creative focus was something that the Club maintained and developed over the ensuing years, so that in 1886 the "Original Nights were more original than ever," says Ryan.[29] These evenings persisted well into 1888, as the reports in *United Ireland* show. That year Fahy and O'Donoghue listed "the cultivation of Irish literary talent" as one of the Southwark Club's two "main objects."[30]

The Club's second distinguishing trait, duly noted by Fahy and O'Donoghue in 1888, was a strong commitment to the popularisation of Irish literature and culture (in this it was again imitating Young Ireland). The Southwark members did not want their intellectual and literary efforts to be confined to their immediate circle. Instead, they wished to reach as much of the Irish population in Britain and Ireland as they could. Hence the fact that they published their work in the Irish press. The Club also issued its *Irish National Reciter* in a deliberately cheap form so as to make it accessible to the bulk of the Irish people. It was published, said the advert in *The Irish Programme*, "with a view to bringing the choicest productions of Irish authors within the reach of the large masses of the people." Furthermore, "about a dozen of us", says Fahy, toured the Irish clubs and INLGB branches of London delivering lectures on various subjects. 'Spreading the Light' was the name that they gave to this dissemination of Irish literary and historical knowledge.[31] These various initiatives mark a crucial departure in Irish literary emigrant circles and underline the Southwark Club's role in the birth of the Irish revival. They were the first systematic effort by Irish litterateurs in Britain during the nineteenth century to ignore British readers and target the Irish audience in Britain and Ireland.

Crucially, these two features chimed with Ryan's priorities and values. He too was keen not only to stimulate the Irish audience in preference to the British one but to do so on as wide a basis as possible. As *The Heart of Tipperary* shows, he felt that any Irish cultural awakening should be popular and inclusive rather than confined to elite levels ("Young Ireland", says O'Reilly, "believes in triumphant democracy"[32]). As a man of

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[28] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, I, p.256.
[29] *The Irish Programme*, 19 July, 4 Oct. 1884; Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.25.
[30] *United Ireland*, 6 Nov. 1886, 5 Feb. 1887, 10 Mar., 19 May, 20 Oct. 1888; F.A. Fahy and D.J. O'Donoghue, "Ireland in London", *Evening Telegraph Reprints, No.7*, p.86. Those prominent at the 'Original Nights' in 1886-8 included Fahy, Kelly, O'Donoghue, Moran and Ryan.
[31] *The Irish Programme*, 2 Feb. 1884; Fahy, "Ireland in London", p.250.
[32] Ryan, *The Heart of Tipperary*, p.77.

modest origins, this belief was vital to Ryan and he adhered to it throughout his career. At the same time, his chief interest and passion was literature and especially Irish literature. His letters to Downey during the early 1890s are preoccupied with the latter topic. Ryan had "little difficulty", says Waters, "in idealising Irishmen and litterateurs; Irish litterateurs were best of all."[33] As we have seen, he had harboured literary ambitions since his youth in Ireland and his dearest wish was to establish himself as an Irish writer. In 1892-3 Ryan made an attempt to realise this aim. Writing to Downey in early 1892, he explained how, following the merger of the *Irish National Press*, in whose London office he had been working, and the *Freemans Journal*, he had decided to give up regular journalism and "depend wholly...on literary work - it is much more to my taste." He would produce only "Irish work" ("poems, stories, literary essays, sketches"), although in order to achieve his goal Ryan was prepared to publish in the English as well as the Irish press. He concludes in bold fashion: "I know that literature is a risky matter, but it is the only thing I really care for & am deeply interested in, so will 'dare the dangerous deep.'"[34] Soon afterwards he plunged into the writing of *The Heart of Tipperary*. Unfortunately, the experiment did not last. By mid-1892 Ryan was contributing a 'London letter' to the *Irish Catholic* in Dublin, and by early 1893 he was on the *Catholic Times* in Liverpool.[35] Yet, if he could not exist solely through literary work, he would at least, with the subsequent publication of his first novel, go some way towards fulfilling his desire to be an Irish writer. Literature was clearly his overriding interest (he labelled Liverpool the "most un-literary city in England"[36]) and Irish literature was undoubtedly his first love.

Together, Ryan's Irish literary enthusiasm and his inclusive outlook meant that, whilst he recognised other aspects of the revival, such as the nurturing of native customs, the development of a popular and distinctive Irish literature was the objective which, in the 1880s and 1890s, he was most committed to and most eager to see realised. In *The Irish*

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[33] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.59. That Ryan idealised the literary life is shown by the fact that the heroes of his novels were nearly always imaginative writers rather than just journalists. O'Reilly in *The Heart of Tipperary*, for example, is a poet and potential dramatist as well as a journalist (p.239). Arthur Clandillon in *Daisy Darley* (1913) is another example here, being a novelist and a reporter (see Chapter Seven for more on this novel). That these figures are, like O'Reilly, largely autobiographical emphasises how Ryan thought of himself as a creative writer and not simply a newspaper hack.

[34] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 29 Feb. 1892. Ryan had been working on the anti-Parnellite *Irish National Press* - his first journalistic post in London - since the autumn of 1891. The paper had been set up by T.M. Healy at the start of 1891, but the defection of the *Freemans Journal* to the anti-Parnellite side in July that year meant there was not enough room for two anti-Parnellite dailies in Dublin.

[35] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 1 June 1892, 25 Feb. 1893.

[36] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 25 Feb. 1893.

Literary Revival he writes of how one section of the revival was comprised of "literary enthusiasts pure and simple...who would have Ireland's literature really expressive of herself."[37] This was effectively a description of Ryan himself. But what did a distinctively 'Irish' literature entail? At this point Ryan did not feel it involved writing in the Irish language (this view would later change). Nor did it require literature to be subordinated to nationalism. Instead, he believed that it meant Irish writers expressing Irish ways and emotions (what Yeats called "Irish habits and passions"[38]). Striking the keynote of the revival, Ryan wanted them to look to home for inspiration. "They will illustrate life after our own hearts," he said in *The Irish Literary Revival* in 1894, "and bring more hallowed associations around our Irish scenery. They will...create characters...that will touch our Celtic sympathies." "Life, humanity and imagination", not "polemics", should be the touchstones for Irish writers.[39] He naturally adhered to these strictures in his own work, with both *The Heart of Tipperary* and his 1895 offering, *Starlight Through the Roof*, dealing with fictional peasant communities in the south of Ireland. In *Starlight through the Roof* he presents a familiar picture of the Irish as a close-knit, imaginative people, rich in folklore and intimately linked to their local landscape. As for *The Heart of Tipperary*, although set during the Land War, it was "more a matter of Irish life than Irish politics", Ryan told Downey.[40] Accordingly, he no doubt hoped that each one would take its place in the vanguard of the new popular Irish literature.

Given this combination of personal and national literary ambition, it becomes even clearer why Ryan felt so at home at Southwark. Indeed, the Club became something of a template for him. It had shown how imagination and creativity could operate at the centre of such a society and how the idea of new Irish literature could be upheld. He wrote later that the atmosphere at Southwark was "inspiring to literary effort" and that the 'Original Nights' produced "good Irish work" (unsurprisingly, Ryan himself was prominent on these occasions).[41] Equally importantly, the Club had sought to make Irish literature and culture accessible, to reach beyond its immediate environment and appeal to the larger

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[37] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.6. See the introduction to this book for Ryan's discussion of the different aspects of the revival.
[38] *CL*, i, 442.
[39] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.181-3.
[40] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 21 Aug. 1892. Interestingly, *The Heart of Tipperary* was published by Ward and Downey. Although Downey had retired in 1890, he may have helped secure the book's acceptance, as Ryan sent him reports of its progress with the firm's readers (Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 1 Sept., 2 Oct. 1892, 2 Mar. 1893). Downey returned to publishing in 1894 and his new firm, Downey & Co, brought out *Starlight Through the Roof* (which Ryan issued as 'Kevin Kennedy').
[41] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.22; *United Ireland*, 10 Mar., 19 May 1888.

Irish audience. Consequently, the Southwark Club provided a yardstick by which future ventures could be judged. Specifically, this would mean the Irish Literary Society (ILS), which took shape in 1891-2. Coming into being at the very point that he was proclaiming his literary passion to Downey, Ryan wanted the new society to reflect that passion from the outset, to put creativity at the heart of its mission and work towards a new national literature that would be popular and imaginative, that would excite the Irish reading public. In effect, he wanted it to go more boldly down the path marked out by the Southwark Club, as the new body was conceived on a greater scale. However, there were others who became involved in the Irish Literary Society who either did not believe in Ryan's ideals to the same extent or who had rather different aims to his, and this caused friction. One of these individuals was Barry O'Brien.

In early 1886 O'Brien, under the *nom de plume* of 'Historicus', published an essay in the *Freemans Journal* entitled 'The Best Hundred Irish Books.' As a follow-up, the paper printed reactions to his selection from a host of Irish figures, both lay and clerical. Later that year the essay was re-published in pamphlet form, with these reactions, and a response to them by O'Brien, appended to it. As his adopted name suggests, his title translated as 'The Best Hundred Irish History Books.' Content rather than the author's nationality was the sole criterion involved, so that by 'Irish books' O'Brien meant "books, or parts of books, written, no matter by whom, about Ireland or the Irish."[42] Having outlined his parameters, O'Brien sets forth a comprehensive list of titles dealing with Ireland's political, constitutional and religious history during the previous three hundred years or so. As for novelists and creative writers, they only appear briefly at the close, forming something of a postscript. Despite the adverse comments this approach elicited O'Brien remained unrepentant about confining his choice to Irish historical works. In his concluding response, he wrote: "Some one has asked, "What is the meaning of the 'best books'?" In my opinion, histories."[43] In his conclusion he also elaborates on the kind of historical writing he prizes: "In the first rank, I place the 'faculty of research'; in the second or the first, 'an inherent love of justice'; and in the last, 'style.'" But, as long as he found the first two qualities, O'Brien was "prepared to dispense with 'style', so far as it is supposed to include the picturesque." "We do not want the facts of history to

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[42] R.B. O'Brien ('Historicus'), "The Best Hundred Irish Books", *Freemans Pamphlets*, *no.7* (Dublin, 1886), p.5.
[43] Ibid, p.45.

be illuminated by pyrotechnic literary displays", he says. "We want them to be set forth in a clear... light...I like facts clearly, dispassionately, stated".[44]

None of this is at all surprising. The past was obviously O'Brien's passion as well as his medium of political argument. As for the type of historical writing he champions, it is a powerful expression of the liberal historian's creed, a strong avowal of his belief in accuracy and impartiality, and the need for original research, all of which he had tried to apply to his own work. More widely, it reflected the rationalist ethic which underpinned that creed. Taken in the round, the pamphlet provides succinct and striking evidence of O'Brien's intellectual liberalism. Just as predictable as its historicism is the work which heads "The Best Hundred Irish Books" list: the Irish chapters of Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*. To O'Brien, Lecky was the historian who best exemplified the qualities he had identified. In fact, it was by drawing on his evaluation of Lecky that O'Brien arrived at his set of guidelines, for, in the original essay, he wrote of Lecky: "Mr Lecky possesses in an eminent degree the qualities essential to make an historian of the foremost rank. He has the faculty of research, the faculty of style, and an inherent love of justice." He was, said O'Brien, "not only the greatest of Irish historians but among the greatest of living writers."[45] Lecky set the example for budding historians to follow. Such praise shows that if O'Brien's admiration for Lecky did not prevent him from contesting his views on Irish history, then Lecky's Unionist politics did not weaken O'Brien's regard for Lecky as a historian. "Mr Lecky the historian must never be forgotten in Mr Lecky the politician," wrote O'Brien in "Mr Lecky on Home Rule".[46] This stance was not unique. As the widespread practice of quoting Lecky against himself demonstrated, many nationalists and Liberals endorsed Lecky the historian whilst disagreeing with Lecky the politician, with Gladstone chief among them.

Yet, despite its laudation of Lecky, "The Best Hundred Irish Books" reveals that O'Brien was to some extent closer to contemporary trends in British historiography than he was to Lecky. Previously, the 'science of history' had meant discovering its underlying patterns and 'truths' and this was something that Lecky had actively pursued early in his career and continued to value. This idea was of course shared in a great measure by Bryce and O'Brien, who would again draw upon it in *Two Centuries of Irish History*. Latterly, though, the 'science of history' had, through German influences, become associated with

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[44] Ibid, p.49.
[45] Ibid, p.5.
[46] O'Brien, *Irish Wrongs and English Remedies*, pp.167-86.

methodology and the increasing emphasis in British historical studies on the importance of using original sources. This new 'scientific method' was championed especially by Lord Acton and, as seen earlier, fellow liberal historians like Bryce (a friend of Acton) were willing to utilise original sources in their process of 'accumulating' historical facts. Bryce, therefore, effectively combined the two 'sciences' of history, using the newer one to establish the facts from which the older one was delineated. But Lecky disliked the new 'scientific method', fearing the 'tyranny of the document'. His use of manuscript material in the Irish parts of his *History of England* ('the faculty of research' praised by O'Brien) was essentially forced upon him, being due to the partisan nature of the secondary sources. He believed that a preoccupation with documents distorted historical perceptions. It also seemed to spell the demise of the 'literary element' in history and for Lecky this quality was as important to history writing as objectivity and truth. To him, history was at its best when written with style and distinguished by artistic form, as it had been in the hands of Macaulay, Gibbon and others. In the face of this move towards more professional standards in historical scholarship, Lecky remained, says McCartney, a survivor "of the great tradition of amateur historians...convinced that his work ultimately had more to do with literature than science."[47] On these related issues of original documents and the 'literary element' in history O'Brien was clearly in step with British historians rather than Lecky. For all his praise of Lecky, O'Brien's distance from him is shown by his readiness to dispense with 'style' and the fact that the 'faculty of research' occupied the 'first rank' in his list of desirable qualities. Like Bryce, he was prepared to embrace the new 'science of history' as well as the old. O'Brien echoed Lecky insofar as this conviction owed much to the imperfect nature of Irish secondary works ("Nothing strikes one more forcibly", he said of this material, "than the absence of any attempt to be exact"), but his acceptance of original sources as the remedy to this problem was far more enthusiastic. "The way to write history," O'Brien said in "The Best Hundred Irish Books", "is to fling text books to the winds, and go straight at the original documents." Thus, with this pamphlet, O'Brien looked to bring the increasingly professional practices of British historians into Irish historical studies.[48]

"The Best Hundred Irish Books" reflects O'Brien's liberal intellect and his British Liberal associations in other ways too. Most notably, the Liberal influences of his youth are all present, so that alongside the work of Irish friends like Gavan Duffy and Butt we

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[47] McCartney, *Lecky*, pp.53-6, 75-6; Fisher, *James Bryce*, I, pp.194-6.

find the Irish writings and speeches of Gladstone, Bright and John Stuart Mill. His liberal mindset is also evident in how the idea for "The Best Hundred Irish Books" was taken from Sir John Lubbock, the Liberal MP, who had previously published a list of the "Hundred Best Books" of world literature. Lubbock had a passion for public enlightenment and his list was intended as a popular guide. O'Brien's project was based on similar liberal notions of self-education and self-improvement, but he arguably failed to match Lubbock's commitment to popularisation, for the historical books O'Brien selected were by no means cheap or accessible. Many were expensive and difficult to obtain and so were more suited to the scholar than the general public, a feature that Gavan Duffy bemoaned: "of the hundred books...there are not ten which are not removed from...popular enjoyment...by their price, their rarity, or their...importance.[49]

It was the historical-rationalist agenda that this pamphlet embodied that O'Brien would, in time, look to apply to the ILS. He would seek to make it a compact, rather scholarly body, whose emphasis would be the study of Irish history. Such a society was not likely to appeal to the wider Irish audience. More immediately, it was also anathema to Ryan and his desire for a society dedicated to a new national literature. O'Brien's cultural vision as given in his 1886 article contained little that was new or literary. It not only sidelined creative literature but also pared down the 'literary element' in history. For Ryan, the all-important values of 'life, humanity and imagination' were decidedly absent. Writing of O'Brien in 1894, he said:

> His opinions on...Irish literature and history may be gathered from his essays on 'The Best Hundred Irish Books'. His case is made out with much skill, but the ancient, the unprofitable, and the dry-as-dust have no small place in his Irish library! Getting blood from the proverbial vegetable were almost as likely an event as the finding of 'sweetness and light' or the gleam of inspiration in some of those grim old tomes.[50]

The specialist nature of O'Brien's list was no doubt another sticking point for Ryan given his popularising aims. Most crucially of all, the 'scientific' historicism and liberal rationalism exhibited in "The Best Hundred Irish Books" was the central way in which O'Brien demonstrated his 'mixed' identity, his debt to British intellectual and political life. For Ryan, this would mean the way that emigration had 'Anglicised' O'Brien's outlook. And this stood in stark contrast to Ryan's wish for a new national literature, which reflected his concern to assert his and Ireland's separate cultural identity. Later, when that dual concern was stronger still, Ryan would be even more dismissive of

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[48] O'Brien, "The Best Hundred Irish Books", p.45.
[49] Ibid, pp.1-24; *D.N.B.*, entry for Sir John Lubbock (1834-1913).
[50] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.111-12.

O'Brien's list, especially the fact that some of the authors were not Irish. The gulf between the two men is encapsulated by their different approaches to the Land War of 1879-82. From O'Brien, this elicited several historical works designed to persuade British Liberals to support Irish land reform. From Ryan, it produced (in the year the ILS was born) a romantic novel of Irish life in which the leading figure dreams of how a popular cultural renaissance will follow the land agitation, thereby marking Ireland's entrance onto the world stage. Carrying such distinctly different mentalities into the ILS, Ryan and O'Brien inevitably came into conflict, with the former trying to maintain the literary direction that he desired and prevent the society falling under O'Brien's rationalist sway.

Before examining this conflict, a few points have to be noted. For a start, the Ryan-O'Brien struggle did not erupt immediately. Nor was it necessarily always the dominant factor in the society. Needless to say, other individuals played their part too, so that within the ILS several cross currents were at work. Additional figures and groups will therefore also come into view. Nevertheless, it will still be shown that the Ryan-O'Brien clash was more central to the society than the kind of conflicts posited elsewhere (such as the idea that the ILS was split between the aestheticism of Yeats and the social and political goals of Ryan, Fahy *et al*).[51] Other events are of importance as well, most notably the tangled story of the New Irish Library. This controversial publishing project impinges greatly for two reasons. Firstly, it would be closely associated with the ILS. Gavan Duffy, the society's first president, became its editor-in-chief, whilst the ILS as a whole wished to play a role, such a publishing venture being one of its primary concerns from the outset. Secondly, Ryan in particular was, for a time, closely connected with both the New Irish Library and Duffy. He understandably associated the project with his hopes for a new national literature. It was precisely the type of enterprise that he wished the ILS to be involved with. As a result, the New Irish Library affair will be explored in some detail, for its history and that of the ILS are basically intertwined between 1892 and 1894. The tale to be unfolded, as far as Ryan is concerned, is one of initial optimism and enthusiasm being supplanted by rancour and disillusionment, both in the case of the ILS and the New Irish Library. He would also fall out with Duffy. Initially, however, there were few signs of the trouble to come.

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[51] Peter Van de Kamp has put this view forward in his essay, "Whose Revival? Yeats and the Southwark Irish Literary Club." However, as this study shows, Ryan's goals were primarily cultural-literary rather than social-political, whilst, in the early years of the ILS, it was Yeats who possessed a political agenda.

By the beginning of 1891 the energy which had characterised the Southwark Club for much of the preceding decade had ebbed. Some of its warmest adherents had moved to Dublin and the Club itself had relocated to Clapham in 1890. In the midst of the political tumult caused by the Parnell split the society was reduced to a 'provisional committee' of the more literary minded members: Ryan, Fahy, O'Donoghue, J.T. Kelly, J.G. O'Keeffe and Thomas Boyd.[52] Suspending the public business of the club, this 'committee' decided to concentrate solely on literary matters. The projects they had in mind are an excellent indication of Ryan's commitment to improving Irish national literary prospects in the months leading up to the formation of the ILS. They included, he says, "the publication of works of neglected Irish authors, the collection of Irish literary material...and most important of all, the establishment of a library of original Irish books." The guiding aim throughout was "the extension and popularisation of Irish literature." The Southwark concern with creativity and accessibility clearly remained uppermost.[53] Of greatest interest is Ryan's disclosure that the idea of a library of new Irish books was already being floated, for it was at this juncture that the Southwark group had its first contact with Gavan Duffy on the subject. At the end of 1890 a collected edition of the verse of J.F. O'Donnell, a London-Irish journalist and poet who had died in 1874, was published. The book was put together by Kelly and the project stemmed from a lecture given at the Southwark Club in 1888.[54] Stirred by the appearance of the O'Donnell volume, Duffy, who lived in France, wrote to Kelly in February 1891 expressing his interest in similar work. He had frequently toyed with the idea, he said, of bringing out a series of cheap books designed to rescue the work of forgotten Irish authors who had "helped the national cause for the last generation or two". "I have often thought", he added, "of forming a small Limited Liability Company for this purpose." Moreover, it was, says Waters, during this year that Ryan's personal link with Duffy began: "Between 1891 and 1893 [Ryan] served intermittently as Duffy's private secretary when Sir Charles was in London."[55]

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[52] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.33-5; Fahy, "Ireland in London", pp.257-8. P.J. Keawell, for example, had returned to Dublin by 1888 (*United Ireland*, 20 Oct. 1888). Thomas Boyd was Ryan's brother-in-law. As for D.P. Moran, he drops from view at this point.

[53] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.34.

[54] Kelly edited the book and it contained an introduction by Richard Dowling. It was prompted by Michael MacDonagh's 1888 lecture on 'Irish Graves in England'. O'Donnell's grave was one of those mentioned and afterwards a committee was formed for the purpose of putting O'Donnell's grave in Kensal Green into a better condition and also bringing out an edition of his poetry (Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.30-1).

[55] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.32; Waters, W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.18; Fahy, "Ireland in London", p.258; *W.B. Yeats, Memoirs*, ed. Denis Donoghue (London, 1988), p.51. Duffy had

But, by the end of 1891 Duffy and the Southwark men had made little progress towards a new Irish library, although Ryan wrote later that he and his friends had begun to lay the foundations for the project.[56] Instead, matters took another turn, for Duffy now slipped temporarily into the background, not returning to Britain until the following summer. In his place came what Ryan called a "new development." This was the renewal of contact with Yeats, who had come back to London in October 1891. Soon afterwards Yeats met with "the most energetic" of the Southwark men (this was probably O'Donoghue). Like them, he had plans for a series of Irish books, as he believed in the need for a new "popular imaginative literature."[57] Accordingly, Yeats encouraged the Southwark men to act on a more ambitious scale, to think in terms of "original work" (rather than just re-publication) and a "thorough popular programme", as indeed some of them - most obviously Ryan - were already inclined to do.[58] Yeats also promised to persuade others to support their venture. The upshot of all this was a meeting at his house in Chiswick in December 1891 which, besides Yeats, consisted of Ryan, O'Donoghue, O'Keeffe and two other Irish friends of the host, T.W. Rolleston and Dr. John Todhunter. Fahy and Boyd were unable to attend due to "insufficient notice", whilst Kelly had moved back to Dublin earlier that year.[59] At this gathering two main ideas were promulgated. Firstly, as Yeats intended, they decided to establish a central Irish literary society in London which would meet regularly and provide a vigorous lecture programme. All were agreed, said Ryan, that it would be more than a "mere Irish club." Rather, it would cultivate a "missionary spirit" and possess an "intellectual voice." It would also be, "in some measure, creative." This, then, was the beginning of the ILS. Secondly, it was naturally felt that a scheme for the publication and circulation of Irish books should be set in motion and that it should involve both new volumes and the works of neglected Irish authors of the past. Control of the scheme would rest with the committee of the new society. The names of other Irish litterateurs in London whose aid they could enlist were also mentioned. These included Downey, Barry O'Brien, John

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raised the possibility of such a book scheme in his contribution to the "Best Hundred Irish Books" debate (O'Brien, "The Best Hundred Irish Books", p.25).

[56] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.35.

[57] Ibid, p.35; *W.B. Yeats, Memoirs*, ed. Donoghue, p.50; W.B. Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London, 1955), p.200.

[58] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.35-6.

[59] Ibid, p.35-6, 52; *CL*, i, 277; Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.199.

Augustus O'Shea, Stopford Brooke, Richard Dowling and Lionel Johnson, a friend of Yeats from the Rhymers Club who claimed to have Irish roots.[60]

Overall, the meeting was infused with a bold spirit. The Southwark Club had shown the way with its literary creativity and its unprecedented focus on Irish rather than British readers, but these values were now to be implemented on a broader, more ambitious, basis. Fahy, although not present, later recorded that the intention was to "found a new Society embracing all London and the provinces, with more extended aims and appealing to a wider circle." This 1891 foundation meeting for the ILS thus constitutes another notable staging post during the early years of the Irish revival.[61] Ryan must have been happy at the outcome given how the nascent society was following and extending the 'Southwark' lines he favoured. With its Irish library plans, the chances of a new popular Irish literature looked strong. As the composition of the 1891 meeting shows, affairs at this stage were very much in the hands of the writers and literary enthusiasts (even Rolleston, whom Ryan felt was more a "critic than an enthusiast", seemed "genuinely anxious for a movement to popularise...Irish literature"[62]). This is an important point, as this situation would not last. There was one discordant note for Ryan, albeit one hidden from his view for now: Yeats was privately hoping to link the London society with a literary-political initiative in Ireland called the Young Ireland League and this had a neo-Fenian colouration which was not to Ryan's taste.[63]

For the moment, though, there was no reason for dampened ardour, and so Ryan's optimism remained very much intact as the ILS took shape in the early months of 1892 and the numbers of those involved increased. One of the key figures in this enlargement process was Rolleston, who would play a central role in the society until his return to Dublin at the end of 1893. A distinguished graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, Rolleston moved to London in 1890, where he helped Yeats establish the Rhymers Club during the early part of that year.[64] In a similar fashion Yeats again turned to Rolleston when launching the ILS in 1891, for, as he later admitted, the idea of the society may have been his, but the subsequent practical achievement belonged more to Rolleston. "He was the

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[60] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.55; *CL*, i, 277-9. For Lionel Johnson, see *CL*, i, 496.
[61] Fahy, "Ireland in London", p.258.
[62] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.55.
[63] *CL*, i, 277-81; W.B. Yeats, 'The Young Ireland League' (*United Ireland*, 3 Oct. 1891), in *Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats, Vol.1*, ed. Frayne, pp.206-8. The Young Ireland League was to be formed out of those Young Ireland societies which still existed from the 1880s. An inaugural meeting took place on 15 Sept. 1891. Yeats intended the ILS to become a branch of this League, but the latter was superseded by the National Literary Society in 1892, for which see p.225 below.
[64] Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol. 1*, pp.39-43; *CL*, i, 217, 508-9.

true founder of the Irish Literary Society", wrote Yeats, "though the first general idea was mine, understanding all about resolutions and amendments and the like."[65] Yet the ILS was by no means all due to Yeats and Rolleston. Besides Ryan and the Southwark men, there were the litterateurs whose names had surfaced at the December meeting. This group, said Ryan, all "came in without hesitation." Among them were of course Downey and Barry O'Brien, and it is clear that from February 1892 onwards these two men played an important part in bringing the ILS into being, for Rolleston was in regular communication with both at this time.[66] Following the formal decision to create an Irish Literary Society (taken at the Clapham Reform Club on 13 January), a series of meetings were held over the ensuing months at which ideas were further developed. The different venues involved give a good indication of the individuals behind the ILS. They included the private homes of Rolleston, Fahy, Downey and O'Keeffe, and O'Brien's Lincoln's Inn law chambers. Meetings were occasionally held at the Cheshire Cheese public house in Fleet Street, which was also home to the Rhymers Club.[67]

Given the detailed account he later gave of these transactions, Ryan was almost certainly at these meetings too. Throughout this time his mood was upbeat. Writing to Downey on 21 January, for example, he said that "the Literary Society" was "getting on very well" and that one of its ideas was "the publication of original Irish volumes & there is on hand some scheme for the better circulation of such works over the Irish reading world." Yeats shared this buoyancy, telling John O'Leary in mid-January: "Our Irish Literary Society London promises well in all ways."[68] The most comprehensive illustration at this stage of Ryan's confidence in the ILS came in early February. An unsigned article appeared in the *Freemans Journal* which, according to Waters, was in all probability written by Ryan (it bears his hallmark and he quotes from it at length in *The Irish Literary Revival*). After detailing the "literary atmosphere" of the ILS, the article provided the following outline of its aspirations:

> The greatest hopes of the association are yet in another direction. It aims to be above all things creative. Lectures, meetings, sympathy and atmosphere are really with it but the means to an end...In fact already certain original works suggested by the known capabilities of some members have been talked of in

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[65] *W.B. Yeats*, *Memoirs*, ed. Donoghue, p.51; Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p.199. For glimpses of Rolleston's ILS activities in early 1892, see the Downey Papers, MS 10, 049: Rolleston to Downey, 1, 5 Feb., 17 Mar., 11 Apr. 1892. There is also an undated postcard relating to the ILS. This seems to be linked to the letter of March 1892.

[66] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.56. For evidence of the close involvement of both Downey and O'Brien in the early phase of the ILS, see the Rolleston letters to Downey listed in note 65.

[67] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.56; Downey Papers, MS 10, 049: Rolleston to Downey, 1 Feb. 1892.

[68] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 21 Jan. 1892; *CL*, i, p.281. See also p.285 of latter, where Yeats tells O'Leary in February 1892 that the ILS "goes on well & promises to be larger than we expected".

> connection with the programme. These books would deal with matters of history, biography, poetry and folk-lore...Old editions and valuable books out of print will be seen to, and arrangements will be tried for bringing Irish books within easier reach of our reading world in London. The Society has also in mind, in connection with home organisations of a kindred nature, a scheme for the better and easier distribution of books throughout Ireland...Here, then, with high hopes and vigorous aims the Irish Literary Society, London, begins its career.[69]

The article is obviously important, for it not only reflects Ryan's optimism but, more significantly, it reveals distinctly his own view of the ILS. It sets out in a precise fashion the principles on which he felt the society had been founded and the direction in which he thought it should be travelling. The familiar elements are all here. The emphasis is on literary creativity, on original work, and the need to build up a new national literature rather than just being restricted to the past. The desire to be popular and to reach the wider Irish audience in Britain and Ireland is also evident. In effect, this piece represents the definitive expression of the Ryan version of the ILS. Waters has observed that the society was at this point "an organisation of and for writers" and this is surely a description that Ryan himself would have both liked and wholeheartedly endorsed. It seemed that he and his Southwark friends had succeeded in transferring the core values of their old club to the new organisation.

The main focus of interest during this time was naturally the proposed series of new Irish books, for this was where the commitment of the ILS to a popular literary revival would be tested. "Certain necessary books were suggested", says Ryan, "as well as the most capable men to write them...Under the influence of the growing enthusiasm ...hopeful results were expected."[70] Unsurprisingly, one of the main forces behind the prospective Irish library was Yeats. At the start of the year he had had positive discussions with Edward Garnett about the possibility of issuing the series through T. Fisher Unwin, the publishing firm for whom Garnett was the reader and which had recently brought out Yeats's novel, *John Sherman*. By February Yeats was beginning to delineate the nature of the new books. Rolleston, he told O'Leary, "promises to do for the first volume a history of Fenianism of a popular nature", whilst Yeats himself was looking to compile a "ballad chronicle of Ireland." The direction he wished to steer the library in appeared to be very much what Ryan wanted, thereby furnishing additional justification for his optimism. As the Rolleston volume indicates, Yeats wanted the new books to take a "popular form" (the projected price was a shilling). They were also to be

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[69] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.19; *Freemans Journal*, 6 Feb. 1892 / Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.57.
[70] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.58-9.

well written and lively in style so as to excite their Irish readers. Yeats did not want dry, scholarly texts. Imagination and feeling were to be the touchstones rather than an obsessive preoccupation with fact.[71]

Yeats therefore opposed the idea of influence being exercised by someone like Barry O'Brien, whose 'scientific' historicism ran counter to his cultural ideas (to Yeats, rationalism was "that great sin against art"[72]). Writing to O'Leary about his library scheme in February 1892, he said: "I should myself be editor & should have no Barry O'Brien or any one else except the directors associated with me to hamper my action." To Yeats, O'Brien was a "man of learning" and in his opinion Irish literature had "been far too much in the hands of men of learning who cannot write." He too disliked O'Brien's "Best Hundred Irish Books" and had criticised it publicly the previous October when discussing the sort of material to be provided in the reading rooms of the Young Ireland societies. O'Brien's books were "quite of the wrong kind," said Yeats in *United Ireland.* "Imagination, and not learning, is the centre of life." He instead recommended the provision of novels, poetry and folklore.[73] Accordingly, in March 1892 he defended his choice of Rolleston as the author of a possible history of Fenianism (O'Leary doubted whether he had the required knowledge) because "it would be better for it to be done by a man who can write so as to inspire people than by one who had perhaps more information but not the writing power." "This is my feeling on the whole question of the projected series," Yeats went on. "Let them be done by good Irish men who can write & they will be read."[74] Yeats's ideas clearly had much to recommend them to Ryan, with his eagerness for 'life, humanity and imagination' in Irish writing. But the desire for a history of Fenianism reveals a further aspect of Yeats's library scheme, one that was less palatable to Ryan: the desire to permeate it with separatist values. Yeats, who may have taken the IRB oath during the 1880s, had assured O'Leary that Rolleston would fill such a volume with "sound national doctrine."[75] This neo-Fenian agenda is important for it would come into play later that year. It meant that although Yeats's ideas largely chimed with Ryan's, there was also the potential for divergence.

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[71] *CL*, i, 280-6, 296-9. Yeats's plan was to organise a circulation in Britain and Ireland, so that, with a guaranteed amount of sales in place, Fisher Unwin would be prepared to publish the series. This was in preference to forming a Limited Liability Company, which was to be Duffy's mode of operation.
[72] Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol. 1*, p.77.
[73] *CL*, i, 286; *Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats, Vol.1,* ed. Frayne, pp.207-8.
[74] *CL*, i, p.291.
[75] *CL*, i, p.285; Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol.1*, p.44.

However, for the moment such problems continued to remain under the surface, as the Irish library plans of the ILS were left somewhat in "abeyance" following the news that Gavan Duffy still intended to press ahead with his own scheme.[76] Meanwhile, the progress of the ILS itself continued apace. On 12 May the inaugural general meeting took place at the Caledonian Hotel. By this time the numbers involved had swelled even further. "We gained helpers every week in London," recalled Ryan, "authors, journalists, artists, civil servants, and doctors were brought in by one organiser or another." As a result, he claimed later that they were aware of the one "obvious danger" before them: "that a non-literary element would seize too much of the reins of power and hamper the literary organisers." Ryan feared that the writers and literary enthusiasts who had launched the ILS in December 1891 would now be swamped. "Danger existed in the rule of others", he said. Yet, whether he and his friends were especially conscious of such a threat in 1892 is unclear. Certainly, the May meeting and its proceedings do not point to such a setback. In addition to Ryan, those attending included Rolleston, O'Shea, Fahy, Downey, O'Donoghue and Michael MacDonagh. The literary enthusiasts and the 'Southwark' element were both well represented.[77]

Moreover, this pattern was repeated when it came to electing the officers and committee of the society. Duffy had already agreed to be President, Rolleston became secretary (with Ryan as his assistant) and Major McGuiness became treasurer. The committee consisted of Todhunter, Yeats, O'Donoghue, Fahy, O'Keeffe, Ryan, Downey, MacDonagh, O'Shea, Barry O'Brien and Sophie Bryant. O'Brien was elected chairman (and would remain so until 1906). There is no hard evidence, then, of the more literary minded members losing control or of the old Southwark group suddenly being displaced. Even so, Ryan wrote later that after the meeting one young Irishman gave him the following warning: "I see one danger, and one danger only before the Society. It is old fogeyism. Trample on it, crush it at every turn!"[78] Like Ryan's statement regarding the threat posed by the 'non-literary' fraternity, it is difficult not to feel that such observations were more an index of what was occurring at the time of writing - 1894 - than a reflection of matters in 1892, for, as will be seen, the situation would be considerably different two

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[76] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.59.

[77] Ibid, pp.59-60. Whilst Ryan, Fahy and O'Donoghue can clearly be labelled as the 'Southwark element', the same can arguably be said of O'Shea and MacDonagh, for they both had connections with the club stretching back into the 1880s. O'Shea, for example, had lectured there in 1885 on 'Irish Landmarks in London' (Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.24-30). The other people at the May meeting were Martin McDermott, J.F. Hogan, Miss D'Esterre-Keeling, Miss O'Conor-Eccles and a Dr Downey.

[78] Ibid, pp.60-1; *The Irish Catholic*, 6 Aug. 1892.

years later. Consequently, Ryan's suggestion that such warning signs were apparent in 1892 is essentially a product of hindsight. O'Brien seems the obvious representative of this 'non-literary-old fogey' danger given his age, intellectual outlook and the fact that he and Ryan came into conflict later. But, whilst Ryan had O'Brien in mind in 1894, he did not see him as a threat at this early stage, even though O'Brien had become chairman. In July of that year, for instance, Ryan referred to O'Brien in laudatory terms, praising the "valuable service" he had rendered the committee.[79]

If Ryan did have any misgivings in 1892, they were perhaps caused by the involvement of someone like W.M. Crook. Crook had known both Rolleston and Yeats in Dublin during the mid-1880s and was also, like Rolleston, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. Having relocated to London in 1886, he was brought into the ILS by the two men in the early months of 1892 and was soon recognised, says Ryan, as one of the most active workers within the society. In fact, he presided over the May meeting and was subsequently co-opted onto the committee.[80] Crook's talents, though, were more practical than literary (one paper at this time described him as "hard-headed...dry as a chip, mathematic"[81]) and this, coupled with his rapid ascent, may have caused Ryan some discomfort. Considering the background of Crook and Rolleston, Ryan may have already identified what he felt was an uncongenial Trinity element forming within the society, one which, with its Protestant Ascendancy associations, might negate the populist (Catholic) mentality of the Southwark men. Ryan did take this line to some extent in the future, but it would be a mistake to overstate these differences at the outset, for, as with O'Brien, Ryan's attitude to Rolleston at this point was positive.[82] And, significantly, Ryan's general mood also remained high, thereby casting additional doubts on the idea that he was unduly perturbed in 1892 either by 'old Fogeyism' or a Trinity College fifth column. His *Irish Catholic* articles, which had just commenced, show how his optimism was unabated, with Ryan noting in early June that at "every committee meeting of late there has been a report of very encouraging progress." He finished this piece with an

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[79] *The Irish Catholic*, 2 July 1892.

[80] *CL*, i, 28; Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.56-60, 106; *The Irish Catholic*, 6 Aug. 1892; BL, Oriental and India Office, Seton Papers, MSS Eur/E.267/70: *Irish Literary Society, General Rules and List of Original Members, 1892*. Along with Crook, the other members later co-opted onto the ILS committee were Richard Dowling, J.F. Hogan and Charles Russell, the son of Sir Charles Russell, the Gladstonian attorney-general.

[81] *United Ireland*, 16 Apr. 1892.

[82] Later that summer, for example, after criticism of Rolleston had surfaced in Dublin, Ryan defended him in *The Irish Catholic*, saying: "we know of no literary Irishmen whose Celtic sympathies are more unmistakable...or who makes more personal sacrifices for any cause he has at heart" (6 Aug. 1892).

emphatic declaration of confidence in the newly born ILS: "It is scarcely to be doubted that its influence on the future of Irish national literature will be very great."[83] For now, the society's momentum was slowed somewhat by the 1892 general election, with the inaugural address being postponed until the following March. In the meantime the situation shifted again, for, whilst Yeats had crossed to Ireland in early May and in the process missed the ILS meeting, Gavan Duffy was preparing to return to Britain.

He arrived in London in June and, after a preliminary meeting with the committee, Duffy addressed the ILS as a whole at a garden party in Hampstead on 23 July. It was here that he finally gave an outline of his own plans for a popular Irish library. He reiterated his desire to issue the new books through a Limited Liability Company, floated the possibility of a "gallery" of Irish biographical studies by "the best men of this time", and spoke again of the need to publish works "which have disappeared out of circulation."[84] Naturally enough, he appealed to the society for aid in this literary enterprise and although Ryan claimed later (following his quarrel with Sir Charles) that Duffy imposed his ideas in a dictatorial fashion, the ILS in fact accorded him a warm welcome and was quite willing to back his scheme.[85] After all, such a scheme been one of its priorities from the start, it had invited Duffy to become President, and had even laid aside its own preliminary library designs in anticipation of his return. It was also assumed that the society would help provide the necessary writers and organisers. The ILS thus became closely identified with Duffy's proposed book scheme.[86] Ryan himself joined in the chorus of approval, as his *Irish Catholic* articles illustrate. His piece on the Hampstead gathering is full of praise for the veteran nationalist, further reflecting his optimism at this time, and hardly suggesting a fear of 'old fogeyism'.[87]

In Ireland events did not run so smoothly. Yeats had gone there to found "a society of like purpose and nature" to the ILS so as to prepare the home literary field for the

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[83] *The Irish Catholic*, 11 June 1892. These articles ran from 4 June 1892 to 17 September that year.
[84] Sir C.G. Duffy et al, *The Revival of Irish Literature* (London, 1894), pp.25-6; Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.62-4.
[85] Writing in the *New Ireland Review* in December 1894, Ryan said: "When Yeats and his young friends were fairly on their forward track, Sir Charles came on the scene, eager to rule, glad to be didactic, proud to play the part of literary potentate" ('O.Z.' (W.P. Ryan), "William Butler Yeats", *New Ireland Review, Vols. 1-2* (Dec. 1894), p.654). However, as contemporary press reports show, the ILS was happy to help Duffy. Rolleston, for instance, concluded his speech at Hampstead "by promising the active assistance of the society in aiding Sir Charles's scheme for the publication at popular prices of Irish books" (*Irish Catholic*, 30 July 1892).
[86] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.65.
[87] Ryan's account of the Hampstead meeting appeared in *The Irish Catholic*, 30 July 1892.

projected book series (it was also needed to avert Dublin jealousy at the ILS). He continued to see the library scheme operating along his lines, the ones he had sketched to O'Leary in February, and still nurtured hopes of organising matters within the framework of the Young Ireland League.[88] However, these plans were disrupted on both counts. Firstly, the latter was superseded by the emergence of the 'non-political' National Literary Society (NLS) in May-June 1892. Although it numbered Yeats, O'Leary and John McGrath (the literary editor of the Parnellite *United Ireland*) among its original adherents, the NLS also owed much to John T. Kelly of the old Southwark Club and included more moderate figures like George Sigerson, the historian and scientist. The new Irish library project was identified as one of its "first duties", but it was here that Yeats suffered his second difficulty, for his library plans were cast into the shade by the arrival of Gavan Duffy, who crossed to Ireland in August in order to expound his publishing scheme before the NLS.[89]

Unlike London, his reception in Dublin was mixed. This was because it became clearer than it had been at Hampstead that Duffy felt power should rest in his hands. In addition to being chairman of the proposed National Publishing Company, he wished to exercise editorial control over the books that it would issue (he wanted the shareholders to "make him the controlling literary power"[90]). To Yeats, McGrath and others, such a proposal was unacceptable, as it left them without a say in the selection of the new volumes. Accordingly, throughout August and September Yeats and his friends tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to prevent Duffy gaining control, arguing that he should work in harness with an editorial committee. At first it might be assumed that Yeats's motive was a literary one, for, as we have seen, he wanted an original and imaginative series, and Duffy, with his connection to the didactic tradition of 1840s Young Ireland and his desire to issue reprints as well as new volumes, seemed to threaten this.[91] In fact, the clash was more political than literary. As R.F. Foster has shown, Yeats's aim was to run the new Irish library, and the literary societies connected with it, in the O'Learyite, Fenian interest (this was mainly to impress Maud Gonne).[92] Evidence of such a desire has already been witnessed in regard to Rolleston's projected history of Fenianism. Yeats's plans for a

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[88] *CL*, i, 294-9.
[89] *United Ireland*, 21 May, 4 June 1892; Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life, Vol.1*, pp.120-1.
[90] *United Ireland*, 13 Aug. 1892.
[91] In a letter to *United Ireland* (14 May) Yeats showed his desire to distance the project from the literary legacy of Young Ireland by stating that the new series would be "no mere echo of the literature of '48'" (*CL*, i, 298).
[92] Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol.1*, pp.117-24.

Young Ireland League reflected this agenda too. Yet, despite his intentions, both the ILS and the NLS had evolved along distinctly non-political lines.

Yeats was left to try and insert his political designs into the library scheme. At a meeting in Dublin in mid-August he said that the new volumes should appeal to "heroism, the love of true manhood, and so on."[93] But this neo-Fenian strategy was opposed by Duffy, who was careful to emphasise, both in London and Dublin, his fitness for maintaining the moral and political probity of the books issued.[94] He was determined to ensure that the project embraced a safer brand of nationalism. Hence Yeats's struggle to prevent him controlling the library project, a struggle in which clerical and moderate nationalist opinion rallied behind Duffy. In response, Yeats relied on those "young men" who held 'advanced' nationalist opinions. It should be noted that this political divide also embraced the dynamics of the Parnell split, with Yeats and his Parnellite allies (O'Leary, McGrath) opposing the anti-Parnellite Duffy, which was another reason why clerical opinion fell in behind the latter. As Duffy told Edmund Downey in early August: "The soil is still hot with the political lava overflowing for the last twelve months, too hot to build upon comfortably."[95]

This political interpretation of the Duffy-Yeats quarrel is important because it helps explain why Ryan was to support Duffy rather than Yeats throughout the library battle (defending Duffy from attack in his *Irish Catholic* articles). Such a stance may seem surprising given the literary appeal Yeats had for Ryan. That very September, for example, he gave *The Countess Kathleen* an enthusiastic review, highlighting Yeats's imaginative qualities.[96] It has also been seen how Yeats's idea of an artistic library based on imagination rather than learning would have attracted him. But, with the realisation that the divide was more political than literary, Ryan's decision starts to become explicable. This is because, as noted earlier, Ryan had no real sympathies with Fenianism. At the same moment that Yeats was trying to mould the library scheme into a neo-Fenian shape, he was casting Fenianism as a retrograde movement in *The Heart of Tipperary*. This novel shows clearly that for Ryan the physical force tradition was redundant; the Fenian revolt he sketches ends in chaos. Ryan was also keen to exclude 'polemics' from

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[93] *United Ireland*, 13 Aug. 1892 (see too 18 June 1892).
[94] Duffy et al, *The Revival of Irish Literature*, pp.11-13; *United Ireland*, 13 Aug. 1892. Duffy declared before a meeting of the NLS that he "would pledge his character that there should be no impropriety in the volumes."
[95] *W.B. Yeats, Memoirs*, ed. Donoghue, pp.55-68; Downey Papers, MS 10, 008: Duffy to Downey, 9 Aug. 1892.
[96] *The Irish Catholic*, 3 Sept. 1892.

Irish literature and although Yeats was not about to sacrifice literary quality to politics, his agenda may have raised this possibility for Ryan. Yeats's position, then, would have had little appeal for Ryan and must have only pushed him towards Duffy. Indeed, for a literary enthusiast like Ryan to make such a choice lends credence to the contention that the Duffy-Yeats battle was more political than literary. It meant that there was little reason for him to feel dissatisfied with the literary content of Duffy's library scheme. On the contrary, whilst Duffy's Hampstead plan may have contained some unwelcome ideas, his speech also had several positive features from Ryan's point of view, making it appear that the library scheme would meet his wish for an imaginative national literature.[97] His keen support for Duffy certainly suggests that he felt this way. The Company should be given a "fair chance of showing the lines on which it means to proceed," he said.[98]

Other factors also played their part in Ryan's Duffyite stance. Politically, the Parnell split probably had an effect. Like Duffy, Ryan was an anti-Parnellite, as his work for the *Irish National Press* and *The Irish Catholic* shows, both journals being virulently anti-Parnellite. This can only have distanced him further from Yeats. However, as Ryan's treatment of the library battle appeared in a paper that was not just anti-Parnellite but markedly conservative and clerical, he would have been expected to fall in behind Duffy. This does not call his Duffyite line into question, but it does qualify some of his more effusive comments.[99] Another point worth noting is that, with his Young Ireland past, Duffy was, unlike Yeats, a figure of considerable standing, a fact that may well have influenced Ryan. The latter also wrote later of how "owing chiefly to the action of one of their number the young workers committed themselves to Sir Charles's ideas and leadership."[100] This was presumably Rolleston, who, despite his earlier links with Yeats, had now become a close ally of Duffy and disapproved of Yeats's association with 'advanced' circles in Dublin. As secretary of the ILS, he may well have swayed others, especially Ryan, his assistant, although by the time this was written - 1894 - Ryan had fallen out with Duffy and so may have been looking to shift the blame elsewhere for his pro-Duffy sentiments of 1892.

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[97] Whilst Duffy mentioned books on practical matters, he also spoke of producing "captivating" books which would "gratify the love of the wonderful, and carry [people] away from the commonplace world to regions of romance." In his idea of a biographical gallery he talked of original works as well as reprints, and the former were to be "picturesque", so that the people read them (Duffy et al, *The Revival of Irish Literature*, pp.11-24).

[98] *The Irish Catholic*, 17 Sept. 1892.

[99] For confirmation of Ryan's Duffyite line, see Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 1 Sept. 1892.

[100] 'O.Z.' (W.P. Ryan), "Sir Charles Gavan Duffy", *New Ireland Review, Vols. 1-2* (Aug. 1894), p.384.

That summer Ryan underlined his support for Duffy by continuing as his private secretary and then, in October 1892, Duffy, who was now back in London, asked Ryan to be the Organising Secretary for his library scheme and oversee the distribution of the books in Britain. "Duffy has been very kind to me," Ryan told Downey. "He has said a good deal to me during the past week about the Co. and the Canvassing System he wishes to have carried out. I believe thoroughly in such a system's good - that I am myself a...suitable person to see to the working of such a business...I am not so certain."[101] Ryan's hesitation thus stemmed from personal reasons rather than a lack of belief in a popular distribution. The upshot was that, for the moment, he declined the post. But that same month Duffy was forced to abandon his scheme for a National Publishing Company after the financial difficulties involved proved insurmountable. Then, in a move which provoked Yeats's lasting anger, Rolleston revealed to Duffy how Yeats had previously discussed with Garnett the possibility of issuing an Irish book series with Fisher Unwin.[102] As a result, Duffy and Rolleston began their own negotiations with Unwin, one of their conditions being that editorial control should rest exclusively with Duffy, thereby elbowing Yeats aside.

The one remaining question is how did Barry O'Brien react to the library struggle? Whilst his role is difficult to trace, he occupied a somewhat uneasy position. On the one hand, he was obviously close to Duffy, his connection with him stretching back to the mid-1870s.[103] This would have bred a certain sense of allegiance. At the same time O'Brien was a good friend of O'Leary and this, along with the formation of the ILS, had led to links with Yeats in 1892, subsequently bringing the latter the prospect of work for the *Speaker*, though in cultural matters there were of course pronounced differences between Yeats and O'Brien. The exigencies of the Parnell split may have further drawn O'Brien towards O'Leary and Yeats and away from Duffy.[104] His loyalties were clearly rather divided and so publicly he kept a relatively low profile. Yet in private it appears that, if anything, his sympathies were extended more to the Yeats-O'Leary camp. It was probably O'Brien, for instance, who revealed to O'Leary that Duffy and Rolleston had

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[101] Downey Papers, NLI MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 2 Oct. 1892; Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.16.

[102] Writing to Downey on 25 October 1892, Rolleston said: "the estimates were...settled and sent to Sir C.D....he won't like them, but I can't make figure mean anything else than what they do! I strongly advised application to Fisher Unwin" (Downey Papers, MS 10, 049). In the manuscript version of *Autobiographies* Yeats called Rolleston "my first public disappointment." I am grateful to Professor Foster for this.

[103] See p.122 above for O'Brien-Duffy connection.

[104] Yeats, for example, invoked the tensions of the Parnell split in a letter to Unwin in November when trying to persuade him not to press on solely with Duffy and Rolleston (*CL*, i, p.333-4).

entered upon negotiations with Fisher Unwin. This should not necessarily be taken to mean that O'Brien endorsed Yeats's neo-Fenian agenda. Instead, his aim seems to have been to induce some sort of unity and co-operation, and to modify Duffy's attempts to 'boss' the library scheme.[105]

Yeats, who returned to London in December 1892, therefore looked to O'Brien for help that winter in his continued campaign to prevent Duffy having unfettered editorial control. Yeats's idea was that the two literary societies should each appoint an editorial committee which would have a role in choosing books for the Fisher Unwin series. In his attempts to float this plan Yeats's main lever in the ILS was O'Brien. In the event his designs were frustrated. The NLS was unable to agree on the make-up of any possible committee, and, although the ILS managed to appoint a committee, it was, through Rolleston's influence, merely an advisory one.[106] Nevertheless, this episode highlights an interesting point. It shows that within the ILS O'Brien's stock was rising. The fact that Yeats saw him as the best way of implementing his plan indicates the clout O'Brien was starting to exercise (it also reflected Yeats's severance from Rolleston). Another example of this process is that by September 1892 O'Brien was serving on the Finance Committee of the ILS. Other members included Rolleston and Crook.[107] O'Brien was consolidating his position as chairman by extending his influence into other areas of the society. But Rolleston's continued presence is also clear. As secretary, he remained a prominent figure, taking a leading hand in organising the inaugural address of the ILS (given by Stopford Brooke) in March 1893.[108] That same month an agreement was finally reached between Duffy and Fisher Unwin, paving the way for the first volume of the library to be published later that year. Duffy was editor-in-chief, with Rolleston (ILS) and Douglas Hyde (NLS) as his assistant editors, but neither man sought to wield any influence over Duffy, and with Yeats's committee plan also a non-starter, it meant that Duffy had obtained the unhampered editorial control that he had always desired.

During all this time Ryan was in Liverpool working for the *Catholic Times*. In retrospect, this absence appears noteworthy, for, coupled with the rise of O'Brien, it

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[105] *CL*, i, 329-33.
[106] *CL*, i, 336, 343-6.
[107] Crook Papers, MSS Eng.hist.d.375, fol.53-55: Rolleston to Crook, 27 Sept. 1892.
[108] See, for example, a letter from Rolleston to Downey [undated], where he outlines the proceedings for the Inaugural Address (Downey Papers, NLI, MS 10, 049), and a letter to D.J. O'Donoghue [also undated] asking him to attend a meeting at Brooke's house to discuss plans for this meeting (New York Public Library, Maloney Collection of Irish Historical Papers, Box No. 7, IHP 111: Rolleston to O'Donoghue [undated]).

seems to provide the first hint of that shift in power (from the 'literary-Southwark' element to a 'non-literary' one) which, over the next two years, would become far more pronounced. This was not so clear at the time, however, and for now Ryan's attitude towards the ILS remained positive, telling Downey in February 1893 that the society "seems to grow and flourish."[109] The inaugural address the following month reinforced this impression. It illustrated "the power of the society", said Ryan to Downey. Later, he recalled how the meeting had shown that "the Society had come to stay…it was already an organisation with prestige, and a mission to fulfil."[110] Part of that mission (as Rolleston confirmed publicly in the *Speaker* in March) was naturally to assist Duffy's library scheme, and so in July 1893 Ryan, who was back in London, finally accepted Duffy's offer of the post of Organising Secretary in Britain for what was now the 'New Irish Library.' For him, the situation was still encouraging: the ILS was 'flourishing' and its renewed support for the New Irish Library was evidence that it continued to sponsor the idea of a popular national literature.[111]

Moreover, the library itself remained, on the whole, attractive enough. In June 1893 Duffy had told the ILS that the first volume would be Thomas Davis's unpublished historical essay *The Patriot Parliament.*[112] This scholarly tract did not appeal to Ryan and his popular priorities (it was "more for historical students than the people"[113]), but the other projected titles had a more imaginative bent, and several were to come from the younger literary men. They included "The Bog of Stars" (stories of Elizabethan Ireland) by Standish O'Grady, biographies of 'representative Irishmen' by D.J. O'Donoghue, "Dr Doyle" by Michael MacDonagh, "A Guide to Gaelic Literature" by Hyde, and even a possible volume by Yeats entitled "Latter-day Irish Poetry." Ryan himself hoped to contribute later in the series, his plan being to edit a collection of "stories of the people" and also write an "original volume of Irish tales", ideas which again underline his own literary tastes. As Waters has remarked, Ryan's inclusion was probably due as much to his personal link with Duffy as his literary abilities. Yet the prospect of his own work appearing in the series must have increased his enthusiasm as he set about organising the

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[109] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 25 Feb. 1893.
[110] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 2 Mar. 1893; Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.72.
[111] Duffy Papers, NLI, MS 8005 (37): Ryan to Duffy, 17 July 1893; The *Speaker*, 18 Mar. 1893.
[112] "In the first volume of our series," said Duffy in his June address, "Thomas Davis, reprinting the principal acts of James's Parliament, criticises them in careful detail, and finds them for the most part just, moderate, and generous (Duffy et al, *The Revival of Irish Literature*, p.39).
[113] Duffy Papers, MS 8005 (37): Ryan to Duffy, 17 Oct. 1893.

distribution system which would bring the new books to the Irish in Britain.[114] With his acceptance of Duffy's offer, Ryan's commitment to a popular literary revival, to galvanising the Irish audience, was demonstrated in the strongest terms possible. "Few persons in London were more willing than I to help your project for its own sake," he later reminded Duffy.[115] At last it seemed that his desires would be met and that a new national literature for the Irish people would come into being. Unhappily for Ryan, his wishes were not fulfilled. Over the next two years the ILS and the New Irish Library did not serve as vehicles for an imaginative Irish literature in the way that he had hoped.

From July to December 1893 Ryan was preoccupied with overseeing the circulation and sale of the first two volumes of the New Irish Library (*The Patriot Parliament* came out in the autumn and the second volume, *The Bog of Stars*, also appeared before the year's end), a task which required considerable travelling. Notwithstanding the coal crisis that winter and the dry nature of the Davis book, Ryan and his canvassers managed to shift 3000 copies of *The Patriot Parliament*. By October it was evident that his greatest difficulty was in fact Duffy, who, for some reason, decided that Ryan's aim was to make money himself rather than secure a large distribution. Consequently, Duffy suggested that Ryan give Fisher Unwin a money guarantee to ensure that he would dispose of as many books as possible. This Ryan refused, considering such a suggestion "unreasonable" to someone in his financial position. In view of his honest enthusiasm for the project, it is little wonder that he was offended by Duffy's assumption that he was motivated by self-interest.[116] Waters has said that Duffy was "grievously mistaken" in his belief that the younger man could be so easily controlled. It was at this point that the relationship between the two men began to deteriorate. Despite what he called "these jarring notes" Ryan continued to work the distribution system and was able to tell Downey in December: "we are doing very well on the whole, and the promise is decidedly good."[117]

By then Ryan was back in London and planning a shilling volume on "The Irish Literary Revival, its history, pioneers and possibilities", having found during his travels

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[114] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.69-70; Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.25-6; Duffy Papers, MS 8005 (37): Ryan to Duffy, 17 July 1893.
[115] Duffy Papers, MS 8005 (37): Ryan to Duffy, 26 Oct. 1893.
[116] Duffy Papers, MS 8005 (37): Ryan to Duffy, 17 Oct. 1893; Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.26-9.
[117] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.30; Duffy Papers, MS 8005 (37): Ryan to Duffy, 26 Oct. 1893; Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 27 Dec. 1893.

that people were "desirous of facts such as these."[118] But at the very moment that he was embarking on this project Ryan was also starting to express his dissatisfaction with a major component of that revival: the ILS. Writing to D.J. O'Donoghue early in the month, he gave voice, for the first time, to the feeling that the ILS was not making progress and that control of the society was passing to an 'old fogey' element and so away from the writers who had founded it:

> I had a long letter from MacDonagh & was surprised to find how much his ideas resemble my own, on the subject of the late programme, the movement, & certain guiding spirits of the Society...He says, & I think justly, that the Society is being run in the interest of a few people - & every meeting we have shows the ring that speaks and rules. He says that he intends to withdraw from the whole business quietly and gradually. I think that if a feeling like this is allowed to develop that the Society will collapse ignominiously...As one who has been in the Society since the beginning I am firmly determined to make a stand against the red-tapists, the snobs, the rule of B.A.'s M.A.'s, B.L.'s, and against what Dr Downey calls "Old Fogeyism"...By all means let us have them, but let them not be absolute monarchs. Rolleston in his letter of resignation said that the ILS cannot afford to stand still – it must go on till all the Irish literary forces in Britain are brought into an intellectual union. In the provinces the people are working towards that end. We are doing nothing to help them. We do not even recognise them.[119]

As we have seen, this process may have commenced in the winter of 1892-3. Ryan's concern during the second half of 1893 with the New Irish Library was possibly a factor too, as it may have allowed others in the society to increase their influence whilst he was engaged elsewhere. Whether this was true or not, it is clear that Ryan now felt the ILS was heading in the wrong direction, and that battle lines were being drawn between the 'Southwark' men and their 'non-literary' antagonists, both within the committee and the society as a whole.

Who actually made up the two sides? The former group appears to have included, at the very least, Ryan, MacDonagh and O'Donoghue and probably extended to Fahy and O'Keeffe. As for their opponents, Ryan seems to have a number of targets. Barry O'Brien is of course one, as later comments will confirm. O'Brien had also played a part in organising the autumn lecture programme, another source of complaint for Ryan.[120] Then there were the conspicuously 'non-literary-old fogey' friends who had joined the ILS at O'Brien's request, such as Sir Charles Russell, the attorney-general, who had also become a vice-president at the prompting of O'Brien. James Bryce was another member whom O'Brien surely recruited given their close friendship and the way that O'Brien

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[118] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 26 Dec. 1893.
[119] Ryan to O'Donoghue, 12 Dec. 1893, quoted in Van de Kamp, "Whose Revival? Yeats and the Southwark Irish Literary Club", pp.168-9.
[120] O'Brien, for example, originally lined up Duffy to give the opening lecture of the 1893 autumn programme, but after he dropped out through illness, O'Brien turned to Crook (Crook Papers, MSS Eng.hist.d.375, fol.116-18: Michael MacDonagh to Crook, 17 Aug. 1893).

coaxed Russell into joining.[121] Ryan may have been thinking of them when issuing his strictures. Equally, in his reference to 'snobs' and 'B.A.s' he appears to be taking a stab at the Trinity College element within the ILS. This meant Crook (who knew Russell too[122]) and Rolleston, although Ryan's suspicion of the latter seems less marked at this point. Someone that he almost certainly had in mind was A.P. Graves, a poet cum school inspector who, in addition to attending Trinity, was Rolleston's cousin. Graves had taken the chair at the inaugural address in March.

It is easy to see why Ryan was hostile to such men becoming unduly involved. Liberal politicians and eminent lawyers like Bryce and Russell might be distinguished Irishmen, but they were hardly known as literary enthusiasts or cultural nationalists. Bryce of course compounded these shortcomings by sharing O'Brien's historical-rationalist outlook, and the latter would later utilise Bryce's expertise when bending the ILS in a historical direction. For Ryan, the predominance of O'Brien and Graves, and the presence of figures like Russell and Bryce, threatened his vision of a creative, outward looking society dedicated to a national literary awakening. As the letter to O'Donoghue shows, they raised the prospect of a snobbish, somewhat elitist, ILS. Graves, he wrote, believes "that outside the charmed circle [of his friends and family] all is...inferior and Philistine", whilst Ryan no doubt saw O'Brien, Russell and Bryce, friends since the early 1880s, as an unwelcome clique.[123] The ILS had been devised by and for Irish writers, not Liberal academics and statesmen. Further, Ryan saw the influence of members like O'Brien and Graves in the failure of the ILS to enlist the Irish literary enthusiasts scattered across Britain. Following his work for Duffy's Library, he would have been well aware of these enthusiasts, and their mobilisation had been one of the goals of the original 1891 meeting. In all this the ILS stood in stark contrast to the Southwark Club, with its creativity, social ease and commitment to cultural popularisation. Finally, there were the alleged attempts by his opponents to monopolise power. Here, Ryan perhaps had in mind how Graves had replaced Rolleston as secretary in early December (the latter resigned in order to take a post in Dublin). O'Brien was also still chairman and the fact that he presided at

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[121] O'Brien, *Life of Lord Russell*, p.6; Seton Papers, MSS Eur/E.267/70: *Irish Literary Society, General Rules and List of Original Members, 1892*; *Irish Literary Society, Rules & List of Members and Associates, 1893-4*, p15 (Private).

[122] Crook delivered a series of Home Rule lectures in Russell's London constituency in 1886 and dined at his house (Crook Papers, MSS.Eng.hist.d.368, fol.61, 67-72: Russell to Crook, 19 Oct., 1, 17 Nov. 1886).

[123] 'O.Z.' (W.P. Ryan), "The Author of Father O'Flynn", *New Ireland Review, Vols. 1-2* (July 1894), p.324.

Rolleston's farewell dinner may have looked like a transfer of power. At any rate, with Rolleston gone the way was clear for O'Brien to increase his own influence.[124]

This divide between Ryan and the 'snobs' was heightened by a controversy over his book, *The Irish Literary Revival*. At the end of 1893 Ryan asked the committee if they could furnish him with photographs for the volume. According to Rolleston, this included Duffy, whose "consent and approbation for the book" Ryan sought.[125] If this was indeed the case, it shows that the New Irish Library problems had not led to a complete breach between the two men, at least not in Ryan's view. *The Irish Literary Revival*, though, swiftly put an end to any lingering relations, for Duffy refused to endorse the project. His principal objection was the part where Ryan said that he [Duffy] had decided to abandon the Publishing Company despite the protests of the directors (Rolleston and Downey). Not only did this look like an attempt, in Rolleston's words, "to publicly fix upon Sir Charles alone the blame for putting an end to the Publishing Co.", but it also utilised private information that Ryan had only gained by being Duffy's "confidential amanuensis." As Waters says, it seems "incredible" that Ryan did not realise Duffy would object to "any tarnishing of his reputation."[126]

In order to avoid such a fate Duffy enlisted the aid of Ryan's gentleman antagonists on the committee, who, having initially countenanced the volume, were now somewhat embarrassed. In January 1894 Graves and Crook remonstrated with Ryan over the above passage and tried to persuade him to change it. When he refused to back down Duffy gave Graves a "private document" with which to frighten Ryan, but Graves told Duffy that the document was "distinctly libellous." "O'Brien has it from a leading counsel", said Graves, "and had I shown it to anyone and the fact been taken note of by Ryan's friends on the committee, I should have been open to an action for defamation of character."[127] The leading counsel was probably Russell and the episode shows that although O'Brien had not sympathised with Duffy over the New Irish Library, he was certainly going to back up his old friend in his row with Ryan. In the event Ryan went ahead with his project and *The Irish Literary Revival* appeared in April 1894. Duffy threatened to resign

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[124] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.74. Rolleston was appointed secretary to the Irish Industrial Association.

[125] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 26, 27 Dec. 1893; Downey Papers, MS 10, 049: Rolleston to Downey, 6 May 1894.

[126] Downey Papers, MS 10, 049: Rolleston to Downey, 22 Apr., 6 May 1894; Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.37.

[127] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.33-5 (the Graves letter is dated 20 Jan. 1894 and is quoted on pp.34-5); Rolleston to Downey, 6 May 1894. The contents of Duffy's 'private document' are not clear, but perhaps contained an accusation of financial corruption relating to the New Irish Library.

as President unless the ILS distanced itself from the book, and so the committee passed a resolution saying that the volume did not have the official backing of the society.[128]

The fall out from the episode is clear. In March O'Donoghue told Downey that Ryan had "not made it up with Duffy" and had got into "very bitter relations with the committee." As the Graves letter shows, the divide in the committee between Ryan and his 'Southwark' friends and the 'snobs' and 'non-literary' men had become marked. Rolleston was another who was very critical of Ryan's book, particularly disliking what he saw as Ryan's "breach of confidence", though Rolleston was distanced from the fray in Dublin. As for Duffy, he was, according to O'Donoghue, pursuing Ryan "relentlessly" and had naturally become firmly allied with his enemies. In Ryan's eyes, he had joined the ranks of 'old fogeyism.'[129] This is underlined by the fact that Duffy, besides being friends with Graves and O'Brien, had, like the latter, known Russell and Bryce for many years too. For Ryan, such overlapping friendships must have deepened the sense of forces coalescing against him, of a powerful clique developing.[130] But, crucially, the counterattack had begun, for *The Irish Literary Revival*, as well as being a way to promote the literary movement (and possibly a chance to get back at Duffy), represented the start of Ryan's campaign to salvage the ILS. In his letter to O'Donoghue, he had vowed to make a stand against his opponents and it was in this book that he began to do so, for it included many of the sentiments expressed to O'Donoghue, sentiments which had surely been reinforced by the efforts to prevent the book's appearance.

The obvious point at which Ryan does this is the end of his chapter on the ILS. Here, he notes the society's recent lack of progress, speaking again of the failure to mould the provincial "Irish literary associations" into a coherent body and claiming that the talent of the members had not been properly utilised, so that the ILS had little to show in terms of literary output. He makes what is essentially a rallying call to sympathisers within the ILS to regain control and return the society to its original ideals of creativity and popularisation. "There was danger in nothing", he said, "but the failure to rise to the occasion, to fashion and forward the policies of its founders, the programmes that the

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[128] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.33-4; Rolleston to Downey, 6 May 1894. Due to Duffy's hostility no publisher would touch *The Irish Literary Revival*, and Ryan had to bring it out himself.

[129] Downey Papers, MS 10, 041: O'Donoghue to Downey, 15 Mar. 1894; Rolleston to Downey, 6 May 1894.

[130] For Bryce and Russell's links with Duffy, see, for example, Duffy Papers, MS 8005 (30): Russell to Duffy, 1 Nov. 1886; MS 8005 (31): Bryce to Duffy, 11 Aug. 1887; MS 8005 (32): Russell to Duffy, 10 Dec. 1888.

people expected...it dared not bury itself in itself."[131] The plea to stop the ILS succumbing to a fatal mixture of insularity, inertia and gentility is clear. Ryan wants the society to reaffirm that a new national literature was still its priority. It is in this context that the comments examined earlier regarding 'old fogeyism' and a 'non-literary element' should be read. Rather than being sharp insights about the situation in 1892, they were warning cries as to what was happening there and then - in the spring of 1894 - and so were part of Ryan's newly born campaign to wrestle the ILS back from the 'non-literary' fraternity.

What makes *The Irish Literary Revival* particularly significant, though, is that it was the setting for a pointed assault on O'Brien. It is this attack which demonstrates how Ryan saw O'Brien as part of the 'non-literary-old fogey' camp. It provides compelling evidence of the way that the two men must have clashed within the ILS, showing how Ryan believed O'Brien's intellectual outlook to be wholly at odds with his vision of the ILS as a vital force in the revival, working towards an imaginative Irish literature:

> Much of his ability has been expended in studies that are foreign to the Irish reader. Devotion to rigid fact and aversion to the play of fancy are amongst his strong points...[he] would choke up the sparkling... mountain rill of Celtic fancy with forbidding...skeletons which he calls the materials of history. He would crush Celtic Ireland under a cairn of law books and then go forth in good faith to tell the...world of an Irish Literary Revival.[132]

It was here that Ryan criticised "The Best Hundred Irish Books" for lacking the "gleam of inspiration." He obviously felt that O'Brien's cultural programme was not liable to appeal to the wider Irish audience. Yet this passage goes further still, as it appears to claim that true Irish identity resided in 'fancy' and imagination. It was a point that he made later in the book in his discussion of what made 'Irish' literature and again the next year in *Starlight Through The Roof.* O'Brien, however, had adopted an agenda that was "foreign to the Irish reader." In other words, his 'scientific' historicism and rationalism were 'un-Irish', so that Ryan seems to be implying that O'Brien's cultural and intellectual touchstones were British, not Irish. If so, he was not alone in constructing such a dichotomy between 'Irish imagination' and 'British rationalism.' Yeats, for one, also adverted to this divide.[133] Thus, Ryan arguably presents O'Brien as someone who had come to share the values of his English surroundings when the purpose of the revival was to establish Ireland's cultural distance from Britain. Within the walls of the ILS the new

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[131] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.74-5. He again complains about the failure to link up with the other Irish literary societies in Britain on p.177, and Ryan also voiced similar sentiments regarding the lack of a common programme in the *New Ireland Review, Vols. 1-2* (August 1894), p.393.
[132] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.111-2.

generation of Revival literary emigrants encountered the old Home Rule one and recoiled from what they saw as their 'Anglicised' condition.

But, if Ryan knew that O'Brien's mindset was the antithesis of his, then he was also quite aware that O'Brien, being chairman, was in a position to impose his views on the ILS, and this was something which Ryan undoubtedly felt O'Brien had done:

> As chairman of the committee, Mr Barry O'Brien has been specially concerned with the working of the Irish Literary Society. His province has been to keep enthusiasm in check, to weigh every suggestion in legal scales, and to put on the brake at every indication of fast travelling. However, even those who least agree with his ideas on the subject of progress, must admire his devotedness to the society and to the policy...he deemed...wisest.[134]

It was perhaps O'Brien whom Ryan blamed most for the failure of the society to reach the wider Irish population by federating the provincial Irish literary clubs. These comments show that he was surely referring to him when citing 'red tapists' in his letter to O'Donoghue. By the winter of 1893-4 he had clearly identified O'Brien as his greatest obstacle in the struggle to once again give the ILS a creative, popular, ethos. More than anyone, O'Brien appeared to hinder Ryan's desire to make the society a driving force within the revival. He was not just a member of the 'non-literary' camp but the very 'head centre' of 'old fogeyism' itself. He was responsible for recruiting fellow 'old fogeys' like Russell and Bryce, moves that emphasised his Liberal links and so his own apparent lack of revival credentials. O'Brien seemed to be importing his Liberal London world into the heart of the ILS. His friendship with Duffy, and his support for him during the controversy over *The Irish Literary Revival*, must have further damned him in Ryan's eyes. That O'Brien and Ryan were on opposite sides of the Parnell split cannot have helped either. The friction between them is illustrated by the fact that Ryan (unlike the Parnellites Yeats and Tynan) never contributed to the *Speaker*.

One of the main reasons why the ILS seemed to have little to show for its two years of existence was the failure of the New Irish Library to fulfil expectations. It had of course been hoped that through the series the ILS would prove its commitment to a new Irish literature, with many of the writers being drawn from the society. In the event MacDonagh and O'Donoghue did not write for the library and, unsurprisingly, neither did Ryan. It became increasingly apparent that the ILS was not to play as active a role in the project as had been assumed, thereby leaving it short in terms of literary output, and, with editorial control out of the society's hands, it was difficult to improve the situation. This

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[133] Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol. 1*, p.53.
[134] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.112-3.

lack of ILS authors was compounded by the disappointing nature of the books actually published, for the next two volumes in the series were *The New Spirit of the Nation* by Martin MacDermott and *A Parish Providence* by E.M. Lynch. The former consisted of poetry culled from the Young Ireland newspaper of the 1840s and the latter was moral instruction through the medium of fiction.[135]

Consequently, although Ryan persisted with the distribution work, he felt that the series had not produced a popular imaginative literature and that this was reflected in diminishing sales and enthusiasm. It was "very uphill work with some of the books," he told Downey in April, whilst, with the Davis and Lynch titles in view, he wrote in *The Irish Literary Revival*:

> The people did not care three straws for... history, nor for morals however adroitly pointed, and...they had not the heart for industrial or statesmanlike problems. Something which brought back...the joys of old times...the light of Irish hearts...these appealed to them.[136]

Ryan obviously had in mind the kind of fiction that he wrote himself and had planned to contribute to the library, fiction that expressed Irish ways and emotions. In the light of what Yeats had published in the interim, he was starting to wonder whether the young enthusiasts of the ILS should have gone their own way in 1892 rather than letting Duffy take control.[137] In fact, he now saw the New Irish Library as something of a liability and felt that in order to preserve the society's literary reputation it was necessary to stress publicly that the ILS had had little to do with the choice of volumes. "The truth is," wrote Ryan, "that the President only is responsible for the approval and issue of the Library items - the society...has no...voice in the matter." He did not want the society to be tainted by the shortcomings of Duffy's Library. The latter, he said, "can hardly be called typical of the contributions" which the ILS "can and will make to Irish literature."[138] Ryan therefore sets out an independent literary future for the society, one which would presumably be more stirring and imaginative than Duffy's scheme. It shows that in the spring of 1894 he was not only attempting to return the ILS to a more creative path but was hopeful that such a campaign could prove successful.

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[135] Both volumes were out by May. *A Parish Providence* was especially derided, with reviewers feeling that it did not match the quality of O'Grady's *Bog of Stars* (see, for example, *United Ireland*, 5 May 1894).
[136] MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 14 Apr. 1894; Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.71.
[137] Ryan wrote: "It is interesting to consider what the young men would have done, if...they had gone to work upon their own lines. Some of them, such as W.B. Yeats, have since published independent books which, to put it mildly, challenge comparison with the best in the old Library of Ireland" (*The Irish Literary Revival*, p.59). Since the summer of 1892 Yeats had brought out *The Countess Kathleen* (1892) and *The Celtic Twilight* (1893).
[138] Ibid, pp.70-1.

Sadly for Ryan, it was not to be. As 1894 progressed, it became clear that his warnings were not being heeded (or it was not possible to act upon them). Power continued to accrue to his 'non-literary' opponents at the expense of the 'Southwark group.' For example, by May of that year Ryan himself was no longer on the committee, which was hardly surprising given how he had alienated much of it. In addition, Crook was now vice-chairman and this, when added to the posts held by O'Brien and Graves, points to control of the ILS resting largely with their camp.[139] Another index of the growing eclipse of Ryan and his associates was *The Irish Home Reading Magazine*, which was launched under the auspices of the ILS in May 1894, but only ran for two issues. Eleanor Hull and Lionel Johnson were the editors (the latter, having been elected to the committee, was playing a prominent part in the ILS at this point). In this project Ryan and his group did not participate at all. None of them wrote for the magazine and they were absent from the list of proposed contributors. In contrast, O'Brien, who drew up this list, was involved in establishing the journal and this helps explain the exclusion of the Ryan group (as well as the historical portion of the magazine).[140]

In the face of this situation, Ryan reiterated his concerns about the society, this time in the *New Ireland Review*.[141] Although this represented a continuation of his campaign against the 'non-literary' fraternity, he seems less optimistic than before, as he now sounds a note of resignation about the society's ultimate fate. Writing in September 1894, Ryan said:

> So far its pace has been somewhat slow, and its enthusiasm nearly an unknown quantity...On the other hand, it is really difficult to make the Society a cohesive and a moving force...The problem of its progress was made one of exceptional difficulty the day it was decided to open its doors to a very non-literary section...if the literary folk in the Society were quite as active, or quite as clannish, as the non-literary, the progress to be reported by this time would be much more cheering than it is.[142]

The last sentence appears to be a reference to the O'Brien-Russell-Bryce-Duffy group. The following month Ryan was, if anything, even less hopeful about matters. The picture

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[139] *The Irish Home Reading Magazine* (London, May & October 1894) lists the ILS committee and officers.
[140] Sigerson Papers, MS 10, 904 (9): O'Brien to Sigerson, 10 Mar. 1894; *CL*, i, 355, 383. "The Irish Literary Society have resolved to start a Quarterly Review", O'Brien told Sigerson, "and the work of floating it has devolved on Lionel Johnson, Perceval Graves, W.B. Yeats, Edward Garnett & myself." It was in this letter that O'Brien outlined the list of potential contributors. For Johnson, see *W.B. Yeats, Memoirs*, ed. Donoghue, p.95.
[141] Ryan's complaints appeared in the "With the Irish in Great Britain" column. Although he did not sign it, it can be traced to him because in an undated letter to Downey (Downey Papers, MS 10, 051) he asks: "Is there any harm in mentioning in the *New Ireland Review* for Oct that you are resuming the publishing business?" The October 1894 number (pp.537-8) then included this piece of information.
[142] *New Ireland Review, Vols. 1-2* (Sept. 1894), p.461. Interestingly, such was the despair over the ILS that Ryan and his 'Southwark' friends even toyed with the idea of starting a new literary society in order to realise those aims - "bright and cheap Irish books for the people" - that the ILS had failed to deliver.

he draws suggests that the ILS was even more under the sway of O'Brien and his 'non-literary' friends. Once again, the society stood in marked contrast to the creative environment of the Southwark Club and, indeed, was also at odds with its own 'literary atmosphere' of 1892:

> I find that in some quarters a feeling of despair is settling in over its lack of initiative, its frequent non-literary character, its chilling atmosphere, its absence of any enlivening sense of common impulse...and its evident tendency to dictatorial rather than democratic methods of management...Literature, or literary impulse, shrinks from the atmosphere of such a place.[143]

Ryan then issues what would prove a final call for the society to chart a more literary course before the game was up:

> [The ILS] has splendid material, if it were only active and available...It is high time to try and turn it to some tangible and worthy purpose. A day may soon come when it will be too late. Already there are...warnings to that effect. Promises...and reviews are all very well in their way, but a turn at solid work would be immeasurably better...It would be a curious irony if the Irish Literary Society, after its wonderful opportunity, should fail to keep in line with that...forward movement. It is devoutly to be hoped that it will spare us such an anti-climax.[144]

This sense of increasing disillusionment was mirrored in his attitude towards the New Irish Library, for, as the year progressed, Ryan's dissatisfaction with the series, and his hostility towards its editor-in-chief, deepened yet further. In August 1894 he wrote an article on Duffy for the *New Ireland Review* which was harder in tone than anything in *The Irish Literary Revival*. He complained, for instance, about Duffy's autocratic style and how the library had not proved either as original or as truly popular and 'national' as had been hoped:

> As time went on it was seen that the library scheme became more and more a private venture of his [Duffy's] own...the pity was that what might have been a great national concern, a concentrated effort of many propagandists to reach the people, lapsed simply into a series of publications (mostly reprints)...solely controlled by one man, who was determined that his way and his way only should be accepted.[145]

And he again attacked Duffy's failure to produce an inspiring, imaginative series:

> His idea of Irish literature was something which would preach a fine scheme of general utility: a little statesmanship, a little ethics, a little science, a little model farming, a little culture, and so on. Drama and romance would give way to the Popular Educator.[146]

Ryan voiced these grievances in private too, remarking to Downey how "in series intended for the people the story element, which makes most direct appeal to them, is too often neglected." Duffy's library had not met Ryan's lofty hopes of expressing Ireland's distinctive identity. Thus, his frustration at the ineffectiveness of the ILS was allied with ever increasing disappointment over the New Irish Library (a "remarkable opportunity"

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[143] Ibid, (Oct. 1894), pp.536-7.
[144] Ibid, p.537.
[145] 'O.Z.' (W.P. Ryan), "Sir Charles Gavan Duffy", *New Ireland Review, Vols. 1-2* (Aug. 1894), p.384.
[146] Ibid, p.385.

had been lost, he said in September), with each one no doubt serving to fuel the other. Together, they had failed to produce the popular imaginative literature which he desired, and so after two years of struggle Ryan felt little progress had been made. "As far as cheap + bright books for the masses are concerned," he told Downey, "we stand practically where we stood in 1892."[147]

All this came to a head in the winter of 1894-5, with Ryan penning two articles in which the gloves really came off. The first (December 1894) was ostensibly about Yeats, but Ryan used it as a platform for an even more stinging attack on Duffy. It was here, for example, that he accused Duffy of playing the dictator after his arrival in London in July 1892. The article shows that by the end of 1894 Ryan had become firmly convinced that he and others should have backed Yeats rather than Duffy during the Irish library struggle. With hindsight, he felt that a Yeats victory would have been of greater benefit to Irish national literature. Yet, as noted earlier, matters now appeared in this light because the literary shortcomings of Duffy's Library had been thrown into relief by the quality of Yeats's subsequent work.[148] It was also due to the way that Yeats had adjusted his position somewhat from the neo-Fenian stance of 1892. When he savaged the New Irish Library in the *Bookman* in August 1894, it was essentially on literary grounds. Two years before this had not been the case, and so Ryan could forgive himself for having taken what he now felt was the wrong side.[149]

Then, in his second piece (March 1895), Ryan launched what became his final, and most virulent, attack upon the ILS. The occasion of the onslaught was the transfer of the ILS from Bloomsbury to Adelphi. To Ryan, this was an apposite move, for it was in keeping with the society's snobbish outlook:

> [The Irish Literary Society] has flown from the ugliness of Bloomsbury to...the heart of Adelphi...[which] is above all things stylish. This is meet indeed in the eyes of an influential element of the Society's membership; for is it not their dearest aim to give style and tone to Irish intellectual products? Let others supply the creative spirit, the humdrum commodity of inspiration...this upper ten of the Irish Literary Society will vouchsafe to touch the output with aristocratic hands, and send it forth blessed to mankind...They will see that great judges and statesmen and professors give the finishing touches to the

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[147] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, [undated, August] 1894; *New Ireland Review, Vols. 1-2* (Sept 1894), p.460.

[148] 'O.Z.' (W.P. Ryan), "William Butler Yeats", *New Ireland Review, Vols. 1-2*, (Dec 1894), pp.647-60. Duffy, the ex-Young Irelander, thought of literature as "simple song and politics", said Ryan, whilst the new revival spirit, as represented by Yeats, was one of "complex life and literature." Of Yeats's recent works, *The Celtic Twilight* most impressed Ryan (it "came nearest to the people"). This article is also noteworthy for its criticism of Rolleston, showing that Ryan now saw him firmly as a Trinity 'snob', "too remote from the people."

[149] For Yeats's attack on the New Irish Library, see *Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats, Vol. 1*, ed. Frayne, pp.332-5, and *CL*, i, 391-2, 397-8.

work of book-stained specialists; and it is surely a matter of exceeding great difficulty to imagine...a more ideal arrangement.[150]

'Great judges' almost certainly refers to Charles Russell, who in 1894 had become Lord Chief Justice of England and been raised to the peerage as Lord Russell of Killowen. 'Statesmen and professors' probably means figures like Bryce and Sir Robert Ball, who was Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge and an ILS vice-president. But, whilst this article contains some of his most caustic criticism of the society, it is essentially an admission of defeat by Ryan. It shows that for him the ILS was now unquestionably in the control of a select 'non-literary' group and their 'aristocratic' supporters. The battle cry of October 1894 had failed and his disillusionment was complete. O'Brien and Graves, elitism and 'old fogeyism,' had won the day and the writers who had launched the society had been supplanted. "The most hopeful day of the Irish Literary Society", said Ryan, recalling his positive mood of mid-1893, "was somewhere about a twelvemonth after its inception." "Then there was...enthusiasm which promised to be fruitful." Two years later the ILS was "less a corporate body than a thing of reviews [and] parades." As a result, Ryan largely gave up on the ILS from this point. Although he remained a member and occasionally attended meetings, his heart was no longer in it. His hopes of using the society to promote a popular new Irish literature were finished and the contrast with the Southwark Club was total.[151]

Instead, the next ten years simply saw O'Brien tighten his grip, with the society continuing to largely develop in what Ryan no doubt viewed as a snobbish, 'non-literary' direction. It meant that O'Brien was able to increasingly impose his historical agenda. In all this he was aided by the further demise of the 'Southwark' group as a force within the society. D.J. O'Donoghue, for example, had moved to Dublin by late 1895, and the following year Fahy became President of the newly founded Gaelic League of London, an event which showed that the next phase of the cultural revival, the Irish language movement, was making progress in emigrant circles.[152] Fahy was still actively involved with the ILS in the late 1890s, but by the early 1900s he had transferred most of his energy to the Gaelic League. J.G. O'Keeffe was another 'Southwark' man who made this

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[150] 'O.Z.' (W.P. Ryan), 'An Adelphi Group', *New Ireland Review, Vols. 3-4* (Mar. 1895), p.24.
[151] Ibid, p.25. For evidence of Ryan attending ILS meetings in this period, see the *New Ireland Review, Vols. 3-4*, Dec. 1895 (p.225), and *Vols. 5-6*, April 1896 (p.115).
[152] Maloney Collection of Irish Historical Papers, Box No.7, IHP 109: Fahy to O'Donoghue, 9 Sept. 1895; *The Irish Peasant*, 10 Feb. 1906 (Ryan sketched Fahy as part of his "Irish Pioneers" series).

switch. By July 1897 he was one of the League's "most steady workers."[153] It is a pattern illustrated by looking at the ILS committee. In 1896 Fahy and Michael MacDonagh were the only 'Southwark' men who remained members of that body. By 1902 just the latter was left. Interestingly, Fahy's withdrawal may have been due to a speech by Charles Russell in May 1900 in which he derided the attempt to revive the Irish language. As well as underlining Russell's own detachment from cultural nationalism, this outburst provoked threats of resignation from Fahy and other Gaelic League members of the ILS. To what extent these were carried out is unclear, but it may well have led to Fahy's departure from the committee.[154]

Another member whose influence had declined by 1896 was Lionel Johnson (he too was no longer on the committee), although in his case this was mainly due to alcoholism. As for Yeats, his position was, as ever, slightly different. He continued to take an interest in the society throughout the 1890s, being, for instance, a contributor to and an organiser of *The Irish Home Reading Magazine*. He remained on the committee, gave occasional addresses and participated at meetings, where the opinions he expressed on Irish literature sometimes provoked more conventional members like Graves. Yeats's nationalist views could stir up trouble too and may have caused Graves's resignation as secretary in April 1900.[155] At the same time, the aristocratic tinge to the ILS would not have exasperated Yeats in the way that it did Ryan. By the later 1890s he was keen to interest the 'educated classes' in Irish culture. Despite his ongoing participation, though, Yeats was not a decisive influence in the ILS after 1892. In 1893-5 this was largely due to how he divided his time between Britain and Ireland, whilst after 1897 he was preoccupied with the ambitious project of the Irish Literary Theatre (so that in 1898-9 Yeats attended only one of twenty-one ILS committee meetings).[156] In December 1900 he admitted: "I can do the Society no very great service now that it is made & has found its routine."[157]

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[153] *New Ireland Review, Vols. 7-8* (July 1897), p.313. Fahy was still on the committee in 1899 and lectured that year on 'The Jacobite Songs of Ireland' (*Irish Literary Society Gazette*, Vol. 1, no.3, Mar. 1899, p.2 (Private)).

[154] Crook Papers, MSS Eng.hist.d.378, fols.7-8: a list by Crook of ILS officers and members, dated 1896; Seton Papers, MSS Eur/E.267/70: *ILS General Rules* (printed 1902-5). For the Russell-Fahy row, see *CL*, ii, 532-3.

[155] For Yeats's activities at the ILS between 1896 and 1900, see *CL*, ii, 26-7, 148-53, 199, 231-2, 366, 401, 580-1 and *Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. Pethica, pp.156-7, 171-2, 181, 231, 286-7. For a literary clash with Graves, see *CL*, ii, 387, whilst on the political side, Graves resignation may have occurred after Yeats, who had recently called for a protest against the Queen's forthcoming visit to Ireland, was re-elected to the ILS committee in March 1900. Graves may have felt that this made the ILS look "disloyal" (*CL*, ii, 513-5).

[156] *Irish Literary Society Gazette*, Vol.1, no.3, Mar. 1899, p.2. In January 1895, for instance, he was writing to Lionel Johnson from Sligo and asking how the society was getting on (*CL*, i, 433). It was at the ILS,

Yet, if elements of the original membership had, to varying degrees, fallen away by the early 1900s, then newer recruits had been found elsewhere. Unfortunately for Ryan, they seemed to be of the 'aristocratic' or 'non-literary' variety. All the following, for example, became ILS vice-presidents between 1894 and 1902: Lady Gregory, the Countess of Aberdeen, Sir William Butler, Lord Monteagle, Lord Castletown, Horace Plunkett and the old war correspondent Sir William Howard Russell. Judicial figures like Sir Richard Henn Collins and Sir Edward Carson, the Unionist MP, had spells as vice-presidents too in this period (even Alfred Harmsworth, the future Lord Northcliffe, was an ILS member in the 1890s).[158] Yeats was surely responsible for the election of Lady Gregory, his new Ascendancy patron, to the society in 1897. Together, they probably brought in Monteagle, Plunkett and Castletown, as all were friends of theirs and they persuaded the latter two to act as guarantors for the Irish Literary Theatre. As for Collins, Charles Russell is obviously likely to have enlisted him. And, given his recruitment of Bryce and Russell, and his position as chairman, O'Brien was conceivably also involved in this further accretion of 'aristocratic' sponsorship. After all, he had known Lady Gregory since late 1895 and, through her, had met Plunkett in 1897.[159]

Moreover, an example of O'Brien trying to secure 'aristocratic' patronage is provided by an interesting episode in connection with the Irish Texts Society, an offshoot of the ILS which came into being in April 1898.[160] O'Brien attended some of the meetings prior to the society's foundation (as a sort of overseer for the ILS) and on 3 March he proposed that the Marquess of Dufferin be asked to act as its President. Initially, this motion was carried, but by the end of April the provisional committee had decided to ask Douglas Hyde instead, doubtless believing that the Irish-speaking Hyde would be more palatable to their revival audience, and Hyde accepted their offer.[161] Nevertheless, the incident does

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however, that Yeats gave his first public talk on the Irish Literary Theatre in April 1899 (*Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats, Vol. II*, ed. John P. Frayne (London, 1975), pp.153-8).

[157] *CL*, ii, 604.

[158] *The Irish Home Reading Magazine*; Seton Papers, MSS Eur/E.267/70: *ILS General Rules* (printed 1902-5); *CL*, ii, 620-1; *Irish Literary Society, Rules & List of Members and Associates, 1893-4*, p.15. Henn Collins, though, resigned as a vice-president in November 1900 following what he saw as political remarks by Yeats at Stephen Gwynn's lecture of 25 Oct. 1900.

[159] Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol. 1*, p.206; *Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. Pethica, pp.133-46. See pp.198-9 above for O'Brien meeting Plunkett at Lady Gregory's in 1897.

[160] The principal aim of the society was to publish Irish language works accompanied by their English translations. Its first chairman was Professor York Powell, the vice-chairman was Goddard Orpen, the honorary secretaries were Nora Borthwick and Eleanor Hull, and the executive council included G.A. Greene, D. Mescal and J.G. O'Keeffe (providing another reason why his ILS involvement dropped off from this point).

[161] University College, Cork, *Irish Texts Society Minute Books*, Box 1, ITS MB1, pp.23-4, 31-2, 35 (24/51897-3/12/1901). O'Brien attended four out of the eighteen preliminary meetings and initially chaired

suggest that O'Brien had a hand in increasing the 'aristocratic' element within the ILS (if so, it is redolent of how he gravitated towards the upper echelons of the Liberal party). In the case of Dufferin, the proposal to make him President of the Irish Texts Society reflects the fact that, whilst a Unionist, he had impressed O'Brien with his writings on the Irish land issue. Again, O'Brien may have first met him through Lady Gregory, although Dufferin had presided at an ILS meeting in June 1897, so the link may have come there.[162] That same evening Russell had paid a brief tribute to Dufferin and his life's work, but, if the presence of such a prestigious duo gratified O'Brien and others, to Ryan it must have encapsulated the society's failure to make a popular impact, to stir the wider Irish audience in Britain. The ILS "did not reach the masses at all," he wrote later.[163]

More than anything, the eclipse of the Southwark group meant the further consolidation of O'Brien's own position. His friend and fellow member Katharine Tynan recalled how O'Brien "ruled the Irish Literary Society with a rod of iron and he always got his way when there was a clash of opinions." Stephen Gwynn was another who acknowledged O'Brien's pre-eminence within the society. He became ILS secretary in 1902 and felt that O'Brien was not just chairman but to "a great extent was the society." However, as Gwynn also noted, O'Brien's strong personality meant that he was not always "an easy man to get along with", and Gwynn remembered how the society's affairs were punctuated by "intermittent rows" involving O'Brien.[164] All this was reflected in an incident which occurred in early 1902. W.M. Crook, who was still on the committee, made the sarcastic remark that O'Brien was not such a "despot" as he thought (Crook apparently disliked a statement made by O'Brien with regard to a recent ILS concert). This quip brought forth a stiff rebuke from O'Brien in which he reminded Crook just how qualified each man was to speak on the matter:

> You know little of what happened in connection with the concert. I know everything. You know little of the general administration of the society. I know everything. You seldom attend the meetings of the Committee.

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the Inaugural General Meeting of the ITS on 26 Apr. 1898 before being succeeded by York Powell (ITS, MB1, p.32).

[162] O'Brien's respect for Dufferin's work on Irish land can be found in his *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland* (II, p.283-4) and *The Home Ruler's Manual* (pp.105, 107-9, 132-5). Lady Gregory knew Dufferin through her late husband, Sir William Gregory, and Dufferin was another who agreed to act as a guarantor for the Irish Literary Theatre (*Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. Pethica, pp. 42-3, 152-3). Details of the ILS meeting presided over by Dufferin can be found in the *New Ireland Review*, *Vols. 7-8* (July 1897), p.313.

[163] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.76. Stephen Gwynn, for one, fondly remembered "seeing and hearing there [the ILS] two illustrious Ulsterman – the great Lord Dufferin and Lord Russell of Killowen" (*Experiences of a Literary Man*, p.210). For a reference to Russell addressing the ILS in 1896, see Duffy Papers, NLI, MS 8005 (41): Russell to Duffy, 27 Apr. 1897.

[164] Tynan, *Memories*, p.327; Gwynn, *Experiences of a Literary Man*, pp.203-4, 217. Despite her affection for O'Brien, Tynan conceded that he had a "pugnacious and peppery side". For an example of one of these "intermittent rows" (this time over finance) see *CL*, ii, 392-3.

I attend them constantly. I have been Chairman of the society since its establishment, and have never ceased to take an active part in the management of its affairs. You have not devoted the same amount of time, and thought which I have given to its business. And, yet, stimulated, possibly by false sentiments about the position which I have taken up to guard the interests of the Society, in connection with this concert, you assume, without any justification whatsoever, an impertinent and aggressive attitude.[165]

Thus, O'Brien himself makes clear the powerful position that he had attained in the ILS by 1902.

Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of his influence was the blackballing of the novelist George Moore in 1900-1, an incident which brought O'Brien into conflict with Yeats. Prior to this, the links between the two men had continued, for in the later 1890s they often met at Lady Gregory's London dinner parties.[166] Their relations came under strain after Yeats put Moore's name forward for election to the ILS in December 1900. To Yeats's "amazement", O'Brien vowed to blackball him, the reason being the anti-national and anti-Catholic nature of Moore's 1887 book, *Parnell and His Island*.[167] Despite the fact that most of the committee backed Yeats, O'Brien would "not give way", and so the dispute rumbled on until March 1901, when Yeats again brought Moore's name before the committee and O'Brien threatened to resign if he was elected. To avoid this, Yeats once more withdrew Moore's nomination. Being aware of what O'Brien had done for the ILS ("it...owes him more than it does to any other member," Yeats told Hugh Law, the assistant secretary[168]), he did not want to force the committee to weigh O'Brien's services against "the principle of tolerance and courtesy." Yeats went on:

Nor can I persuade myself to carry on a personal contest with Mr Barry O'Brien after so many years of work in common. I therefore withdraw Mr Moore's nomination but as I believe that my duty to my own Order as a man of letters makes it impossible for me to share the most indirect responsibility for what I consider an act of intolerance I resign my position on the Committee.[169]

O'Brien had emerged victorious. Once again he had imposed his will on the society, just as Tynan remembered (although Yeats did rejoin the committee the following year).

Crucially, by now O'Brien's dominance had come to be reflected in the society's programme, which, from the late 1890s onwards, contained a substantial amount of historical matter. Naturally, other elements still featured. For example, Gwynn was

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[165] Crook Papers, MSS.Eng.hist.d.383, fol.39: O'Brien to Crook, 22 Feb. 1902. The two men made things up later, with O'Brien thanking Crook heartily in 1906 for subscribing to his booklet *In Memory of Fontenoy* (Crook Papers, MSS.Eng.hist.d.386, fol.61: O'Brien to Crook, (?) Mar. 1906).

[166] *Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. Pethica, pp.125, 135-7, 145, 227. O'Brien had also tried to help Yeats settle difficulties in the 1798 Commemoration movement by allowing the opposing factions to meet at his London home in late 1897 (*CL*, ii, 162-3).

[167] For more details of the episode see Yeats, *Autobiographies*, pp.432-3, Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol.1*, p.237, *CL*, ii, 603-4, 606, 609-10, 616-18, 620-1, *CL*, iii, 49-51, and Frazier, *George Moore*, pp.297-8.

[168] *CL*, iii, 49-50.

[169] *CL*, iii, 50.

instrumental in bringing the Irish National Theatre Society over to London in 1903 and 1904 to perform a number of Irish dramas under the auspices of the ILS. The society also maintained the practice of 'Original Nights' (Fahy continued to organise these throughout the late 1890s).[170] But these never acquired the same status as in the old Southwark days. Instead, the society's focus was now arguably a historical one. Firstly, and most importantly, in 1898 it established a 'History Class'. O'Brien was inevitably its chairman and the initiative was no doubt largely his. Writing in 1903, he described the class as being "for the systematic study of Irish history." The quality of the papers delivered to this class could vary, as not all the speakers were up to O'Brien's formidable level, a fact which sometimes attracted adverse comment in the nationalist press. Even so, the new class was a signal of the society's priorities. As Gwynn recalled of the ILS: "a laudable part of its work was the group study of Irish history."[171]

Nor was this all. By 1898 O'Brien was chairman of an 'Historical sub-committee' whose principal task was a bibliographical one, being the compilation of a volume on the 'authorities of Irish history' (it is unclear whether this book ever appeared). The lecture programme for the society as a whole contained a strong historical flavour as well. This was naturally provided in part by O'Brien himself. Around 1900, for example, he gave a talk entitled 'A Hundred Years of Irish History.' In this O'Brien returned to his familiar hunting ground of nineteenth century Irish history, once again surveying the failure of the British Parliament to legislate according to the wishes of the Irish people. O'Brien also asked friends and fellow members to present historical lectures before the ILS. Bryce, George Sigerson and Sir William Butler, for instance, were amongst those approached between 1898 and 1901.[172] By 1904 the society held regular 'History Nights' for the delivery of such papers and in 1910-11 an attempt was made to lend "special interest" to the 'History Nights' by "inviting members of distinguished families to...sketch...their history as it developed with public events." Gwynn, a descendant of William Smith O'Brien, was one such speaker. Then there were the visits to sites of Irish historical interest which O'Brien organised for the ILS. The first of these, in June 1905, was a trip

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[170] For the INTS in London, see Gwynn, *Experiences of a Literary Man* (pp.203-9) and *CL*, iii, 302, 341-63, 423, 562-3; for Fahy and the 'Original Nights', see the *New Ireland Review, Vols. 7-8* (July 1897), p.313.
[171] *Irish Literary Society Gazette*, Vol.1, no.3, Mar. 1899, p.3; R. Barry O'Brien (ed.), *Studies in Irish History, 1649-1775* (London and Dublin, 1903), pp.iii-iv; Gwynn, *Experiences of a Literary Man*, p.203; for criticisms of the ILS History Class, see the *United Irishman*, 31 Aug. 1901 and 1 Mar. 1902.
[172] *Irish Literary Society Gazette*, Vol.1, no.3, Mar. 1899, p.2; O'Brien, *A Hundred Years of Irish History*; Bryce Papers, MSS 112, fol.27: O'Brien to Bryce, 22 July 1898; Seton Papers, MSS Eur/E.267/70: Butler to O'Brien, 12 June 1901, Douglas Hyde to O'Brien, 22 June 1900.

across the Channel to the eighteenth century battlefield of Fontenoy, where the exiled Irish Brigade had helped defeat the British. *In Memory of Fontenoy*, a short account of the battle by O'Brien, was given to those taking part.[173]

This shift towards an O'Brienite historical agenda was encapsulated by the publication in 1903 of *Studies in Irish History, 1649-1775*, a collection of historical papers that had either been presented to the society as a whole or read before its History class.[174] This was the first book to be issued by the ILS "on its own account" and the fact that its maiden publication was an O'Brien edited historical volume illustrates clearly where the society's focus had come to lie. Indeed, the book left little room for doubt on the matter, since it provided the platform for O'Brien to publicly declare that the society was now essentially a vehicle for Irish historical exploration. "The school for the study of Irish history", said O'Brien in his preface, is what "we principally desire to make" the ILS.[175] Given what we have seen, O'Brien had to a great extent succeeded in this aim. Ryan had spoken in 1894 of the future books the society would produce, but *Studies in Irish History* can hardly have been the type of publication he had had in mind. The book was therefore a symbol of O'Brien's success and Ryan's failure, reflecting how, in the end, O'Brien had managed to steer the ILS in a historical-rationalist direction. The society had become cast in his image and his superiority was confirmed in 1906 when he was elected President (he remained so until 1911). If the 'Home Rule' generation was under threat from 'Irish-Ireland' in Ireland itself, it at least reigned supreme in the ILS.

By this stage Ryan would have cared little about such a triumph, for at the close of 1905 he had returned to Ireland to take up the editorship of the *Irish Peasant*. This event was itself preceded by another vitally important landmark in Ryan's life and one which paved the way for his return home: in 1899 he joined the Gaelic League of London. It was a decision which altered his outlook decisively. He found the learning of Irish to be a joy and an inspiration. It "stimulates so much, vitalises so much," he wrote in 1902.[176] Hitherto, Ryan had considered a distinctive national literature as the main vehicle for

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[173] *Inis Fail*, Dec. 1904; Seton Papers, MSS Eur/E.267/70: *ILS Annual Report 1910-11*; R. Barry O'Brien, *In Memory of Fontenoy* (ILS publication, 1905).
[174] The contributors to the volume were Sir William Butler ('Oliver Cromwell in Ireland'), Philip Wilson ('Ireland under Charles II' and 'Ireland under James II'), H. Mangan ('Sieges of Derry and Limerick'), Stephen Gwynn ('Sarsfield') and Alice Effie Murray ('After Limerick'). A second volume, *Studies in Irish History, 1603-49*, also edited by O'Brien, was published in 1906.
[175] O'Brien (ed.), *Studies in Irish History, 1649-1775*, pp.iii-vi.
[176] *United Irishman*, 15 Feb. 1902.

expressing Ireland's separate identity and believed that such a national literature was possible in the English language. This now changed. Ryan's priority became the revival of Irish rather than the creation of a new national literature, for he had come to see the native language as the central component of Irish nationality. Irish was "in some mysterious way the soul as well as the expression of the race," he said in 1902. "A nation cannot continue," Ryan claimed that year, "unless it has a living language of its own."[177] As a result, he threw himself into the teaching and propaganda work of the Gaelic League, becoming secretary of the London branch in 1902. But Ryan's goals were by no means confined to the revival of Irish. Like other Gaelic Leaguers, the language ideal led him to believe that all of Irish life had to be reconstructed in the spirit of the Gaelic past. The Irish language would provide the basis for the flowering of a full Gaelic culture. When the language is a "vital possession," wrote Ryan, the Gael "can develop in Ireland his own art, industries, drama, music, customs." The guiding aim, he declared in 1904, was nothing less than "the preservation and development of a distinctive Irish civilisation."[178] Ryan's sense of national identity, of Irishness, was therefore immeasurably stronger from the turn of the century. He was firmly allied with 'Irish-Ireland', becoming a regular contributor to its leading journals, such as the *United Irishman* and D.P. Moran's *Leader*. He might continue to aver that Irish nationality was not synonymous with politics, but for him Irishness had become synonymous with Gaelicism. The League had given him fresh standards by which to judge all things Irish.

An immediate casualty of his new outlook was the view that an Irish national literature could exist in the English language. Echoing Pearse, Moran and others, Ryan argued that 'true' Irish literature had to be in Irish. Delineating Irish ways and emotions was no longer sufficient to capture Ireland's distinctive cultural identity. "Anglo-Irish literature", he said in 1900, was "an unhappy half-way house of art; it is neither distinctively Irish nor distinctively English." The...'Celtic note' could not "prove that...a distinctive Irish literature can be maintained in English."[179] This cultural reorientation brought an end to his earlier laudation of Yeats and, significantly, was also evident in his later comments on O'Brien. Previously, Ryan's dislike of the "Best Hundred Irish Books" had centred on their dry rationalism and lack of 'Irish' imagination. Now, the fact that

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[177] *United Irishman*, 15, 1 Feb. 1902; Ryan, "The Work of the Gaelic League, Points for Irish People in Great Britain", Gaelic League of London pamphlet, 1902; Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.74, 132.

[178] *United Irishman*, 1 Feb. 1902; *Inis Fail*, Oct. 1904. For full details of Ryan's work for the London Gaelic League, see Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish Ireland Movement."

they were written in English and that some of the authors were not Irish meant that O'Brien's list was dismissed even more comprehensively:

> They were not 'Irish', and they were not the 'Best', but there were certainly a hundred of them. They were Anglo-Irish, in some cases frankly British, in other cases, antiquated, sometimes libels, now and then good-for-nothing. The list would tempt the Gael nowadays - he was then timid or asleep - to satire.[180]

In the light of the new cultural nationalism, O'Brien's historical choices did not measure up. Carrying too much of a 'British' imprint, they did not reflect a separate Irish identity. Implicit before, the view that O'Brien's intellectual agenda was 'Anglicised' had become explicit. Ryan's distance from O'Brien's 'un-Irish' historicism was greater than ever.

To Ryan, this verdict was underpinned by the content of the books. He found the type of political history that O'Brien dealt with limited and unsatisfactory because, based on the notion that nationality was politics, it failed to trace the evolution of Gaelic culture. In his view, it was preoccupied with surface events and "special pleading" rather than the social, artistic and intellectual progress of the Irish people (what he called "inner Irish history").[181] Writing in 1912 about the early 1900s, Ryan said:

> Many Irishmen by this time did not know Irish history in the broad sense; they only knew more or less of the outer struggle between England and Ireland, which is a very different matter. Of Irish psychology and civilisation in the great sense they had no more notion than of Greek or Egyptian.[182]

It was on this score that Ryan criticised parts of O'Brien's 1904 collection of essays, *Irish Memories*. Whilst acknowledging his expertise in certain areas (such as Wolfe Tone), Ryan lamented his treatment of early Irish history. "Mr O'Brien's...idea of early Gaelic conditions is sadly inaccurate," wrote Ryan in *Inis Fail*, the bi-lingual monthly paper of the London Gaelic League which he edited. "We have the old overdone picture of the warring clans; and nothing of what the Gael did in art, science, story, poetry, and so on." Not having the "real materials" with which to study the early period (presumably a reference to O'Brien's lack of Irish) O'Brien had, in Ryan's opinion, "unconsciously adopted the English view."[183]

But what of the ILS, where O'Brien's dominance had resulted in a preoccupation with the kind of history Ryan found so wanting? In the summer of 1892 Ryan had firmly rebutted accusations from Dublin that the ILS was "imbued with a semi-British spirit."[184] Would he have felt the same by the early 1900s given his new Gaelic identity? Quite

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[179] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.86.
[180] *The Irish Peasant*, 21 July 1906. For Ryan's later criticism of Yeats, see *CL*, ii, 578; *CL*, iii, 10-11.
[181] W.P. Ryan, *The Celt and the Cosmos* (London, 1914), p.17; *United Irishman*, 12 Apr. 1902.
[182] W.P. Ryan, *The Pope's Green Island* (London, 1912), p.55.
[183] *Inis Fail*, Dec. 1904; R. Barry O'Brien, *Irish Memories* (London, 1904).
[184] *The Irish Catholic*, 6 Aug. 1892.

apart from the triumph of O'Brien's rationalist historicism, incidents like Charles Russell's denigration of the language movement suggested that the society was out of step with the Gaelic revival (Ryan may have been one of the Leaguers who threatened to resign over it[185]). The same might be said of the blackballing of George Moore in 1901, as the year before he had very publicly announced his conversion to the Irish language ideal of the Gaelic League and given a lecture on the subject in Dublin.[186] Ryan may indeed have felt that a 'semi-British' spirit had permeated the ILS. He did feel, for example, that the society had fallen into the classic literary emigrant trap of looking to the British rather than the Irish audience. "Mr Rolleston incidentally, and other members of the [ILS] more particularly," he said at a meeting in 1900, "spoke of the importance of bringing Irish thought before...English readers...But...the...primary consideration is that Irish national literature should express and appeal to Ireland."[187] The ILS had set out to break the mould, to follow the Southwark Club in mobilising the Irish audience. Now, it had succumbed to the magnetic pattern of the last century. And for this false focus Ryan had to look no further than the chairman, whose work had sought to bring Irish history before British readers and had, on one level, been tailored accordingly.

The London Gaelic League offered a strong contrast to this. Its cultural and intellectual focus was Ireland. "The London Gaelic League," wrote Ryan in *Inis Fail*, "is only part of New Ireland: our centre of inspiration is beyond the sea, our imagination marches with our race."[188] The League also appealed to Ryan because it had that inclusive outlook and commitment to popularisation which was so vital to him and which the ILS had forsaken. The London Gaelic League was "like a little nation, a delightful democracy," he wrote. Later, he described how the League as a whole had "worked in a thoroughly popular, not an academic way."[189] Ryan naturally responded to this democratic strain and, just as he had sought to bring the literary awakening of the 1880s and 1890s to the Irish population in Britain, so he stressed the relevance of the language

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[185] Certainly, he later wrote disparagingly of Russell and said that this speech had shown "how very far he had travelled from Irish ways and ideals" (*The Irish Peasant*, 21 July 1906).
[186] Frazier, *George Moore*, pp.298-300; Lady Gregory (ed.), *Ideals in Ireland* (London, 1901), pp.45-51; *Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. Pethica, pp.240-4.
[187] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.86. Ryan's feeling on this point would have been increased by lectures like Stopford Brooke's of January 1906, which was entitled "What Ireland has done for England" (*Inis Fail*, Feb. 1906).
[188] *Inis Fail*, Oct. 1904.
[189] *Inis Fail*, Oct. 1904; W.P. Ryan, "The Meaning of the Irish Language Movement", in Basil Williams (ed.), *Home Rule Problems* (London, 1911), pp.24-5; Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.75; Hutchinson and O'Day, "The Gaelic Revival in London, 1900-22: Limits of Ethnic Identity", in Swift and Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Victorian Britain, The Local Dimension*, pp.164-5.

revival to all classes of the Irish people. "The national language, because it raises the mind, is a far-reaching advantage to the toiler," he wrote in 1902. "Nobody has more to gain from the Irish Language movement than the Irish workman and artisan." When in 1904 Ryan published a book of Irish language plays he entitled it *Plays for the People*. "All Gaels agree," he said in 1911, "that whatever intellectual and artistic developments there may be, the basis and beginning must be of and from the people."[190] The democratic cultural ideals that had animated *The Heart of Tipperary* were still very much alive nearly thirty years later.

The differences between the Gaelic League and the ILS are important because they show that, whilst the Irish-Ireland ideal obviously had a great attraction for Ryan, his move into the Gaelic League was also, in part, due to the fact that it provided a welcome alternative to the ILS. It offered a means of escape from 'old fogeyism', O'Brien's inadequate, 'un-Irish' historical agenda and a false 'British' focus. More than that, O'Brien and the society he dominated gave Ryan every reason to maximise his Gaelic League exertions, as they supplied an ample cultural 'warning'. They showed that such was the power of the Anglicising agencies faced by literary emigrants that even when they were engaged in ostensibly revivalist activities the 'British' influences around them could still prevail. To Ryan, this must have confirmed the extent to which the older Home Rule emigrant writers like O'Brien had compromised their Irishness. The Gaelic League's appeal for Ryan when compared to the ILS was underlined by memories of the Southwark Club, as the League succeeded where the ILS had signally failed in measuring up to the Southwark template. Like the latter, the League evinced the kind of Irish orientation and vigorous cultural nationalism that the ILS lacked. The democratic nature of the League and its social make-up - Catholic petit bourgeois - were more in line with Southwark than the 'aristocratic' ILS, where authority was concentrated and the atmosphere was allegedly always one of "respectability."[191] And, with Fahy as President and old friends like O'Keeffe as leading members, the League must have struck Ryan as almost the Southwark Club re-born. It was a connection he made later, in his memoirs, and it was, after all, at Southwark that he had first been exposed to Irish. The League was

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[190] Ryan, "The Work of the Gaelic League", Gaelic League of London pamphlet, 1902; Ryan, *Plays for the People* (London, 1904); Ryan, "The Meaning of the Irish Language Movement", in Williams (ed.), *Home Rule Problems*, p.31.

[191] *Inis Fail*, Feb. 1906; Hutchinson and O'Day, "The Gaelic Revival in London, 1900-22: Limits of Ethnic Identity", in Swift and Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Victorian Britain, The Local Dimension*, pp.254-76.

a "homecoming" for Ryan, says Waters.[192] His defection to it inevitably meant that his declining involvement in the ILS fell away still further. He was part of the 'Southwark' exodus which left the field clear for O'Brien. But the Gaelic League was not just an antidote to the unsatisfactory ILS. In order to fully understand why Ryan joined the League (and how he came to return to Ireland), it is necessary to examine his experiences in Fleet Street during the 1890s, for the League also represented a refuge from the London press world, a world where, in the shape of O'Connor, Ryan met Irishmen whom he felt undoubtedly exhibited a 'semi-British' outlook.

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[192] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.75-6.

7

'The Fairy Gold of Fleet Street': T.P. O'Connor, W.P. Ryan and cultural 'corruption', 1891-1906

The 'Revival' literary emigrants were not the first to question the cultural and political status of 'Home Rule' writers like O'Connor and McCarthy. Even before the 1890s Irishmen, and Englishmen too, drew attention to the effects of London life on their outlooks. In the early 1880s, for example, Henry Lucy wrote of how O'Connor displayed a "thin polish of London manners." More often, though, it was Irish political opponents who flagged such traits, understandably using the London residency, English newspaper connections, and 'mixed' identities of McCarthy and T.P. as a stick with which to beat them. In 1890, for instance, the Dublin Tory press satirised McCarthy as a "literary gentleman from London" who had, late in life, taken an interest in Ireland.[1] Then, during the Parnell split, charges of 'Anglicisation' were predictably and repeatedly levelled at the two men by their Parnellite foes. "He is an Anglicised Irishman," said *United Ireland* of McCarthy, the anti-Parnellite leader, in 1892. "He is out of touch with the...politics of this island...His Mecca is London...His sympathy with our cause is [that] of a sentimental English Liberal." For McCarthy, this accusation was cultural as well as political. In January 1891 *United Ireland* seized upon and criticised an earlier admission by him that he was unable to write an Irish novel because he had lived in Britain too long. Certainly, his novels of the late 1880s had all been set in London and the world of Parliament.[2] Even when McCarthy had dealt with Irish themes the influence of his British audience was apparent. In *The Fair Saxon*, for example, he takes care to praise the "singular fairness" of the English people in their reaction to Fenianism. Similarly, whilst *A History of Our Own Times* necessarily included Ireland in its sweep of events and contained several pro-Home Rule 'moments', it was clearly a work of British history written for British readers, the 'our' in its title indicating McCarthy's identification with his British audience.[3]

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[1] Lucy, *A Diary of Two Parliaments*, II, p.184; McCarthy & Praed, *Our Book of Memories*, p.252.

[2] *United Ireland*, 13 Feb. 1892; O'Day, *The English Face of Irish Nationalism*, p.24; Kelly, "Parnell in Irish Literature", in Boyce & O'Day (eds.), *Parnell in Perspective*, pp.245-6. These novels were written in tandem with Mrs Campbell Praed. They included *The Right Honourable* (1886) and *Ladies Gallery* (1888). *Our Book of Memories* (pp.14, 26) shows McCarthy suggesting various London 'scenes' for inclusion in the former.

[3] McCarthy, *A Fair Saxon*, pp.259-61. For pro-Home Rule 'hits' in *A History of Our Own Times*, see IV, pp.184-205, 240-1, 380-5. McCarthy also defends the character of the Fenian leaders here, IV, pp.135-43.

O'Connor suffered even more at Parnellite hands than McCarthy (this was due in large part to his biography of Parnell, which, appearing just after his death, was inevitably seen as exploitative by Parnellites). In November 1891 *United Ireland* ridiculed him as "this man who pretends to be an Irishman", and labelled him an "English scribe with an Irish name." His anti-Parnellism was portrayed as simply a way of preserving his burgeoning metropolitan career as a Radical journalist and politician, of not alienating his British audience. O'Connor, said *United Ireland* in 1892, "believed that his future as an English journalist and English politician depended on his opposing his Leader."[4] The Parnellite MP Henry Harrison wrote later that by the split T.P. was more of a Liberal than a nationalist. Another Parnellite critic was Arthur Lynch. Besides chiding O'Connor for his devotion to Gladstone, as seen earlier, he drew the following picture in 1896:

> T.P. has become a little Saxonised himself and even affects...something of their cold, flat speech instead of that 'large utterance' of his own native islanders...[He has] lost some of his old fervour for Ireland, and should now be ranked simply as a Radical and English.[5]

Unfortunately for O'Connor, this judgement was to seem mild in the light of the attacks that followed in the next two decades. As an 'advanced' nationalist and a member of the Gaelic League, Lynch foreshadowed the two main sources from which growing accusations of political and cultural 'Anglicisation' would emanate: nationalist political enemies, especially Arthur Griffith's Sinn Fein, and the revival activists of Irish-Ireland.[6] And, as a London-Irish journalist, Lynch of course also foreshadowed a vital force within the latter group of detractors: the Revival literary emigrants.

In 1894 Ryan was drawn more fully than before into Fleet Street and 'literary London' - and so along the classic Irish literary emigrant path - when he joined T.P.'s two post-*Star* journals. For him, the experience led to thorough disenchantment. By 1898 he was in revolt at the sordid commercialism and numbing triviality of Fleet Street and 'literary London'. At the heart of this unappealing world was his editor, O'Connor, who had seemingly fallen prey to that commercialism, especially after his switch to gossip weeklies in 1898. To Ryan, the conclusion was clear: here was an Irishman, and supposed nationalist, who, after thirty years in London, had adopted decadent English models, had become Anglicised. He was a cultural 'warning', a 'horrible example', to be often cited in

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[4] *United Ireland*, 21 Nov. 1891, 9 Apr. 1892. For denunciation of O'Connor's *C.S. Parnell, A Memory*, see the first of these dates. *United Ireland* called the book "T.P.'s shilling shocker," thereby associating both it and him with lowbrow English culture, a link which anticipated the line later taken by Irish-Ireland critics of O'Connor.

[5] Henry Harrison, *Parnell Vindicated, The Lifting of the Veil* (London, 1931), pp.34-5; Lynch, *Human Documents*, pp.161, 171.

the coming years. Ryan was encouraged in this analysis by a revival climate in which the new cultural nationalism was increasingly depicted as a battle to protect an idealistic Irish identity from the baleful influence of English materialism and vulgarity. For him, an escape route from the commercialism of Fleet Street and the threat of sharing O'Connor's fate presented itself in the shape of the Gaelic League. With the lesson of T.P. to spur him on, Ryan looked to safeguard his Irishness by embracing the invigorating Irish-Ireland vision of the Gaelic League. This path was shared by Moran. He too served his time in Fleet Street under T.P. - at *The Star* - before moving into the Gaelic League. Disgust at English decadence and materialism, and exposure to T.P., seem to have similarly played their part in his adhesion to Gaelicism. Certainly, like Ryan, Moran would regularly denounce these aspects of English life and hold up O'Connor as a cultural 'warning', a shocking instance of an Anglicised Irishman who had substituted these 'corrupt' English ways for native, Gaelic, ones. And, alongside T.P., he would place McCarthy as another such 'warning'. For both him and Ryan, this internal rejection of London life and its Irish devotees in favour of the revival ethos was succeeded by external rejection in the form of a return to Ireland, where the revival could be aided at first hand. The romantic image of 'literary London', which O'Connor and McCarthy had believed in and which, for a century, had bewitched Irish writers, leading to their Anglicisation, was now dismissed as a sham, an illusion. The return of her emigrant litterateurs would enable Ireland, and especially Dublin, to take London's place as the Irish cultural capital.

When O'Connor's stake in *The Star* was bought out in 1890 he had to agree not to start a rival evening paper for three years. Accordingly, he first returned to the fray with a Sunday newspaper, the *Sunday Sun*, which was established in May 1891 and was financed from his *Star* severance money (it became the *Weekly Sun* in January 1893). By June 1893 he was free to launch a new evening journal and so that month *The Sun* appeared, with T.P. using his income from the *Sunday Sun* to float the new paper.[7] There was understandably considerable overlap between his two new journals and *The Star*, most obviously in terms of politics, where T.P. continued to sponsor the idea of an Irish-Radical reform alliance and a 'union of the two democracies.' Home Rule remained part of a wider social reform programme aimed at the working classes. "The charwoman of St Giles is still the commanding personage in our political drama," said O'Connor in the

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[6] Mark Ryan, *Fenian Memories*, pp.166-7.

Sunday Sun. *The Sun*, echoed this, demanding the "bettering [of] the social conditions of Labour" and, like *The Star*, championing the cause of organised labour, especially during late 1893, when it energetically supported the miners in their battle for a "living wage."[8] It also reiterated the call for greater labour parliamentary representation ("Working-class constituencies shall go to working class members," O'Connor said on the opening day), although, as before, this had to take place within a Liberal framework due to the Home Rule alliance. "I have always held," he said in October 1893, "that the Liberal party can be so transformed...as to be the real Labour party."[9] Finally, the social campaign in *The Sun* was especially concerned with London, a cause which T.P., with *The Star* in view, reminded his readers that he had been "one of the first" to take up.[10]

But, for all the similarities with *The Star*, O'Connor's journals of the 1890s possessed a crucial difference, one that ultimately outweighed the political parallels. This was that whilst politics were important on the *Sunday Sun* and *The Sun*, they were no longer the overriding concern they had been at *The Star*. T.P. had made the latter a popular paper, including many non-political features, but its priority had always been the Irish-Radical alliance, and the 'new journalism' had, on one level, been a means of bringing that alliance to a working class audience. This strategy now changed. The 'new journalism' rather than politics dominated O'Connor's two new journals and if, like before, the former helped him reach working class readers, it was the commercial rather than the political benefits this might bring which primarily exercised his mind. Both papers were mainly given over to news, book reviews, fiction, sport, society gossip and the theatre. The 'personal' tone was prominent. "Its fundamental conception," said O'Connor of *The Sun* is "that it shall tell the story of each day in the briefest, the most picturesque ...fashion." "The interest will be literary and non-political in many parts of the paper," he added. There was also a desire to attract female readers, particularly on the *Sunday Sun*, which had a column entitled 'The World of Women.'[11] This change of approach is emphasised by comparing the different front pages. Unlike *The Star*, the front page of *The Sun* contained no political articles at all, but was made-up of news and society 'snippets.'

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[7] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.127-30; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.171.
[8] *Sunday Sun*, 10 May 1891; *The Sun*, 18 Oct. 1893. For the miners' dispute, see *The Sun* during October 1893.
[9] *The Sun*, 27 June, 19 Oct. 1893; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.129. *The Sun* ran a column dedicated to labour affairs entitled "Labour Notes". See for example, 7-9 Mar. 1894.
[10] *The Sun*, 27 June 1893. Similar to the above, *The Sun* had a column for London issues called "London, Its Politics and Government". See, for instance, 3-5 Oct. 1893.
[11] *The Sun*, 27 June 1893; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.130; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.163-73; Francis Gribble, *Seen in Passing* (London, 1929), pp.162-3.

The same was true of the *Sunday Sun*, where the first item to greet the readers was O'Connor's review of 'The Book of the Week.' It meant that neither new journal opened its first issue with a *Star*-style declaration of political faith. The political tenets of *The Sun* were not outlined until page two and it was page four before the *Sunday Sun*'s political gospel appeared. Even then the contrast with *The Star* was not complete. Rather than coming first, the political vows were only made after T.P. had described the attractive style and 'human' approach his papers would adopt. Thus, whereas *The Star* began with 'this is a Radical journal,' *The Sun* began with T.P. saying: "In the forefront I put my purpose as that of producing a good newspaper". He made it clear that it was the popular, commercial, appeal of his papers that now mattered most.[12]

What caused this shift in priorities? Firstly, it was simply a reflection of the changing situation in Fleet Street. O'Connor's sidelining of politics was in line with the direction the London press was taking in the 1890s. Politics were being dethroned. With the growth of the British reading public through the development of popular education, a diet of politics alone was increasingly seen as detrimental to a healthy circulation. Their place was being taken by the 'new journalism'. News, entertainment and amusement were the new priorities and the 'personal' tone was paramount. The birth of Alfred Harmsworth's *Daily Mail* in 1896 is seen as the landmark here and it was fitting that, after a hundred years of Irish emigration there, an Irishman should have revolutionised Fleet Street.[13] Even so, the *Sunday Sun* and *The Sun* had pointed the way before Harmsworth (as had *Truth* and *The Star*), though in his attempts to 'democratise' literature (as in his 'Book of the Week' pieces) O'Connor operated above the standard *Daily Mail* fare. Another paper in the new commercial vein was the *Evening News*, which was acquired by Harmsworth and Kennedy Jones, a Glasgow-Irishman and erstwhile news editor of *The Sun*, in 1894 (Jones at first tried to persuade T.P. to buy it). Under their control, the paper substituted news for politics and its circulation soared.[14] It brings us to another reason for O'Connor's change of tack: the intense competition *The Sun* faced. *The Star* had stepped into a void, but *The Sun* had to dislodge *The Star* if it was to succeed. T.P. no doubt hoped its breezy, non-political, features would help achieve this, and at first they did

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[12] *The Sun*, 27 June 1893; *Sunday Sun*, 10 May 1891.

[13] Harmsworth was born near Dublin in 1865 and came to England as a child, so he does not quite fall into the same literary emigrant category as O'Connor and others.

[14] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.172, 190; Fyfe, *Sixty Years of Fleet Street*, pp.47, 62-5; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.172-5; Kennedy Jones, *Fleet Street and Downing Street* (London, 1920), pp.118-32. For further details of this subject, see Koss, *Political Press, Vol.1.*, and Joel H. Wiener (ed.), *Papers for the Millions, The New Journalism in Britain, 1850-1914* (Connecticut, 1988).

seem to work, for *The Sun* sold well. But this did not last. O'Connor had given *The Star* such a dominant position within the London evening press that it could not be supplanted. The market could not sustain two Radical evening papers.[15] The appearance of the revamped *Evening News* must have made matters worse, especially as it involved the defection of the talented Jones. By the end of 1894 *The Sun* was in trouble and apparently losing nearly £30,000 a year. In this situation O'Connor doubtless came under pressure to steer his papers still further away from politics and towards the kind of commercialism that had reaped dividends for the *Evening News*. Certainly, on *The Sun's* second 'birthday' in June 1895 politics seemed more distant than ever. "[*The Sun*] is as much for literary amusement as for the supply of news", T.P. wrote.[16]

O'Connor's change of direction was reinforced by the political outlook itself, as the prospects at Westminster were now decidedly gloomy. After the advances of 1888-92, the Irish-Radical alliance began to falter. In some ways matters were encouraging. The Liberals had loyally supported Gladstone during the protracted debates over the second Home Rule Bill and, in turn, the anti-Parnellite Irish members had consistently backed the Liberal government in its English reforms of 1893-4, such as the Employer's Liability and Parish Councils Bills. "Say a simple word to recognise [how] my Irish flock supported us in English legislation," John Morley reminded Rosebery before his opening speech as Premier in March 1894.[17] To some extent, then, T.P.'s idea of a mutual reform alliance was implemented. In the final analysis, though, this was scant consolation, for both parts of the alliance floundered before the same obstacle: the House of Lords. Home Rule was contemptuously rejected in 1893, the Employers Liability was dropped after opposition from the Lords, and the Parish Councils Bill only passed after severe alteration by the Upper House. The Cabinet decision not to contest these actions by dissolving Parliament must have disappointed a staunch enemy of the Lords like O'Connor. In the case of Home Rule, it showed that Ireland had slipped down the Liberal agenda. The accession in March 1894 of the suspect Home Ruler Rosebery to the Liberal leadership only intensified this feeling (the Queen's Speech that month did not refer to Home Rule). And, as a noble, Rosebery did not inspire confidence from a Radical standpoint either, especially as he disliked the Radical programme approach enshrined at Newcastle.[18]

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[15] O'Connor, *Memoirs*, II, p.270; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.172-5.
[16] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.130; *The Sun*, 27 June 1895.
[17] Rosebery Papers, MS 10046, fol.183: Morley to Rosebery, 9 Mar. 1894.
[18] Heyck, *The Dimensions of British Radicalism*, pp.216-18; Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, pp.161-5, 247-8.

Also pertinent to T.P. was the political eclipse suffered by Labouchere, his associate in the Irish-Radical alliance. Despite his sterling efforts for the party since 1886 Labouchere had been excluded from the new Liberal Cabinet because of his attacks on the Royal family. Abandoning his previous strictures against patronage, he then pleaded with Rosebery (at that point Foreign Secretary) to make him the British ambassador in Washington. But this too was denied him and so he returned, crestfallen, to the Liberal backbenches. Although he subsequently did his best to undermine Rosebery, his spell of political prominence was fast ending. Wemyss Reid, admittedly no lover of Labouchere, told Rosebery in 1897 that he was "in the meekest mood I have ever seen him...He knows his day is over." By this stage, however, the Liberal party's day also seemed over following their disastrous defeat at the 1895 election. This setback ushered in ten years of Unionist government.[19] If anything, the Home Rule movement, having split into three warring factions, was in a worse state than the Liberals. Such divisions naturally sapped nationalist morale, as did the Irish Party's inability to prevent the Liberals shelving Home Rule. This was amply illustrated by the INLGB, which, boasting 41,000 members prior to the Parnell split, had slumped to 15,000 members by 1898. In 1896 T.P. acknowledged the "division" and "abject depression" afflicting nationalists.[20] With both its Irish and Radical components at a low ebb, the realisation of his grand reform alliance was now a very distant prospect. It is no wonder that Fyfe should have detected a loss of political enthusiasm in the O'Connor of these years.[21] It was something that his newspapers reflected only too well. There was little incentive to discuss politics when they were in such a disheartening state. It was so different from *The Star*. Created when the future of the Irish-Radical alliance was bright, it had had good reason for concentrating on politics.

It was into this somewhat troubled journalistic environment that Ryan stepped in 1894. An Irishman named Tim McCarthy was behind Ryan's recruitment. Having been struck by *The Heart of Tipperary* and *The Irish Literary Revival*, he recommended Ryan to O'Connor, and by the autumn of 1894 Ryan was, like McCarthy, a sub-editor on *The Sun*. It was Ryan's first proper appointment on the London press. Soon after, he began

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[19] Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, p.175; Rosebery Papers, MS 10056, fol.131: Wemyss Reid to Rosebery, 30 Oct. 1897. Labouchere's exclusion from the Cabinet may have also been due to scandal in his private life.

[20] O'Connor, "Home Rule and the Irish Party", *Contemporary Review*, Aug. 1896, p.190; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.140-5; David Fitzpatrick, "The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921", in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, Vol.VI: Ireland Under the Union, II, 1870-1921* (Oxford, 1996), p.679.

[21] Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp. 180-1, 199-202.

working for the *Weekly Sun*. Within two years an impressed T.P. had made Ryan literary editor of *The Sun*. His new duties included book reviews, dealing with the literary news and shaping the (non-political) front page. The paper even provided an outlet for his fiction, including Irish material.[22] The passion for literature and the desire for its popularisation that he had exhibited in the Irish context were, for a spell, transferred to the British sphere. He was part of O'Connor's campaign to bring literature to the London democracy. It brought Ryan into closer contact with 'literary London' and the British reading audience than he had been hitherto. He also befriended London journalists like Clement Shorter (by the late 1890s this former *Star* columnist edited several titles and was married to George Sigerson's daughter, Dora). Ryan's increasing absorption in Fleet Street must have been another reason why his ILS attendance declined after 1895. It emphasises how he became somewhat detached from London-Irish revival circles and activities in 1895-8. Instead, he was now treading the path of so many past Irish writers.

He later depicted his Fleet Street experiences, including his time on *The Sun* and the *Weekly Sun*, in the novel *Daisy Darley, or The Fairy Gold of Fleet Street*. Although published in 1913, the book started life before this. In 1910 Ryan told Shorter: "during the last year I amended and developed a story of London journalistic and literary life called 'The Fairy Gold of Fleet Street'", thereby showing that a version of the novel already existed by this date.[23] Most probably, it was begun sometime after Ryan left the two papers in 1898, for he would then have been well placed to assess his time under O'Connor. The novel charts the literary and journalistic adventures of Arthur Clandillon, a young Irish writer, who is clearly based on Ryan himself. His two main concerns are his personal spiritual quest and his hopes of contributing to Ireland's literary revival, both of which are reflected in the Irish epic he is writing, "The Goldbeaters of Glenboyne." He comes to London in the closing years of the nineteenth century and gains his first Fleet Street post on the *Gleam* and *Sunday Gleam*, two Radical journals. Like Ryan, Clandillon soon progresses, being given control of the *Gleam's* 'literary' front page. The editor of both papers is Theobald Cunningham, a thinly veiled portrait of T.P., and Tim McCarthy can be identified as O'Keeffe, the Irish sub-editor who helps Clandillon onto the *Gleam*.[24] Despite Ryan's later 'amendments' (presumably the parts drawing on his time in Ireland

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[22] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement," pp.44-9; Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 7 Oct. 1894. On 14 Oct. 1894 the *Weekly Sun* carried Ryan's story, "Billy Kelly and the Pope."
[23] Clement Shorter Papers: Ryan to Shorter, 26 Dec. 1910.

in 1905-10) the novel still provides valuable evidence of his attitude towards Fleet Street and 'literary London', and beyond that English society, during the late 1890s, as it is evidence echoed in his writings of the time.[25] It also gives us an insight into how Ryan saw T.P. in these years, and so into the contrast between their two generations.

As presented in *Daisy Darley*, the Fleet Street of the late 1890s is a world in thrall to its 'audience', but it is an audience that "wants betting news, murder descriptions, and accounts of cock-fights." Livingstone, one of the *Gleam* journalists, admits to Clandillon: "I came to London and discovered that the 'audience' of the pressman is...compounded of stupidity and savagery."[26] The press is simply expected to feed this vulgar appetite, to give its readers scandal, sensationalism and trivia. Attempts within the novel to introduce a more cultured, even spiritual, tone are all commercial failures. The public is in control of a newspaper's style and content, not the editor or journalist. This is something that the idealistic Clandillon has to learn. During his first day on the *Gleam* he is shocked to discover that the talk amongst the journalists is not of lofty purposes but of London's latest murder. He wishes to bring a literary, artistic, kind of writing to Fleet Street, and his responsibility for the *Gleam's* front page excites his imagination: "Give me the spacious page of the *Gleam* to fill every day, and I am like a knight or poet set free amid the... radiant panorama of the Middle Ages." But such romanticism is wholly misplaced. It has no future on Fleet Street. The ambitious cultural quarterly that Clandillon helps to create, "Literary Humanity", is a "brilliant literary success and a financial failure." The reason: it is not "coarse and crude enough for the sensual man."[27]

The picture drawn here by Ryan of course reflects the rise during the 1890s of the kind of lowbrow, commercial journalism associated with Harmsworth, the *Evening News* having made crime stories a speciality.[28] To what extent Ryan himself was as ingenuous as Clandillon when he first joined *The Sun* and *Weekly Sun* is unclear. Besides his love of literature and the literary life he did, as we have seen, see himself as a fully-fledged writer

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[24] Even the incidentals link Cunningham to O'Connor. When Cunningham recalls being unable to afford the sausages in a shop window (p.60), he echoes a passage in T.P.'s *Memoirs* (I, p.4), whilst Cunningham's description of a newspaper office as 'a nest of intrigues (p.60) evokes O'Connor's experiences on *The Star*.
[25] An example of where Ryan's time in Ireland has affected *Daisy Darley* is Clandillon's suspicion of the Catholic Church (p.89), which reflects his clashes with the hierarchy whilst editing the *Irish Peasant*, the paper eventually being shut down under pressure from Cardinal Logue. For this, see the Waters thesis, and Brian Inglis, "Moran of the *Leader* and Ryan of the *Irish Peasant*", in C.C. O'Brien (ed.), *The Shaping of Modern Ireland* (London, 1960)). Clandillon's idea of the soul's journey through various stages reflects Ryan's contact with theosophy and Eastern mysticism while in Ireland. See *The Celt and the Cosmos*.
[26] Ryan, *Daisy Darley* (London, 1913), pp.61, 114.
[27] Ibid, pp.219, 184.
[28] Fyfe, *Sixty Years of Fleet Street*, pp.49-50, 62-5.

rather than just a mere reporter, the subsequent publication of *Starlight Through The Roof* lending further weight to this contention. He may well, therefore, have arrived in Fleet Street with dreams of marrying journalism with literature, of cultivating a literary style of newspaper writing. He too may have bought into the romantic image of 'literary London' at whose heart was Fleet Street. Yet, as *Daisy Darley* shows, he would come to feel that the latter was too mean-minded for his Olympian designs. Chastened by experience, he evidently concluded that the London journalist was not expected to improve the public mind but supply it with the crude, superficial, matter it craved. There was no place for those who preferred a more elevated course.

Crucially, that this *Daisy Darley* view was not something he elaborated in hindsight but felt at the time is shown by his 1898 work, *Literary London, Its Lights and Comedies*, which satirises this idea of subservience to a crude audience. Here, a spoof newspaper called the *Daily Termagant* is in trouble. "We have been too brilliant and adventurous," says the editor. "We should...have been impertinent or vulgar. Fine writing is wholly out of place." In a desperate bid to save the paper they surrender to their readers, but this does not mean simply gratifying their taste for trivia. Rather, they decide that the "next issue of the *Termagant* will be the people's paper, written and edited by the Man in the Street."[29] This entails allowing the various correspondents who pester the editor to literally run the paper for a day. The theme of journals being controlled by their readers is taken to its logical extreme. Predictably, the stunt ends in chaos, illustrating how undue submission to the 'audience' was not the correct way to conduct a newspaper. All this was in sharp contrast to the mid-Victorian period, when the assumption had been that journalists dictated affairs to their readers, not that the latter held sway over them.

If Ryan felt that a more cultured style could not be applied to Fleet Street, then he also decided that journalism, especially the evening kind, actually undermined an individual's literary ability (a view shared by Yeats[30]). In *Literary London*, for instance, he tells the story of a young writer called 'Radford', who arrives in London with dreams of becoming a novelist. In the meantime he has to make a living and so joins an evening paper, consoling himself with the thought that journalism was "the kindred field" to literature ("From his reporting duties to his beloved MS would be just a pleasant transition"). Such a notion is swiftly shattered, for Radford finds that his "stories of murder, fires...were not the best aids to the style he desired." Chasing 'scoops' left him too exhausted to write his

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[29] W.P. Ryan, *Literary London, Its Lights and Comedies* (London, 1898), pp.75-6.

novel. Eventually, after twenty years as a journalist, he retires and turns at last to his literary dream. But all he can write is a novel littered with the journalist's stock in trade: a murder, a trial, an execution and so forth. "It won't do," says Radford in despair, "for it isn't art."[31] Far from proving a 'kindred field' to literature, evening journalism erodes the creative faculty. Once more, Ryan presents Fleet Street as at odds with culture rather than allied to it. And it is again something that *Daisy Darley* parallels, for, like Radford, Clandillon cannot finish "The Goldbeaters of Glenboyne" while on the *Gleam*. Moreover, such travails were not far removed from Ryan's own life, as he produced no further Irish novels during his time on *The Sun* (*Starlight Through the Roof* was largely completed by October 1894). "I have to struggle with a bad cold - one of the few things I have carried away from evening journalism," he joked to Shorter in 1899, just after leaving *The Sun*.[32]

Literary London was the one book that Ryan did publish in this period. Although satirical rather than fictional, it is important, as it reveals Ryan's disillusionment not only with Fleet Street but with the whole idea of 'literary London'. The book is a sustained debunking of the pretensions of authors and literary critics alike. He ridicules both the 'great young men' whose talent lies in their idiosyncrasies rather than their work, and the journalists who rhapsodise about these men and their peculiarities: "To be a creative artists was quite a secondary consideration. The great point was to be 'discovered' - for some intellectual eccentricity." Such literary 'discoveries' were essentially ploys to boost the paper's circulation. "Sighted at first glance more True Poets than any other Daily Paper" was Ryan's sarcastic headline. To him, current English poets seldom saw "much beyond the externals of things." "The body rather than the soul" was their "province." All this left Ryan, says Waters, with a "genuine uneasiness about the triviality and artificiality of London life and literature in the 1890s."[33] This uneasiness found expression in other places besides *Literary London*. In the *New Ireland Review*, for example, Ryan often stressed the exhaustion and superficiality of the London literary scene. In late 1894 he lamented how "collections, selections...and anthologies" dominated the English literary world. "There seems to be scarcely any room for an original writer", he said. Then, in

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[30] See, for example, *Letters to the New Island*, eds. Bornstein and Witemeyer, pp.47-8.
[31] Ryan, *Literary London*, pp.142-7.
[32] Downey Papers, MS 10, 051: Ryan to Downey, 7 Oct 1894; Shorter Papers: Ryan to Shorter, 11 Jan. 1899. In a further echo of Radford, Ryan lamented to Shorter in 1898: "I feel at mornings that there are many literary things I could do much better than I have done, but after several hours of journalism I feel differently" (Shorter Papers: Ryan to Shorter, 29 Mar. 1898).
[33] Ryan, *Literary London*, pp.66-9, 123-4; Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.52-6.

February 1896, he wrote of the "irritation and triviality which over-run what is rather fancifully described as the literary world [of England]".[34]

Furthermore, as a cultural nationalist, Ryan had an instant contrast to the bankruptcy of Fleet Street and 'literary London' in the shape of Ireland's literary revival. The gulf between England, with its vulgar journalism and trivial, decadent literature, and Ireland, with its new literature of 'life, humanity and imagination', was a frequent theme of his 1890s writings. In *The Irish Literary Revival*, for example, he describes turning from England, where "so much of latter-day thought and song is suggestive of decay [and] decrepitude", and reaching 'Celtic' shores as "like passing from a worn old world to the rich vistas and the exultant life of a new." Also in this book he recommended studying the gods of Irish mythology given how "so much materialism invades us from the East."[35] That same year Ryan wrote in the *New Ireland Review* of his surprise to find a piece of Irish literature, with "appealing music and lifeful spirit" (it was by the poetess Nora Hopper) in a "gruesome and decadent London publication" like the *Yellow Book*.[36] Ryan drew this literary contrast on a wider scale too. If *Starlight Through the Roof* helped reinforce Ryan's dichotomy between 'Irish' imagination and 'British' rationalism, then, more directly, it juxtaposed the imagination, purity and spirituality of Irish life with the vulgarity and immorality of its English counterpart. In the novel the 'starlight' streaming through the gaps in the peasants' roofs is not only literal, thereby indicating their distance from materialistic concerns, but also metaphorical, representing the imagination and romance with which they fill their everyday lives in the form of songs and stories. In stark contrast to this stands the behaviour of the English settlers whom the local land agent has brought into the neighbourhood. Described as coming from the "dregs of English cities", these unsavoury individuals descend into drunkenness and irreligious violence, burning down the house of the parish priest.[37]

This opposition between Irish imagination/spirituality/vitality and English decadence/ materialism was of course by no means peculiar to Ryan. By the late 1890s it had become a core theme of the Irish revival. Yeats, for example, joined Ryan in depicting English literature as an exhausted and declining force compared to the vibrant nature of Irish

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[34] *New Ireland Review, Vols.1-2* (Nov 1894), p.601, *Vols.3-4* (Feb. 1896), p.373.
[35] Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.180-2.
[36] *New Ireland Review, Vols.1-2* (Dec. 1894) pp.667-8. For Nora Hopper, see *CL*, i, 423.
[37] Ryan, *Starlight Through the Roof*, pp.1-3, 137, 147-53. For later comments by Ryan on this theme, see his 1911 essay, "The Meaning of the Irish Language Movement", in Williams (ed.), *Home Rule Problems*, pp.23-34, where he speaks of Ireland's "cultured democracy", which knows nothing of "sensational fiction", and has not yet "ceased to wonder."

literature, with its vast store of untapped inspiration in the shape of myths and folklore.[38] More frequently, he and others portrayed the revival as at heart a struggle to maintain an Irish-Gaelic identity, with its idealism, emotion and spirituality, in the face of English materialism and immorality, the cheap London press being a specific enemy. In the late 1890s Yeats projected the Irish Literary Theatre as a means of expressing Ireland's "ancient idealism" and so helping Ireland lead "the way in a war on materialism, decadence, triviality".[39] Although England was not cited on the latter occasion, it is clear from other statements that Yeats had her chiefly in mind. In 1900 he declared that Ireland was "fighting England [and] the filth from off her streets," whilst in *Ideals in Ireland* he described how the Irish "literary movement" was concerned with "uttering the national life, and opposing the vulgar books and vulgarer songs...that come to us from England."[40] These sentiments were shared by friends and collaborators like Hyde, Lady Gregory, George Moore and George Russell. Indeed, Hyde had set the tone for much of this with his famous 1892 'de-Anglicising' speech in which he attacked "penny dreadfuls, shilling shockers and...vulgar English weeklies like *Bow Bells*," and urged the Irish people to "cultivate everything...Gaelic." Similarly, Lady Gregory wrote in 1900 of how Ireland's "ideal life" was under threat, as "the materialism of England & its vulgarity are surging... about us - it is not Shakespeare England sends us...but "Tit Bits."[41] And, as seen earlier, clerical writers like Canon Sheehan would echo these denunciations of English decadence and materialism, although, unlike the 'neutral' spirituality of the Protestant writers above, they of course saw Irish 'spirituality' as strictly Catholic. At this stage Ryan did too, as *Starlight Through the Roof* shows. Later, after the clashes with the hierarchy which marred his time in Ireland, this would change, with Ryan defining Irish 'spirituality' as 'Celtic' (or 'Gaelic') Catholicism so as to distinguish it from repressive 'Romanism.'[42]

For the moment, his views of Fleet Street and English society were buttressed by a revival atmosphere in which the commercialism and immorality of England were

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[38] *W.B. Yeats, Letters to the New Island*, eds. Bornstein and Witemeyer, pp.60-7; Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol.1*, p.110.
[39] Foster, *Modern Ireland*, p.452; *CL*, ii, 302.
[40] *CL*, ii, 576; Yeats, "The Literary Movement in Ireland", in Lady Gregory (ed.), *Ideals in Ireland*, p.90.
[41] Duffy et al, *The Revival of Irish Literature*, p.159; *Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. Pethica, pp.240-1. For Russell on this theme, see his essay, "Nationality and Imperialism", in Lady Gregory (ed.), *Ideals in Ireland* (pp.15-22), and for Moore, see *United Irishman*, 6 July 1901.
[42] See p.24 above for Canon Sheehan. For how the Catholic Church becomes closely aligned with Irish cultural revival in *Starlight Through the Roof*, see pp.112-17, 144-155. Later, to Ryan the main difference between 'Celtic' Catholicism and 'Romanism' was that the former believed in man's essential divinity and so his potential, whilst the latter saw him as a sinful 'worm' requiring firm control. See *The Celt and the Cosmos*, *The Pope's Green Island* and *The Plough and the Cross* for a full exploration of this theme.

constantly highlighted. But what of Theobald Cunningham, the O'Connor figure in *Daisy Darley*? How does he cope with the vulgarity of Fleet Street and its tyrannical audience? Like T.P., Cunningham has a formidable Radical reputation. He is the great protector of the London democracy. "Everything poor [and] oppressed, everything that thirsted for Emancipation, he championed in his writings," says Ryan of Cunningham, echoing the way that T.P. campaigned for the Progressives during the LCC elections by appealing for sympathy with the suffering masses of the capital ("Think of London's poor...of the dweller in the Whitechapel slums," he wrote in 1889).[43] However, behind this noble reputation Cunningham is a pessimistic, world-weary man, describing the "story of humanity" as "one of filth, fear and futility."[44] Significantly, he has reluctantly accepted that to survive the London newspaper must feed the crude demands of his readers rather than seek to influence them. As a result, he keeps telling the idealistic Clandillon to avoid a polished style in favour of coarse simplicities. His refrains include "beware of the damn literary warp" and "write for the bar parlour". "If you want to tell the British public that a man likes two chops for dinner," he says, "there's no need to use...picturesque language." "The Briton is only interested in the two chops." Cunningham recognises the quality of Clandillon's cultured efforts - "they are impossibly refined and beautiful," he says of the essays in 'Literary Humanity' - but to adopt literary ambitions is to court commercial disaster. "A...stupid rival, in half the time, would secure a quarter of a million [readers] ...beauty is truth, truth beauty; but modern economic conditions, and...modern stupidity, are infernally awkward." Unhappily for Cunningham, Clandillon and the other journalists do not heed his strictures and he is forced to sell the *Gleam* and the *Sunday Gleam*. His staff had ignored the 'golden rule': "Be bad enough to be popular."[45]

Through Cunningham, Ryan thus presents O'Connor as a disillusioned man who is being worn down by the commercial imperatives of Fleet Street. He recognises fine writing and is not totally averse to a more cerebral approach, but, in the face of stiff competition, he feels he must gratify his audience's lowbrow tastes. As a picture of T.P. in the 1890s, it is clearly by no means inaccurate. Here is the O'Connor who has lost his political enthusiasm, having seen his vision of an Irish-Radical alliance crumble, shaking his faith in the masses. Equally represented is the T.P. who, under pressure from the likes of Harmsworth and Jones, has decided to chart a more overtly commercial course. Ryan

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[43] Ryan, *Daisy Darley*, p.57; *The Star*, 16 Jan. 1889.
[44] Ryan, *Daisy Darley*, p.61.
[45] Ibid, pp.59, 170, 222-3, 258.

would later describe in his memoirs how O'Connor called him into his office and did indeed urge him to avoid the "damned literary warp."[46] At the same time Cunningham's praise of Clandillon's work and his countenancing of the 'Literary Humanity' project does reflect how, through initiatives like the 'Book of the Week', T.P. was still often employing a more cultured approach than Harmsworth. Unfortunately, this failure to wholly emulate the superficialities of his rivals brought O'Connor to the same end as Cunningham. As we have seen, he was in financial trouble by late 1894 and so, echoing Cunningham, he ended up selling *The Sun* and the *Weekly Sun* in early 1898.[47]

If Ryan captured much of T.P.'s outlook and personality in Cunningham, then what does the portrait tell us about Ryan's view of O'Connor while working under him? The key here is the obvious contrast between Cunningham and Clandillon. The one is steadily surrendering to Fleet Street commercialism and triviality; the other is pondering his soul's journey, pursuing a literary style of journalism and nourishing Irish literary aspirations. The clear implication is that Cunningham, and with him T.P., is on the road to Anglicisation through an acceptance of English materialism and decadence. And, having seen how the latter themes, along with their contrast to Irish imagination and spirituality, permeated his writings in the 1890s, both fiction and non-fiction, and how they baulked large in the revival ethos, it is almost certainly an analysis that Ryan made at the time. He had just written *Starlight Through the Roof* and had recently been involved in an attempt to develop a new Irish literature. In both cases he was actuated by the desire to express Ireland's separate identity through a distinctive literature. Now, he was in close contact with O'Connor, an Irish writer whose cultural path was the antithesis of his.[48] It is also notable that Cunningham's political reputation is solely Radical; Irish nationalism is not attributed to him. That T.P. had adopted English rather than Irish models in Ryan's opinion is borne out by a passage from 1898 in which O'Connor is an unspoken but felt presence. Speaking of Yeats's failure to attract attention in England, Ryan says: "[Yeats] was a disembodied spirit, and Mother Albion does not care for disembodied spirits. If [he] could go into Parliament, or edit the *Daily Chronicle*, or launch a newspaper syndicate, he would be a much larger figure to his age."[49] With his exposure to T.P. on *The Sun*, the

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[46] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.48.
[47] Ibid, p.50; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.131.
[48] For confirmation of this Ryan had to look no further than T.P.'s comments on the New Irish Library's first volume, Davis's *The Patriot Parliament*, in *The Sun* (6 Oct. 1893). He explained the book's value in terms of educating English readers in Irish history, not as the start of a new Irish popular literature. O'Connor thought of the English audience rather than Irish cultural identity.
[49] Ryan, *Literary London*, p.123.

fate awaiting the unwary Irish literary emigrant in London had started to unfold before Ryan. Yet, it was what he and O'Connor did after *The Sun* which really drove home the cultural 'warning', and threw the differences between their two generations into relief.

After his financial difficulties on these two papers O'Connor looked to restore his fortunes by launching a new weekly paper entitled *M.A.P.* (Mainly About People). As the use of this old *Star* column title suggests, his new journal was entirely devoted to the 'personal' approach. "This journal will be purely personal", said T.P. in the first issue, "personal from the first page to the last - from the first line to the last...I shall not write about politics, but about politicians; I shall not write about books, but about their authors." The new personal journalism which O'Connor had pioneered in the 1880s, and which had dominated *The Sun* and the *Weekly Sun*, had taken over completely. Society gossip was the order of the day. "The beauty of the dresses worn by the ladies in this inclosure is...to be seen rather than described", said the *M.A.P.* reporter at Ascot in 1898.[50] Ebbing on *The Sun* and *Weekly Sun*, T.P.'s political momentum and influence had, in journalistic terms, become negligible. The contrast with *The Star* was total. He was no longer using Fleet Street as a power base in an ambitious attempt to shape Liberal policy or laying claim to the leadership of London Radicalism. Instead, his journal existed for commercial purposes only. It was a strictly Harmsworthian enterprise. Rather than moulding public opinion, he was supplying the amusement it desired: "I have always believed...the public wanted...personal and...social journalism." His journalistic ditching of politics in favour of the 'personal' approach was encapsulated by a series of articles on Parnell in 1898-9 under the title, "The Tragedy of Parnell". These pieces were concerned not with Parnell the politician but with Parnell the 'man' and his doomed romance with Mrs O'Shea. Home Rule, one half of his 1880s grand alliance, had become an exercise in sentimentality, in commercial journalism. The consolation for O'Connor was that his shift in priorities did indeed prove profitable. In June 1899 he declared that *M.A.P.* was "far and away the most successful publication I have started for many years." "It has been a paying property from the start, and is now the beginning of a great newspaper fortune."[51]

Ryan, meanwhile, remained on *The Sun* and the *Weekly Sun* for a brief time after T.P.'s departure, leaving when the new owners lowered the level of the two papers even further, eschewing those features that had hitherto kept them above the Harmsworthian

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[50] *M.A.P.*, 18 June 1898; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.189-90.

rut, such as the commitment to literature. In order to boost its circulation *The Sun* began staging stunts worthy of the *Daily Termagant*, thereby showing that Ryan's satire of that year was not far removed from Fleet Street reality. By May 1898 he had gained employment as literary editor of the *Sunday Special*, which had been started the previous year by Herman Schmidt, a naturalised German.[52] Unlike the revamped *Sun*, his new post allowed Ryan to continue to indulge his literary interests. He had retained his links with Fleet Street, but, with his severance from evening journalism, those links were reduced. Of greater import for Ryan was what happened the following year. In 1899 he joined the London Gaelic League. As we have seen, this event decisively altered his outlook, leading him to reassess his whole notion of Irish life and culture. But, whilst he gained a new sense of Gaelicism, in other ways the League deepened previous ideas of Irishness, for, through its evocation of ancient Irish 'civilisation', it possessed those very qualities of imagination, vitality, and spirituality which Ryan and others had seen as unmistakably 'Irish' in the 1880s and 1890s. "Magic and spiritual momentum were in it", he said of the Irish language. "Where the Gaelic League idea penetrates and grows there is life, energy, the gracious stir of humanity."[53] Later, he described how the League involved "a fascinating...realisation of the romance of life."[54] Ryan's sense of a 'homecoming' must indeed have been strong upon joining the League.

And yet what these continuities help illustrate is that the Gaelic League was not just a homecoming but an escape too, an escape from Fleet Street and 'literary London', where such 'Irish' qualities were conspicuously absent. His literary editorship of the *Sunday Special* gave Ryan a measure of relief, but the Gaelic League constituted his real refuge from the vulgar excesses of Fleet Street, recently brought to a pitch by the downward spiral of *The Sun*. It provided a romantic and spiritual antidote to the materialism and decadence of English life, which had so disenchanted him by 1898 and which seemed to take an even firmer grip following the outbreak of the Boer War in late 1899.[55] Ryan's move into the League was therefore, on one level, a reaction against his experiences in

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[51] Ibid, 17 June 1899. For the start of "The Tragedy of Parnell", see *M.A.P.*, 3 Dec. 1898. O'Connor's shift from politics to sentimentality and commercialism was emphasised by his 1896 book *Some Old Love Stories*, a collection of articles from *M.A.P.* relating the love affairs of several famous historical figures.
[52] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.50-61. Echoing how the *Daily Termagent* was handed over to its readers, the new proprietors invited certain public 'characters' (e.g. the music hall personality Dan Leno) to edit *The Sun* for a day (Gribble, *Seen in Passing*, pp.172-3).
[53] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.77; *Inis Fail*, Oct. 1904 (see too Nov. 1905).
[54] Ryan, "The Meaning of the Irish Language Movement", in Williams (ed.), *Home Rule Problems*, p.23.

Fleet Street and 'literary London' in the late 1890s, a rejection of a world that had been exposed as a vast illusion, being commercial, not literary. It was about negative reasons as well as positive ones. It meant that after the recent waning of his revival work - especially his Irish writing - due to his *Sun* duties, he was once more engaged in cultural nationalist activities. The right orientation had reasserted itself and Ireland was again his prime focus. Ryan's distancing of 'literary London' in favour of Irish-Ireland was demonstrated in literary terms when he published his Irish language dramas, *Plays for the People*, in 1904. After his closer contact with the British reading public, he was again targeting his correct audience, the Irish one, albeit on a reduced scale. He was once more contributing to Irish national literature, though in a different form. "Just now I find the main (literary) interest of life in writing...stories in Irish", Ryan told Shorter in 1902.[56]

The way that the League freed Ryan from the 'illusion' of Fleet Street and took him into Irish idealism and spirituality is conveyed in *Daisy Darley*. Clandillon's inability to finish "The Goldbeaters of Glenboyne" while on the *Gleam* and *Sunday Gleam* echoes the reduction in Ryan's revival activities in the late 1890s, so that when, after leaving these papers, Clandillon finally takes up his Irish epic, it corresponds with Ryan's move into the League. Like Ryan, he has returned to Ireland internally and is contributing to its cultural revival. The novel, which concerns the imagined harmony of a co-operative agricultural initiative in the Boyne valley, is of Clandillon's "own place and...people." It is very much a spiritual tale, with the characters "believing in their own essential divinity." It is "idyllic and human, yet transcendental," and has "nothing of the world, the flesh and the Devil." The novel's very title indicates the triumph over materialism that is taking place.[57] Thus, as the League did for Ryan, it has provided an escape from the commercialism and triviality of Fleet Street. Clandillon realises that the latter is the utter negation of his literary and spiritual goals and as such stands revealed as a sham: "[His] real interests and those of Fleet Street were as the poles apart. He felt a shallow heart...in it...it led to nothing but ephemeral sensations...it had no noble enthusiasms, no worthy sense of Life. It was of illusion all compact." Moreover, when the book is published these feelings, and the book's Irishness, are confirmed in vivid fashion by the fact that it is entirely ignored by the London press. Clandillon decides that "the romantic and literary

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[55] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.66-75. As Waters shows (pp.75-86), this divide between Irish spirituality and English decadence provided Ryan with the basis for a full 'counter-Imperial' ideology in which only 'nations' were real and profound, Empires being artificial and superficial.
[56] Clement Shorter Papers: Ryan to Shorter, 26 Mar. 1902.

London" he had been following was "a mirage". Instead, reflecting Ryan's own literary re-engagement with the Irish audience, Clandillon sees that he should have written for his own countrymen: "I should have sown in my natal and ancestral soil."[58]

But if Ryan's adhesion to the Gaelic League was a refuge from a culturally bankrupt Fleet Street, then it was obviously also a refuge from the threat of Anglicisation that Fleet Street carried. And, crucially, Ryan had before him a perfect example of how this Anglicising process could operate in the shape of O'Connor. With his move into gossip weeklies, Ryan no doubt concluded that T.P., heading in this direction on *The Sun*, had now wholly succumbed to Fleet Street decadence and commercialism. His cultural 'corruption' was complete, for he was producing the very kind of trivial, tasteless, journalism that revivalists wanted to keep out of Ireland. His divorce from Irishness, from its innate spirituality and imagination, was stark. Ryan's sense of O'Connor's final surrender to English materialism is well illustrated by Cunningham. After selling his two papers, he similarly starts a gossip weekly. He will unashamedly give London's "burning maw" the trivia it craves and a little later Clandillon hears that he "is making a fortune" doing so.[59] Cunningham's loss of Irishness is then further underlined by how he fails to notice the appearance of Clandillon's novel. For Clandillon, and so Ryan, the lesson taught by Cunningham/O'Connor was a compelling one. If the Irish literary emigrant was not careful, even the 'nationalist' one, residency in London could lead to Anglicisation, to 'corruption' by the worst elements of English cultural life. Whilst T.P. demonstrated that an Irishman could succeed in Fleet Street, he showed that such success came at the cost of national identity and the higher self. With his slide into gossip weeklies, O'Connor's position as a powerful cultural 'warning' for Ryan and other Revival literary emigrants was sealed. In joining the Gaelic League Ryan would have had T.P.'s example in mind. Given the diminution in his revival work, he may even have felt by 1899 that his own Irishness had been weakened in Fleet Street. By enlisting in the League's cultural mission Ryan could preserve that Irishness and so avoid O'Connor's fate. In 1905 a contributor to *Inis Fail* claimed: "most Irishmen in London set no store...by a 'London reputation'...real Irishmen cannot fall in with British ways and ideals, and fit into the British environment."

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[57] Ryan, *Daisy Darley*, pp.274-9. As the idea of man's 'essential divinity' shows, the Irish 'spirituality' here is that of Ryan's later 'Celtic' Catholicism (see note 42 above).
[58] Ibid, pp.274-9, 290.
[59] Ibid, pp.259, 280. Ryan would satirise the sort of obsession with trivial detail and material objects found in O'Connor's new paper in a parody of a *M.A.P.* interview of Yeats. The interview was published on 20 Oct. 1900 and Ryan's parody appeared in Moran's *Leader* on 3 Nov. 1900. See too *CL*, ii, 726.

Ryan was among these 'real' Irishmen, but close contact with an 'unreal' Irishman, with one who had embraced 'British ways', had played a considerable part in the process.[60]

By 1900, then, the cultural differences between Ryan and O'Connor were marked, just as they were between Ryan and the O'Brienite ILS. The gulf between the two generations of literary emigrants was strikingly apparent. It became even more so within a few years as Ryan and others returned to Ireland. After leaving the *Sunday Special* in 1900, the need for employment kept Ryan in Fleet Street, bringing stints on the *Morning Leader*, the *Daily Chronicle* and, a labour paper, *The Weekly Tribune*, between 1900 and 1905. The latter simply confirmed all his existing misgivings, being an idealistic enterprise which eschewed racing tips in favour of educational and literary material, and consequently lasted for just five issues (its *Daisy Darley* parallel is the *Champion*, which, started for "intellectual democracy", is an instant flop)[61]. Then, in, late 1905, Ryan was given the chance to return to Ireland when James McCann, a Dublin stockbroker and Irish MP, invited him to become editor of *The Irish Peasant*, an Irish-Ireland weekly attached to a co-operative initiative in County Meath, both of which McCann financed.[62] Ryan jumped at the chance. From the London Gaelic League, with its gaze fixed on Ireland, it was but a short, natural step. Fergus O'Hagan, the autobiographical hero of his 1910 novel *The Plough and the Cross*, fondly recalls the "London...nights, when already they were spiritually at home in the New Ireland." The same Irish 'magic' and spirituality that had attracted Ryan to the League now inspired him to aid the Gaelic revival at home. He would help create the new Irish 'civilisation' there. "Ireland had drawn him back as a shrine draws a devotee", says Ryan of O'Hagan.[63] In fact *Starlight Through the Roof* shows that the idea of a romantic return to Ireland to lead a cultural revival had first exercised Ryan in the mid-1890s. The motive force of the cultural, agricultural and industrial movement gripping Rosskeely (Horace Plunkett's example is traceable here) is Gerald O'Hara, a returned emigrant from America. "How [Ireland] with her dreams and

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[60] *Inis Fail*, June 1905.

[61] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.129-32; Clement Shorter Papers: Ryan to Shorter, 26 Mar. 1902; Ryan, *Daisy Darley*, p.286.

[62] Ryan, *The Pope's Green Island*, pp.6-7; Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.104-5, 160; Inglis, "Moran of the *Leader* and Ryan of the *Irish Peasant*", in O'Brien (ed.), *The Shaping of Modern Ireland*, pp.115-16. McCann status as an Irish MP reminds us that, despite the general divide between generations in Ireland, the Irish Party was not totally divorced from the revival nor necessarily hostile to it. See Maume, *The Long Gestation*, and J.J. Horgan, *From Parnell to Pearse* (Dublin, 1948) for more on this.

traditions...and possibilities had drawn his heart...to her service," muses O'Hara. The literary vision sketched in 1894 had, by 1905, become an invigorating reality for Ryan.[64]

Yet the 'positive' attraction of the Gaelic League was not the only factor re-applied on a larger scale. The 'negative' reasons involved in joining the League were also present. The League had represented an internal rejection of Fleet Street commercialism, the 'vulgar' British audience and the 'mirage' of 'literary London'. His move back to Ireland repeated this rejection, but in emphatic, external, terms. At a banquet in his honour in late 1905, P.D. Kenny, the departing editor of *The Irish Peasant* and himself recently in London, expressed this sense of English materialism being shunned in favour of revivalist aspirations. Ryan, he said, had, "like me, left the greater financial allurements of London to come and work for Ireland." The true significance of Ryan's external dismissal of 'literary London' comes through in *Daisy Darley*. Just as the Gaelic League was the seedbed for Ryan's return home, so "The Goldbeaters of Glenboyne" leads Clandillon back to Ireland, capturing the attention of a McCann-like figure called Gerald Mangan, who similarly persuades Clandillon to edit the weekly paper of a co-operative project in Ireland. This opportunity, avers Daisy Darley, Clandillon's fiancé, is a "glorious end after ...your hunting after fairy gold in Fleet Street."[65] The contrast is pointed. For O'Connor and McCarthy, Fleet Street had been part of that 'literary London' which had been a 'fairyground' to them, and which had drawn them with a 'romantic longing'. Now, for Ryan, that image had been turned around. 'Literary London' was a 'fairy gold' illusion, a place where literary ideals were seemingly welcome, but where in fact commerce ruled. Nor is *Daisy Darley* just a dismissal of the Home Rule generation's example. With its historical associations - 'Arthur Clandillon' echoes Thackeray's Arthur Pendennis, and 'Daisy Darley' evokes the 1820s Irish poet George Darley, whose career interested Ryan in the 1890s - it is also a dismissal of the whole preceding century of Irish literary emigration to, and integration with, 'literary London' that this generation symbolised.[66] By returning to Ireland as a new century opened Revival literary emigrants like Ryan made a determined effort to break the London magnetism (and its threat of Anglicisation)

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[63] Liam P. O'Riain (W.P. Ryan), *The Plough and the Cross* (Dublin, 1910), pp.341, 355; Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", pp.160-2. This novel is basically a fictional account of his time as editor of *The Irish Peasant*. See Waters and the Inglis essay (note 62 above) for more on this subject.

[64] Ryan, *Starlight Through the Roof*, pp.79-82, 191-2. Plunkett had himself spent time in America before returning to Ireland to spearhead the co-operative movement of the 1890s, founding the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society in 1894. In *Starlight*, though, he is Lord Killardin (pp.230-2) rather than O'Hara.

[65] Waters, "W.P. Ryan and the Irish-Ireland Movement", p.160; Ryan, *Daisy Darley*, p.306.

[66] Ryan's wrote appreciatively of Darley's life and career in *The Irish Catholic* (9 July 1892) and the *New Ireland Review, Vols.1-2* (Dec. 1894), p.670.

which, driven by the Union, had dominated the old. The divide between them and the 'Home Rule' writers could not be clearer.

In going back Ryan and others were obviously not simply dethroning London as the Irish cultural and capital but setting up Ireland, and specifically Dublin, in its place. This aim was necessarily an integral part of the revival as a whole, so that the mobilisation against London magnetism came from inside Ireland as well as outside. The foundation of the NLS in 1892, for example, was one of the earliest thrusts in this direction. *United Ireland* greeted its appearance in mid-1892 with the bold claim that Ireland's "intellectual capital" was "here in Dublin." This was in answer to a long running debate in the paper on the location of Ireland's 'intellectual capital', itself fuelled by the creation of the ILS, which, although not the intention of its sponsors, had provoked the worry that Ireland had conceded that its cultural capital was London.[67] Yeats swiftly rebutted this charge (the "centre of Irish literary life can only be had in Ireland"), and Ryan later reiterated in *The Irish Literary Revival* that Ireland was perforce the centre of Irish cultural life, and even hoped that, through the revival, the "misplaced children of song and story" would come home.[68] Despite such brave declarations, the reality was somewhat different (not least that Ryan himself remained in London), so that in 1899 D.P. Moran could again lament how London was "the capital of Ireland." From that year onwards, though, the feeling that Ireland was at last becoming the centre of Irish cultural endeavour asserted itself as the revival gathered momentum. The Irish Literary Theatre began staging plays in Dublin - through it Yeats and Lady Gregory hoped to make Dublin the "Mecca of the Celt" - and the Gaelic League expanded markedly.[69] And when these developments started to bring the Revival emigrants and other London-Irish writers home, the sense of Ireland, and Dublin, as the Irish intellectual capital, as the 'Mecca of the Celt', really took hold. Already J.T. Kelly (of the Southwark Club), D.J. O'Donoghue and T.P. Gill (who "hated London") had returned, but in the early 1900s they were followed by more substantial,

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[67] *United Ireland*, 4 June 1892. The Irish 'intellectual capital' debate ran throughout April, May and June 1892. It was engineered in part by Yeats and McGrath in order to lay the ground for the NLS, but Irish concern over the implications of the ILS had been heightened by an article in the London *Daily Telegraph* (7 Mar. 1892), which found it "eminently fitting" that such a society should be in London, not Dublin, given that English was the language of Ireland (*CL*, i. 297n).

[68] *CL*, i, 296-9, 306-7; Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, pp.38, 178-9.

[69] D.P. Moran, *The Philosophy of Irish Ireland* (Dublin, 1905), p.15; *Lady Gregory's Diaries*, ed. Pethica, pp.152-3. George Moore later related how Yeats and Edward Martyn unfolded their theatre plans to him in London in 1899, Martyn calling Dublin the coming "capital of the Celtic Renaissance (*Hail and Farewell*, ed. Richard Cave (Gerrards Cross, 1976), pp.76-7). To Irish-Irelanders, Yeats's theatre of course sought to make Dublin the capital of 'Anglo-Irish Ireland', but *Inis Fail* did admit (Jan. 1906) that it was still helping to turn Dublin from a "provincial town of England" into "the awakening capital of an awakening Ireland."

influential, figures.[70] Besides Ryan and Moran, this included the novelist George Moore, the writer and publisher Stephen Gwynn, and even, in a sense, Yeats, for prior to the Irish Literary Theatre project he had avoided Dublin for three years.[71] In addition, many less well-known writers and Gaelic League enthusiasts returned to Ireland, as historians have explored, and as the example of P.D. Kenny shows.[72] It seemed that Ireland had replaced London as the romantic 'literary' image to which Irish minds turned. Certainly, Ryan's son, the historian and 1916 revolutionary Desmond Ryan, saw it this way when crossing to Ireland for the first time in 1906 to join his father in Meath. His imagination fired by Irish myth and legend rather than Thackeray and Dickens, Dublin and Ireland possessed the kind of magical attraction for him that London had had for McCarthy in the 1840s:

> Across the seas in the spring of 1906...nearly thirteen years old, past the Queen of Cities, Dublin, to the lonely emerald spaces of County Meath, within six miles of Tara of the Kings, then it was I first caught a glimpse of Liffeyside in passing. She was an El Dorado beckoning with the fabled Boyne in a fairy mist beyond her...a far-off capital of dreams and heroes, a rare city my fancy had often mirrored as I watched the stars over a hawthorn-fringed hill sweeping down to Dulwich.[73]

If Ryan wanted evidence that his and others' hopes had been realised and that the Irish cultural capital, the Irish 'fairyground', truly was in Ireland, not London, he only had to look to his son. For Desmond Ryan, the 'road of imagination' undoubtedly led to Ireland.

Although the return of Revival emigrants like Ryan may have benefited the Irish-Ireland movement at home, it naturally weakened the Gaelic movement in London.[74] But it was not just Gaelicist zeal that they took back with them. The hostility to English triviality and decadence that Ryan had acquired through his time in Fleet Street was carried home too, so that emigrant writers like him, who had had this close contact with what he called "the race of Harmsworth and Rhodes", would play their part in the continuing campaign to preserve 'spiritual' Ireland from English materialism and immorality, from its 'filthy' press.[75] Indeed, with their arrival in Ireland this campaign in many ways intensified, for, as will be seen, Moran especially was loud and vigorous in his denunciation of 'gutter

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[70] Bodleian Library, Henry Woodd Nevinson Papers, MSS.Eng.misc.e.610/6: Diaries, 6 Apr. 1899. Gill was back in Dublin by 1899, and editing the *Daily Express*. For Kelly and O'Donoghue, see pp.217, 242 above.
[71] Foster, *W.B. Yeats, A Life, Vol.1*, p.135. Moran actually returned in 1899, Gwynn came back in 1904, and Moore returned with great fanfare in 1901. In *The Plough and the Cross*, Moore is Geoffrey Mortimer, the novelist who had 'cut' himself "away from Britain with many solemn rites and interviews a couple of years ago, and returned with eclat to help Ireland save her soul" (pp.19-20).
[72] See p.23 above. See too Ryan, *The Pope's Green Island*, p.73, and *Inis Fail*, Jan. 1906.
[73] Desmond Ryan, *Remembering Sion* (London, 1934), pp.9-11.
[74] Hutchinson and O'Day, "The Gaelic Revival in London, 1900-22: Limits of Ethnic Identity", in Swift and Gilley (eds.), *The Irish in Victorian Britain, The Local Dimension*, pp.254-76.
[75] *The Leader*, 3 Nov. 1900 ("Mr Yeats's Jug").

literature.' What Ryan also returned with of course was his distaste for O'Connor and the Home Rule generation of literary emigrants. If the unsavoury spectacle of a 'corrupt' T.P. had contributed to Ryan's entrance into the Gaelic League, then Ryan's embrace of the League's Irish-Ireland ethos, with its even stricter interpretation of Irishness, inevitably deepened his contempt for his Anglicised old editor who thought nationality was politics. The friendly relations between Clandillon and Cunningham in *Daisy Darley* suggest that, despite his grave cultural reservations over T.P.'s embrace of English commercialism, Ryan liked O'Connor on a personal level while on *The Sun*.[76] By 1910 his view of T.P. had become harsher, more biting. This change had something to do with T.P.'s activities since 1900 as well as Ryan's Gaelicist beliefs and subsequent work for the League.

The non-political direction signalled by *M.A.P.* was continued on the newspapers O'Connor created in the early 1900s. *T.P.'s Weekly*, founded in 1902, echoed the literary priorities of *The Sun* and the *Weekly Sun*, evincing an "almost complete dependence on literary matters". It too was a considerable success, strengthening the image of T.P. as someone bloated with material wealth, though due to carelessness and generosity he usually had less money than his Irish critics liked to think. Then, in 1906, O'Connor, after parting company with *M.A.P.*, launched a rival gossip weekly called *P.T.O.* (Please Turn Over), but by 1908 he had merged *P.T.O.* with *M.A.P.* and resumed the editorship of the latter. In addition, he had become parliamentary correspondent of the *Daily Mail* in 1899.[77] Whilst this post said everything about O'Connor's eclipse as a Fleet Street power following the rise of Harmsworth (it was a far cry from *The Star*), it also strengthened the Irish-Ireland belief in his cultural 'corruption'. To them, the fact that T.P. was now working for Harmsworth doubtless symbolised how he had resorted to English superficiality and commercialism in his own papers (though the irony of course was that Harmsworth was Irish). It also raised the question of what a supposedly nationalist MP was doing joining a vigorously Imperialist paper like the *Daily Mail*, especially at the height of the Boer War, when even mainstream nationalists were vociferously pro-Boer. Although T.P. shared their pro-Boer sympathies, his decline as a journalistic political force, both in nationalist and Radical terms, was seemingly confirmed.[78]

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[76] The *Daisy Darley* picture of friendly relations between O'Connor and his staff was something Francis Gribble attested to as well (Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.174).

[77] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.131, 155-6, 187-94; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.191-93, 239-40, 265, 300-1; Horgan, *From Parnell to Pearse*, pp.152-3; *The Leader*, 1 Sept. 1900. O'Connor described *T.P.'s Weekly* as "a penny journal that has done much to make good literature popular."

[78] Maume, *The Long Gestation*, p.28; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.208-11. By now T.P. was known in Britain far more as a popular journalist than as a politician. See, for example, the *Liverpool Review*, 25 Mar. 1899.

However, with the end of Unionist rule in 1905-6, his political zeal returned. His Liberal ties had remained close (he was good friends with the Liberal leader, Campbell-Bannerman) and for him the 1906 election restored the 'natural order', with the Irish Party once again supporting the Liberals.[79] The unexpectedly large Liberal majority lessened Irish influence over the new ministry, but, from a Radical standpoint, O'Connor was enthused. Moreover, the election also brought a sizeable Labour contingent to Westminster and T.P., a long-standing advocate of labour representation, welcomed this development even though the Labour MPs were independent of the Liberals. He saw the Irish cause as part of a reform alliance with the 'new' Radicalism and Labour. The old dream of a 'union of the two democracies' was thus rekindled, along with his Radicalism, and, after the Liberal triumph, the outlook for his alliance was bright.[80] To revivalists and Irish-Irelanders, though, as well as 'advanced' nationalists like Griffith, a 'union of the two democracies' went against all they stood for. It sunk Irish national identity in a wider democratic one, and threatened to submerge the Irish people in the vulgar popular culture of the 'degenerate' English masses when the revivalists were trying to save them from it.[81] And T.P.'s own association with this English decadence and immorality had grown stronger in his critics' eyes, especially Catholic ones, for other factors now supplemented the original crime of gossip weeklies. His Catholicism, for example, first open to question in the early 1880s, had grown increasingly lax.[82] In 1909 he began writing for the Radical *Reynolds News*, which, although a supporter of Home Rule, was considered 'irreligious' and carried advertisements for birth control. By then T.P. had separated from his wife and had acquired a Greek mistress. His cultivation of the company of various actresses was also well known, reflecting his love of the London theatre. As well as weakening his nationalist reputation through their 'English' immorality, these factors attracted ridicule about his role as a Catholic politician, defending Catholic educational interests from

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[79] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.166-81; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.216-21. T.P. wrote a biography of Campbell Bannermann (1908) after his death. In 1905 he helped broker the understanding between him and Redmond by which the Irish would support the Liberals at the election in return for a gradual approach to Home Rule. O'Connor then took a leading part in the negotiations over the ill-fated Irish Council Bill of 1907.

[80] Later, though, when the Liberal failure to make Home Rule a priority at the coming election was alienating Irishmen in Britain, O'Connor reminded the Liberal Chief Whip, the Master of Elibank, that his party's stance could provoke "a collision between the two great democratic forces, whose union may accomplish so much good, and whose disruption may lead to so much evil (NLS, Master of Elibank Papers, MS 8001, fol.213-14: O'Connor to Elibank, 14 Apr. 1909).

[81] Griffith also disliked the 'union of the two democracies' policy on political grounds, having no faith in the British people. For his views on the British democracy, see Maume, *The Long Gestation*, pp.50-51.

[82] Maume, *The Long Gestation*, p.10. John J. Horgan described O'Connor as "careless about his religion". Meeting T.P. in 1907 at the house of a mutual friend, Dr Thomas Neville, Horgan observed that "it was

Liberal encroachment.[83] To revivalist and nationalist critics, O'Connor, with his cultural 'collaboration' and Radical politics, was eloquent testimony to the 'British' nature of the Irish Party and the Home Rule generation that it represented.[84]

No one believed this more in Ireland in 1910 than Ryan, for who T.P. also embodied the compromises of his literary emigrant forerunners. In *The Plough and the Cross* he drew a devastating picture of the 'corrupt', Anglicised, O'Connor which showed clearly how, through the post-1900 developments above and his own Gaelicism, Ryan's view of O'Connor had hardened since the late 1890s, the portrait being far more savage than in *Daisy Darley*. It demonstrated in powerful terms O'Connor's emblematic status and his function as a cultural 'warning' for Ryan. T.P. appears as Terence O'Connellan, a London-Irish editor whose days as a political journalist are gone. In Ireland for his mother's funeral, he visits O'Hagan, the Ryan figure, in Dublin. O'Hagan, the editor of an Irish-Ireland paper, used to work for O'Connellan in London "when Terence was still regarded as a great journalistic leader of democracy." Now O'Connellan produces a gossip weekly entitled *T.T.T.* ("Terence's Own Trumpet", or, as the 'irreverent call it, "Terence's Terse Tattle"). The divide between the 'Irish' spirituality of O'Hagan and the 'English' materialism of O'Connellan is set up immediately when the latter's appearance brings O'Hagan back to the "material world" after a bout of philosophical reflection. How O'Connellan is then depicted reflects the strengthening of O'Connor's materialistic image since 1900. He is said to "metaphorically" kiss "hands to Eire from his mansion or his luxurious editorial rooms in London," and has trouble squeezing through the door, for he is "more portly and material-looking than ever."[85]

To the sin of English cupidity is added that of English decadence, with the "spoilt" O'Connellan saying to O'Hagan: "[we] "Parliamentarians that ye want to supersede are full of the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and so understand life and men." Later, Ryan

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only with great difficulty that Mrs Neville...succeeded in persuading [O'Connor] to attend Mass on Easter Sunday" (*From Parnell to Pearse*, pp.152-3).

[83] Maume, *The Long Gestation*, pp.10, 46; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.199-202; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.158. Writing to an American friend, William Bourke Cockran, in 1904, O'Connor, commended the friendship of one Miss Evie Greene, the Prima Donna of the Duchess of Dantzic Company. "I will not speak of her great dramatic genius and of her beautiful voice", he says, "for these things will speak for themselves, but of her sweetness as a woman" (New York Public Library, William Bourke Cockran Papers, Box 5, Irish Correspondence: O'Connor to Cockran, 30 Dec. 1904).

[84] Griffith's *United Irishman*, for instance, consistently singled out O'Connor in its attacks on the Irish Party (see 12, 26 Jan. 1901, Mar 22. 1902). It was not only Irish critics who portrayed T.P. as materialistic. The Liverpool press were similarly sarcastic about their local MP (see the *Liverpool Review*, 12 Oct. 1901).

[85] Ryan, *The Plough and the Cross*, pp.212, 250, 28-32. 'O'Connellan' was also probably a swipe at Daniel O'Connell, whose stock was low with Gaelic revivalists and radical nationalists of the early 1900s. They saw him in 'collaborationist' terms, his readiness to dispense with the Irish language being a major fault.

evokes O'Connor the theatre lover and friend to actresses, with O'Connellan relating how he found solace from the "futility and inconsequence of the...human story" in the London theatres. "There may be a lovely lady beside you shedding the ineffable charm of femininity through your atmosphere...or you may know that later a beautiful actress will hang round your neck and kiss you rapturously."[86] All this contrasts with O'Hagan's "simple Christianity", which hints at Ryan's idea of a 'Celtic' Catholicism shorn of its Roman layers. The gulf between O'Connellan 'corrupt' English ways and O'Hagan's higher 'Irish' values is driven home when the former tries to lure O'Hagan back to London by offering him more money: "Come back to London on my staff...and I'll increase your...salary by one-half." Having failed before to make O'Hagan "human and ambitious", O'Connellan says: "you are young yet, and so there is time to corrupt you." However, O'Hagan, the committed cultural nationalist will not desert his country for money: "That would be three times as much as I can ever expect in Ireland...But to take more money than one wants, or deserves, is immoral. The true payment is joy, and [helping] others. And...Ireland wants me, or rather I want Ireland."[87]

The obvious implication is that O'Connellan does not want Ireland. For him, Ireland was not a worthy alternative to money but a way to make it. "My heart was bleeding into 'copy' for Ireland when you were in your cradle", he says later in the novel, touching on how T.P. and the other 'Home Rule' literary emigrants wrote for the British audience, even on Irish matters.[88] O'Connellan's Anglicisation is further underlined by how he inevitably fails to appreciate the Gaelic revival - "ye'll achieve nothing more than a National Council...of all the will-o-the wisps" - and cannot even perceive its existence, returning from his journey west for his mother's funeral to tell O'Hagan that he did not see the "new Ireland" of "life and hope" so much as a "horrible winter of life." If Ryan is to be believed, O'Connor saw Ireland in 1910 just as he did in his mid-nineteenth century youth, O'Connellan's talk of "blighted villages" echoing T.P.'s description of 'hopeless' country towns in *The Parnell Movement*. The remedy remained the same too: emigration. "The Irishman", O'Connellan says, "does nothing...until he gets away from his...bogs and mists."[89] He therefore scoffs at O'Hagan's suggestion that he too might return and work for Irish Ireland. To him, the reason for Ireland's blighted state and the pointlessness of

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[86] Ibid, pp.32, 213. Whether Ryan and T.P. did meet like this in Ireland in these years is unclear, but given how closely Ryan's novels reflect details of his life it is a possibility.
[87] Ibid, pp.33-35.
[88] Ibid, pp.250.
[89] Ibid, 31-2, 210-13.

Irish-Ireland attempts to remedy it was simple: the dead hand of clerical authority, which swiftly crushed anything in Ireland "that would like to be up and doing." Even so, as an Irish MP, O'Connellan does the Catholic bishops' bidding and poses as a "champion of the faith." The apparent unseemliness of the latter-day O'Connor, with his suspect Catholicism and 'irreligious' Radical links, acting as a Catholic politician is clearly Ryan's target (it is an "undignified position", says O'Hagan, to uphold a cause you do not believe in).[90] Another one is T.P.'s readiness to merge his and Ireland's national identity in a 'union of the two democracies', with O'Connellan saying: "All this talk about nationality is dry and vain. What essential difference is there between an Irishman, and an American, or an Englishman?" It echoes the Radical O'Connor who, in the first issue of *The Star*, saw "all men as more united in their common needs than divided by their place of birth."[91]

Throughout O'Connellan's appearances in *The Plough and the Cross*, Ryan keeps his, and so T.P.'s, emblematic nature to the fore, reminding his readers of the wider processes of Anglicisation that he represents, namely the Irish Party and the Home Rule generation in Ireland and Britain. For instance, at their first meeting O'Hagan says that O'Connellan and the Irish Party are an Anglicising agency because they necessarily recognise London as the Irish 'capital': "You are a leading member of a party whose whole trend is to keep the Irish political, social....and intellectual centre of gravity in London, instead of... Ireland, where...it ought to be." The chapter detailing O'Connellan's return from the west is then entitled "The Two Standards" so as to stress the representative function of both O'Connellan and O'Hagan. But it is at the close of their first meeting that O'Connellan's wider associations are most forcefully spelt out. Equally clear is O'Connor's role as a hideous cultural 'warning', an example to Irish Ireland of the 'corrupted' fate awaiting the Anglicised Irishman. With O'Connellan gone, O'Hagan muses: "Terence O'Connellan seemed to typify that uninformed and disillusioned Ireland, grown materialised...He was self-questioning Racial Deterioration striving to acclimatise itself in another civilisation ...If "Irish-Ireland could afford to buy him, it might exhibit him as a Horrible Example". In highlighting O'Connellan's representative status, Ryan no doubt had the Home Rule literary emigrants in mind as well as their generation as a whole. After all, it was from his personal contact with O'Connor that Ryan's idea of T.P. as a 'Horrible Example' gained its force. For the latter it was a long way from the 1880s, when nationality was politics.

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[90] Ibid, pp.30-5, 210-17, 248-50.

Then, *United Ireland* paid him this tribute: "A patriot of pure and devoted character...of transcendant abilities, there is no greater ornament to his party and no better Irishman living than T.P. O'Connor."[92] To Ryan and Irish-Ireland, T.P. no longer possessed any of these qualities. Neither 'pure' nor Irish, he was no longer an ornament to his party but instead pointed up its Anglicised state along with that of the 'older' Ireland it embodied.

In tracking D.P. Moran's activities in London in the 1880s and 1890s the broad similarities with Ryan are immediately evident, but underneath differences predictably arise. Like Ryan, Moran's first contact with the cultural revival was courtesy of the Southwark Irish Literary Club. Crossing to London in 1887, he soon found his way to the Club, as his name features regularly at its meetings from early 1887 onward. He delivered lectures and contributed to the 'Original Nights', and, as seen earlier, had joined Ryan as one of the Club's leading members by 1888.[93] It probably provided the newly arrived Moran with the same kind of comfort as it did Ryan, especially as he broadly shared the members' Catholic petit bourgeois backgrounds, though he was more middle class than lower middle class. But, with the waning of the Club in 1890-1, Moran drifted away from Southwark circles. The Parnell split had much to do with this, as, in contrast to Ryan and others, Moran was a committed Parnellite, becoming secretary of a Parnellite branch of the INLGB. This severance from the Southwark group helps explain why he played no part in the subsequent foundation of the ILS. Although he later became a member, he was not particularly prominent and was not involved in Ryan's campaign against 'old fogeyism' According to Maume, the disillusionment of the split caused Moran to drop out of Irish politics and nurture a "sardonic detachment from the Irish" for several years. If the ILS is an accurate index, this 'detachment' included cultural as well as political circles.[94] On the journalistic front Moran's career was something of a reverse of Ryan's. His introduction to Fleet Street and O'Connor was immediate, joining *The Star* in 1888. Few details of this time exist (sadly Moran did not fictionalise it), though, unsurprisingly, he helped with the paper's coverage of Irish politics, especially the renewed land

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[91] Ibid, p.31; *The Star*, 17 Jan. 1888.
[92] Ryan, *The Plough and the Cross*, pp.31, 47; *United Ireland*, 10 Sept. 1887.
[93] *United Ireland*, 26 Feb., 2 Apr. 1887, 11 Feb. 10 Mar., 19 May, 20 Oct. 1888; Ryan, *The Irish Literary Revival*, p.29.
[94] *The Irish Peasant*, 26 May 1906 (Moran is sketched by Ryan in his 'Irish Pioneers' series); Maume, *D.P. Moran*, p.7; *Irish Literary Society, Rules & List of Members and Associates, 1893-4* (Private), p.14. This list shows that Moran was not an original member of the ILS and in Ryan's *The Irish Literary Revival* he drops from sight after the decline of the Southwark Club.

agitation, the 'Plan of Campaign.' Exactly when Moran left *The Star* is unclear, but rather than staying in Fleet Street proper he went on to edit a land reform paper and a "small London local paper" in the 1890s. Echoing the O'Brien-O'Connor divide, Moran and Ryan were not close friends in London despite the extent to which their paths crossed.[95]

Whilst Moran's London activities can be traced, it is harder to gain a sense of his outlook in these years, for contemporary expressions of opinion, either through personal correspondence or journalism, are lacking and hard to locate. Much has to be inferred or teased out from his later writings. Moran's own reflections on the period are coloured by his later Irish-Ireland views. One point where the generational divide asserts itself is how he came to dismiss the notion, adhered to by the Home Rule literary emigrants, of writing for the British audience, of explaining Ireland or arguing her case before them. Moran decided that this concern with what the British thought was simply cultural 'cringe'. It is perhaps why he drifted away from Fleet Street after leaving *The Star.*[96] The difficulties in tracing his opinions mean that it is not easy to sketch the full process by which he arrived at the most significant event of his London years and one that brought him back into Irish revival circles: joining the London Gaelic League in 1896. The immediate reason was an invitation from the London branch's founder, Fionán MacColuim, to attend its language classes. Moran responded enthusiastically. Although he later derided his 1880s political-cultural nationalism as part of his 'West British' phase, the Southwark Club had helped give Moran a sense of his distinctive Irish identity as it was then understood. It must have contributed to the sense of difference he retained throughout his early years in London, his feeling of "thou shalt be Irish, thou shalt not be English." Thus, the League had an instant appeal, for the Irish language provided the root explanation for this feeling (what Maume calls "the lost key") and the inspiration to preserve and develop it. Moran did not see the language in the 'magical', spiritual, terms that Ryan did (Ryan's nature was always more idealistic and romantic), but its attraction as a realisation of Irishness was just as strong. However, given his similar links with the Southwark Club he did perhaps share Ryan's sense of 'homecoming'.[97]

Another area where he arguably echoed Ryan was in the 'negative' factors propelling him into the League. Like Ryan, Moran's time in London led to disenchantment with the

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[95] *The Irish Peasant*, 26 May 1906; Maume, *D.P. Moran*, pp.7-8; *Waterford News*, 7 Feb. 1936 (Moran obituary).
[96] Maume, *D.P. Moran*, p.7.
[97] *The Irish Peasant*, 26 May 1906; Maume, *D.P. Moran*, pp.7-8; 'X' (D.P. Moran), "Confessions of a West Briton," *The Leader*, 8 Sept. 1900; Maume, *The Long Gestation*, p.60.

perceived vulgarity and commercialism of English life. Just before his return to Ireland in 1899 he began writing a series of articles for the *New Ireland Review* (later republished as *The Philosophy of Irish-Ireland*) in which he expressed his disgust. The articles were littered with references to English materialism and greed (the "trimming, bread-and-butter Saxon bourgeois who would [swallow] the devil...sooner than lose a customer), and the decadence of its popular culture (its "tittle-tattle periodicals").[98] Of course, in these statements Moran drew on established revival themes as well as his own experiences. Nevertheless, as it did for Ryan, the League constituted an antidote to, and a refuge from, the unpleasant aspects of London life, though for Moran it was less about escaping the 'illusion' of 'literary London'. He was not so immersed in Fleet Street prior to joining the League as Ryan was, and he is unlikely to have believed in 'literary London' the way that Ryan, the aspiring writer, had. In distancing London life Moran was naturally combating the threat of being absorbed by it. His 'thou shalt not be English' comment suggests that he felt such a threat. Like Ryan, his recent detachment from London-Irish circles may have sharpened it. He certainly recognised the powerful Anglicising forces that Irish emigrants in Britain as a whole necessarily faced, arguing in his *New Ireland Review* articles that they were quickly assimilated.[99] Whilst this reflected the stricter, Gaelic, definition of Irishness gained via the League, it seems to be something Moran felt before 1896 too. And this brings us to whether in these years he saw Home Rule writers such as O'Connor as part of this emigrant Anglicisation. It is possible. He had contact with T.P., and at a time when he was exploring Ireland's separate cultural identity at the Southwark Club, so that a sense of O'Connor's English models of commercialism and triviality may have existed. After all, though politics were T.P.'s priority on *The Star*, the innovative 'new journalism' was still one of its hallmarks. Like Ryan, therefore, Moran may well have regarded O'Connor as a cultural 'warning' and so had his example in mind when joining the League. The frequency with which he subsequently singled T.P. out for criticism does suggest that a personal dimension was present in his attacks on O'Connor. But if T.P. operated as a cultural 'warning' for Moran, it was with less force than for Ryan, who witnessed his slide into gossip weeklies.[100]

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[98] Moran, *The Philosophy of Irish-Ireland*, pp.6, 51 (see too pp.45-8, 95-8, 102); Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, pp.239-42; Maume, *The Long Gestation*, p.60.

[99] Moran, *The Philosophy of Irish-Ireland*, pp.17, 28-9. Moran's belief in the swift assimilation of the Irish in Britain foreshadows recent work on the subject (see pp.20-1 above).

[100] One cultural 'warning' of 'West Britonism' Moran certainly did possess was his brother Joseph, who, to D.P.'s disgust, refused to learn Irish and remained a London journalist and nationalist political activist (Maume, *D.P. Moran*, p.8; *The Leader*, 25 Apr. 1936).

Joining the Gaelic League led Moran into the same drastic re-evaluation of Irish life as Ryan. He realised that Irish nationality was not simply politics, but rested on the deeper foundations of Gaelic culture and language. Ireland will accomplish nothing, he said, "until she falls back upon her...language and traditions." He too saw the former as the vital foundation. "Above all we must re-learn our language", said Moran, for this was the "great connecting link between us and the real Ireland."[101] Instead of waiting for the panacea of Home Rule, the Irish should set to work in creating their own 'civilisation.' Embraced by Moran himself at Southwark, the idea of an Irish literature in English was now considered ridiculous. The 'Celtic note' was a "glaring fraud" and this meant a firm dismissal of Yeats.[102] After an interval, Moran had not only resumed cultural nationalist activities but acquired a deeper, more precise, idea of Irishness. He was another for whom emigration had generated a "heightened sense of national consciousness."[103] In 1899 he took this 'new' Irishness back to Ireland to facilitate the Gaelic revival there, founding the Irish-Ireland journal *The Leader* in 1900. The complacent 'West British' middle classes of Ireland would soon feel the lash of Moran's stinging prose.

Also in his sights were the cultural enemies he had acquired through emigration. As Ryan did, Moran returned with a hostility to 'degenerate' English culture, now intensified by his Gaelic ethos, and contempt for the Anglicised Home Rule writers, especially T.P., his old editor. If whether Moran saw the latter this way before joining the League is open to question, it is not so afterwards. With his new Gaelic standards to judge by, he had no doubt of the cultural compromises of his predecessors.[104] Moreover, to his vigorous Gaelicism Moran added an aggressive Catholicism, a belief that this too was an essential part of Irish identity. Here, he differed from Ryan, who, though still a strong Catholic, was moving away from his previously close equation of national revival and Catholicism, and disliked how Moran placed Protestants "virtually outside the pale" of Irish-Ireland.[105] Similarly, Ryan's ensuing concept of a 'Celtic' Catholicism, free of Roman influences,

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[101] Moran, *The Philosophy of Irish-Ireland*, pp.26, 112.
[102] Ibid, pp.22, 105-6. For Moran's dislike of 'Anglo-Irish' literature, see too his hostile review of the Stopford Brooke-T.W. Rolleston anthology, *A Treasury of Irish Poetry in the English Tongue*, in *The Leader*, 22 Dec. 1900. For more on Moran and Yeats, see Deidre Twoomey, "Moran's Collar": Yeats and Irish Ireland", in Warwick Gould and Edna Longley (eds.), *Yeats Annual No.12, That Accusing Eye: Yeats and His Irish Readers* (Basingstoke, 1996).
[103] Waters, "Peasants and Emigrants: Considerations of the Gaelic League as a social movement", in Casey and Rhodes (eds.), *Views of the Irish Peasantry*, p.174.
[104] In *The Philosophy of Irish Ireland*, for example, Moran said of the Irish Party: "I deny that [they are] real Irishmen; few of them, if any, are products of native Irish influences. Their education, literature, social surroundings, are either English, or, what is worse, imitation English" (p.69).

contrasted with Moran's strong clericalism. In his assault on English decadence, and its Irish promoters like O'Connor, Moran did not juxtapose it with Ryan and others' more mystical 'Irish' spirituality. Cultural nationalism obviously informed his hostility, but it was fused with a narrower, more concrete, sense of Catholic morality. The cheap British press sapped "alike our nationality and our morals," said Moran in 1902.[106]

The cultural targets Moran had gained through emigration were both evident in the very first issue of *The Leader* in September 1900. In a piece on "Gutter Literature" he added his forceful voice to the existing revival campaign against English vulgarity, pointing out the coarseness of the cheap English press and stressing the threat posed by its growing proliferation in Ireland:

> We are not prepared by any means to say that the English public is filthy, but we know that to a large portion of it nothing is humorous that is not indecent, and little interesting that is not gross...It is easy to make too much of the influence of these publications, and we do not wish to work a sensation out of them. But it would be fatal to overlook them, for it is not in the nature of corruption of this kind to stand still.[107]

To Moran, this was an area where his demand for Irishmen to start taking responsibility for their actions instead of looking to Westminster could easily be applied. By shunning these immoral English publications individual Irishmen could make a difference. This article set the *Leader's* tone on this issue. Henceforth, Moran and his assistants would consistently denounce English vulgarity and materialism in general and "gutter literature" and music-halls in particular. Londoners, said *The Leade*r in October, are "oblivious to all else but greed and vulgarity." In London "the grinding wheel of commerce is crushing the finest things in life and driving out religion, morality and art." Just as it had done for Moran in London, the Gaelic revival would not only preserve Ireland's identity but protect it against English immorality and materialism. Gaelic League dances and festivals provided an alternative to the music-hall, and restoring the Irish language would render 'gutter literature' impotent. Moran's hostility to English decadence was unremitting. In 1911 he backed a new "crusade Against Evil Literature" in which newspapers were burnt, Vigilance Committees formed in Irish towns, and music-hall evenings broken up.[108]

Alongside this attack on 'gutter literature' was a dismissal of O'Connor and, through him, the Home Rule generation of literary emigrants whose cultural choices echoed his.

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[105] *The Irish Peasant*, 26 May 1906; Maume, D.P. *Moran*, pp.10-11, 22; Maume, *The Long Gestation*, pp.60-1.

[106] D.P. Moran, "One Hundred Years of Irish Humbug", in *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 19 Dec. 1900.

[107] *The Leader*, 1 Sept. 1900. That Moran's concerns were not ill-founded is shown by an article of 1900. Here, Michael MacDonagh wrote of how he was "amazed during recent visits to Ireland at the display of London weekly publications, such as *Tit Bits*, *Answers*, *Home Chat*...in the newsagents' shops, in even the remote towns of Ireland ("In the Bye-Ways of Rural Ireland", *Nineteenth Century*, July 1900).

T.P. had recently been speaking in Ireland and, as in *The Plough and the Cross*, his Anglicised state, his distance from the 'new' Ireland of the revival, is made clear: "Mr T.P. O'Connor may be abreast of the times in his adopted country, but he is a Rip Van Winkle on Irish soil. We may or may not have progressed since he was an Irishman, but at least we have changed even though Mr O'Connor may not be aware of it." Again echoing O'Hagan, Moran asks why T.P. does not return to Ireland and let his native land enjoy the benefit of his "undoubted talent." Nothing compels him to use that talent to "increase the interest of the...*Daily Mail* or the editing of [a] society-snippet." At the close Moran casts both O'Connor and the 'old' Ireland he embodies aside. They are irrelevant, since their 'nationalism' meant ineffective 'treacle' about bad landlordism and the generosity of Irish-Americans rather than the vigorous self-reliance of Irish-Ireland. "We cannot give any more space to him", says Moran of T.P. "The Ireland in which he rose to fame is gone...If he has nothing else to offer, he had better go back home to England."[109]

But O'Connor was not entirely irrelevant to the 'new' Ireland. If he had nothing constructive to offer it, he still supplied that cultural 'warning' of Anglicisation which was a powerful reminder to the younger generation of how Ireland had gone wrong in the past and was being menaced in the present. Accordingly, *The Leader* repeatedly cited his production of gossip weeklies and accused him of peddling exactly the kind of crude, lowbrow, English journalism that revivalists were seeking to drive from Ireland. T.P. was not just an Anglicising agency but a vulgar one at that. In October *The Leader* asked what was the value of Redmond's narrow, political, nationalism when "the T.P. O'Connors are hitching us on...to everything that is low and inane in British life, and are strangling Irish individuality." The following month the paper stated: "no-one is more anxious to spread the English mind broadcast in the form of 'some quotable pars' than that eminent foreigner born in Ireland, Mr T.P. O'Connor." A year later it described T.P. as "an Anglicising agency more virulent and vulgar than the...Ha'penny Cuts."[110] In such stinging attacks was the authentic voice of the returned revival emigrant, exposing the cultural 'corruption' of his Home Rule predecessors in an analysis which gained added force from earlier personal contact with them. For the pious Moran, T.P.'s 'corruption' would only intensify with the subsequent revelations about his personal life.[111]

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[108] Ibid, 20 Oct. 1900; Maume, *D.P. Moran*, pp.23, 31; Maume, *The Long Gestation*, pp.59-60.
[109] *The Leader*, 1 Sept. 1900.
[110] Ibid, 13 Oct., 24 Nov. 1900, 3 Aug. 1901.
[111] Moran would refuse to allow O'Connor's papers in his house (Maume, *D.P. Moran*, pp.27-8).

The generation conflict in literary emigrant circles was brought even more sharply into focus by an article of October 1900 entitled "Three Irish Foreigners." Here, Moran took issue with the 'unthinking' Irishmen who prided themselves on the professional success of emigrant Irishmen like O'Connor, McCarthy and Lord Russell of Killowen. To Moran, each man had a certain amount of talent, or in Russell's case "virtue". But, as the title indicates, he regarded them as 'Anglicised'. Russell had "generously offered' his virtue "at the feet of England", McCarthy "had become more English than the English themselves," whilst T.P. may have lacked "principle" but he had had the "cleverness" to garner a fortune by "making their servant girls weep" through his journalistic 'treacle'. All three were "foreigners by adoption and foreigners by interest and cultivation." And yet their achievements inspired pride in some Irishmen. This was a "false ideal" said Moran. To honour men who had succeeded in Britain by adopting English cultural models, by throwing themselves "into the service of England", was not justified. It demonstrated "cringe, pure and simple", and showed that Irish standards were British, not Irish. Instead of being seen as cultural 'warnings' the Home Rule literary emigrants were being held up as worthy examples. Moran tore down this "false ideal" and replaced it with the revival one that he and Ryan had followed: "Irishmen and Irish ability...for the construction of a distinctively Irish civilisation." Although a Unionist, Horace Plunkett was more Irish than "twenty...O'Connors or McCarthys." Having examined their cultural choices, Moran found the Home Rule writers wholly wanting. They showed that to prosper abroad an Irishman had to shed his Irishness. Like *Daisy Darley*, Moran's article effectively rejected not just the example of the Home Rule writers but the whole previous century of Irish literary emigration to, and assimilation with, 'literary London'.[112]

And, significantly, Moran found O'Brien and the ILS equally wanting.[113] If Ryan felt that the ILS had a British 'focus', Moran simply saw it as Anglicised. In 1900 the ILS held a series of lectures on the past "hundred years" in various Irish fields, and this led Moran to ridicule both the society and its lectures in an essay called "One Hundred Years of Irish Humbug." "The Irish Literary Society is in the main composed of a very superior

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[112] *The Leader*, 13 Oct. 1900. Moran's article was of course simultaneously rejecting that tradition of celebrating Irish success abroad of which contemporary attitudes were just a continuation, a classic example here being Fahy and O'Donoghue's 1889 survey of "Ireland in London" for the Dublin *Evening Telegraph*. For further *Leader* criticism of Russell as 'un-Irish', see 24 Dec. 1901.

[113] Ryan gives the impression (*The Irish Peasant*, 26 May 1906) that Moran's contact with the ILS increased in the late 1890s, but that, with his new Gaelic ethos, he found its "placid, tepid" atmosphere and non-Gaelic outlook exasperating. If so, this suggests a Moran-O'Brien angle to the ILS generation clash. It also suggests that, as it did for Ryan, the League provided Moran with a welcome alternative to the ILS.

collection of West Britons," he said, evoking its 'aristocratic' nature. He then attacked the "antiquated West British theories" of the speakers, including O'Brien and Rolleston. The latter was lambasted for still nourishing the idea that Irish literature could exist in English, whilst O'Brien's account of nineteenth century Irish history - 'A Hundred Years of Irish History' - elicited a stiff rebuke from Moran. Similarly believing that nationality was not simply politics, he shared Ryan's objection to O'Brien's narrow political history:

> Mr Barry O'Brien fumed as he pulled the old strings on politics; orated as if the last few years of Gaelic League propaganda had not been, as if politics was history, and nothing counted in the making or unmaking of nations but monster meetings, parliamentary divisions and resolutions.[114]

Seeking to gain British Liberal support for Irish reform, O'Brien's historical work had aimed to expose the Imperial Parliament's failure in Ireland and so had concentrated on the course of Irish legislation. This approach - enshrined in his lecture - was now deemed inadequate by those, like Moran and Ryan, who were interested in tracing not the course of Irish legislation but the evolution of Gaelic 'civilisation'. What had formerly been a means of asserting his nationalism had become evidence of his 'West Britishness'. The British context in which O'Brien had written his history was again highlighted.[115] Thus, by 1900 Moran had publicly attacked the 'mixed' identities of all three Home Rule writers: O'Brien, O'Connor and McCarthy. To him, as to Ryan, these identities smacked of cultural compromise and 'corruption', of Anglicisation, and so, although he had not clashed with them as directly as Ryan had, he strengthens the idea of a generation conflict in Irish literary emigrant circles. By the time O'Brien ascended to the Presidency of the ILS in 1906 Moran had already proclaimed that anyone holding this office was "not likely to learn much of Ireland."[116]

Despite the injunctions of Moran and Fergus O'Hagan, O'Connor did not return to Ireland. As early as October 1885 he had confirmed the extent to which London was his cultural capital when he told Wilfred Blunt that even if Home Rule was obtained - so that Ireland recovered her 'deposed' capital - he had "no intention of going back to live in Dublin."[117] If the Irish cause closest to his heart could not sever him from London, then it is not surprising that a cultural revival from which he was detached proved equally

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[114] Moran, "One Hundred Years of Irish Humbug", in *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 19 Dec. 1900.
[115] Another example of the gulf between Moran and O'Brien is their attitude to Charles Russell. Whereas Moran denied he was really Irish, O'Brien emphasised his friend's Irishness in his *Life of Lord Russell* and stressed how Russell asserted that Irishness in England (pp.85-6, 156). The very fact that O'Brien considered Russell worth writing about demonstrates the difference between him and Moran (and Ryan).
[116] *The Leader*, 22 Dec. 1900.

ineffective in enticing him back to Ireland. T.P. was too old and too entrenched in British life to make such a move. In this respect the figure of O'Connellan was no distortion. "In spite of his Irish blood and sentiment", said J.J. Horgan, one felt T.P. "was quite indifferent to, and indeed ignorant of, the new Ireland represented by Sinn Fein and the Gaelic League and that his real interests were, naturally enough, centered in Fleet Street and Westminster."[118] So they had been since the 1880s and so they remained until his death in 1929. During the last two decades of his life O'Connor continued to launch new papers, such as *T.P.'s Monthly* and *T.P.'s Journal*. He maintained his close political and social contact with the Liberals, acting as the chief Irish-Liberal link in the torturous attempts to secure Home Rule from 1910 to 1918, and enjoying the company of Lloyd George and the Master of Elibank when travelling abroad. Old friends like John Morley remained.[119] At the 1918 election he survived the wreck of the Irish Party to become Father of the House. In a poignant passage Michael MacDonagh describes how the seventy-year old O'Connor arrived in the Commons to take his place only to find "the Irish benches filled with British Unionists, and not a vacant place where he himself could sit down."[120] T.P. had remained loyal to Home Rule even if Ireland had deserted it. By his own definition of nationalism, he had retained his 'mixed' political identity to the end.

The same was true of McCarthy and Barry O'Brien, though, unlike O'Connor, their nationalist sides were stirred somewhat by the cultural revival. Having resigned as leader of the anti-Parnellites in 1896, McCarthy's health broke down the following year and his removal from London to Westgate-on-Sea in Kent proved permanent. From there the revival did not escape his notice, for in the early 1900s he tried to learn something of the Irish language. Indeed, with some of McCarthy's later writings there is the impression that, conscious of the extent to which Irishmen of his type were now being cast as 'West British', he sought to reassert his Irish identity. For example, as Foster has observed, his 1904 autobiography had a somewhat defensive title, being *The Story of an Irishman*, and throughout he emphasised his devotion to the 'national cause.'[121] Three years earlier he had written a novel about the 1848 rising entitled *Mononia* (it is notable that he had to

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[117] Blunt, *The Land War in Ireland*, pp.10-11.
[118] Horgan, *From Parnell to Pearse*, pp.152-3.
[119] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.171, 187-90, 202-3, 213-14; Fyfe, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.220-1 278-9, 237; Master of Elibank Papers, MS 8802, fol.56: O'Connor to Elibank, 10 May 1910; Morgan, *John, Viscount Morley, Some Personal Reminiscences*, p.96. For full details of T.P.'s political career from 1906-18, see Brady.
[120] MacDonagh, *The Home Rule Movement*, pp.290-1.
[121] Doyle, *Justin McCarthy*, pp.58-9; McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.411; Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*, p.290.

look to the past when writing an Irish novel) and in 1911 he recalled his Cork youth in *Irish Recollections*.[122] Even so, his literary work in retirement also provided ample testimony to his absorption in British political, literary and social life, with McCarthy recalling his association with the leading figures of these worlds in such volumes as *Reminiscences* (1899), *British Political Leaders* (1903) and *Portraits of the Sixties* (1903). The British state in turn recognised his contribution to British culture, the Premier Arthur Balfour awarding McCarthy a Civil List pension for his services to literature in 1902. And, if McCarthy's age and ill-health precluded a romantic return to Ireland, it was in any case from London, not Ireland, that he felt exiled. "I dare say I should have left London in...a tragic mood", he wrote in 1904, "if I had known that I was making my final farewell to the life of the Metropolis, and...the life of the House of Commons."[123]

O'Brien echoed McCarthy in his willingness to acknowledge the new Gaelic spirit, and even paid tribute to the work of the Gaelic League in the early 1900s. But this did not signal a fundamental shift in the nature or balance of his mixed nationalist-Liberal identity. He remained a Home Ruler and his nationalism remained essentially political. His friendship with John Redmond blossomed and the possibility even arose of O'Brien becoming an Irish Party MP.[124] At the same time his intellectual liberalism and Liberal London links endured. The rationalist historicism which had come to dominate the ILS continued to be the means of expressing his nationalist views. With the brightening of Liberal prospects from 1905, O'Brien's literary activity increased. In 1905 he published *England's Title in Ireland*, which applied the liberal principle of popular consent to the various eras of English rule in Ireland and naturally found them lacking. That year his close friend James Bryce became Irish Chief Secretary and, with the Liberals committed to a gradual implementation of Irish autonomy, the two men brought out a new edition of *Two Centuries of Irish History* in 1907. Bryce soon left to become the British ambassador to the United States, but by 1910-12 Home Rule proper was back on the political agenda. In 1910 O'Brien edited a volume of Redmond's Home Rule speeches (supplying a

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[122] For further details of Mononia, see Murphy, "Between Drawing–Room and Barricade: The Autobiographies & Nationalist Fictions of Justin McCarthy", in Stewart (ed.), *Hearts and Minds: Irish Culture and Society Under the Act of Union*, pp.111-19.

[123] Doyle, *Justin McCarthy*, pp.58-9; McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.390.

[124] *The Irish Peasant*, 21 July 1906; NLI, Redmond Papers, MS 15, 211 (2): O'Brien to Redmond, 13, 27 Sept., 26 Nov. 1900, 22 Sept., 27 Dec. 1903. Redmond provided an introduction to O'Brien's *A Hundred Years of Irish History* in 1902.

historical overview in his introduction) and also reissued his *Life of Parnell.*[125] Then in 1912 he contributed "The Government of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century" to *The New Irish Constitution*, a volume of Home Rule essays by various Liberal writers. Here, he again provided the kind of detailed account of the Imperial Parliament's failure in Ireland with which he had made his name in the 1880s and which had so impressed Gladstone. That year O'Brien joined John H. Morgan (the book's editor), Augustine Birrell, Morley, Reginald (now Lord) Welby, C.P. Scott and others at a dinner to celebrate its publication. Birrell, Bryce's successor as Chief Secretary, was a particularly good friend. He had written for the *Speaker* in the 1890s, and he and O'Brien had earlier been neighbours in Lincoln's Inn.[126] Finally, with the publication of his biography of John Bright in 1910, O'Brien served a reminder that his Liberal links not only reached back to the 1880s but extended right into the 1860s. He was well aware of the image such long-standing Liberal links gave him. Asked by Charles Russell in 1900 whether he considered him [Russell] an 'old Whig', O'Brien said: "no, but [I am] generally regarded as an old Whig myself."[127]

The New Irish Constitution dinner underlines one of this study's central themes - the literary, political and social success of O'Brien and the Home Rule writers in London - and this, in turn, brings us back to the question of English attitudes to the Irish in Victorian England. Whilst claims have been made that anti-Irish sentiment among the English middle and upper classes was racially motivated, the success of the Home Rule writers points to class prejudice instead being the vital factor in anti-Irish sentiment.[128] Like Trollope's Phineas Finn, the bourgeois backgrounds of the Home Rule literary emigrants made them 'acceptable' Irishmen and so allowed them to penetrate the higher reaches of London literary, political and social life. The Home Rule writers' success also suggests that neither Irish nationalism nor Catholicism were necessarily a bar to a profitable career in England (though T.P. was hardly evidence of the latter). McCarthy himself drew this conclusion in a much-quoted passage:

> I may say...that my career as a journalist, novelist and historian, depending for success upon the English public, might...have been regarded as hampered...by the fact that I was an Irishman, a Roman Catholic, and

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[125] O'Brien, *England's Title in Ireland*; R. Barry O'Brien (ed.), *Two Centuries of Irish History* (London, 1907); *The Home Rule Speeches of John Redmond*, ed. R. Barry O'Brien (London, 1910); Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 279, fol.17: O'Brien to Bryce, 10 Apr. 1906.

[126] O'Brien, "The Government of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century", in John H. Morgan (ed.), *The New Irish Constitution* (London, 1912); Morgan, *John, Viscount Morley, Some Personal Reminiscences*, p.102; Augustine Birrell, *Things Past Redress* (London, 1937), p.126; Bryce Papers, MSS Bryce 215, fol.146-7: Birrell to Bryce, 17 June 1907; *The Irish Peasant*, 21 July 1906. Birrell wrote an introduction for O'Brien's 1910 biography of John Bright.

[127] O'Brien, *Life of Lord Russell*, pp.367-8.

[128] The anti-Irish racism argument has been made by L.P. Curtis Jnr. See pp.27-8 above.

an advocate of...Home Rule. But I never found these facts interfere in the slightest degree with the fair receptions of my books by English critics or English readers.[129]

A host of his contemporaries can be summoned to support the view that for Irishmen, even nationalist and Catholic ones, the way was open in Victorian England, and to show that anti-Irish racism was hardly the experience of middle class Irish Catholics in Britain. Charles Russell's glittering legal career is an obvious example here, especially as he was not afraid to assert both his Catholicism and his Irishness. In the conclusion to his great historical speech before the Parnell Commission in 1889 he described how he had "received kindness, consideration, and regard" ever since moving to England. Similarly, O'Connor's brother-in-law, the journalist William O'Malley, recalled late in life: "During the fifty odd years I have lived in England...I have never experienced anything but kindness at the hands of Englishmen."[130] The opportunities open to 'educated' Irishmen in England were spelt out by James Bryce in 1884: "an Irishman has every chance, and uses it, of success in England...[in arms, law, medicine...literature, science] many of the leading men of modern Britain are Irish by birth and education - real Irishmen."[131] Above all, as this study in general and the Home Rule writers in particular show, Irishmen could make their mark in English journalism and literature ("the cry of 'no Irish need apply' does not hold good in the literary world," said Ryan in 1892[132]). Indeed, with their ascent to Fleet Street editorial positions in the late 1880s, O'Connor and O'Brien had demonstrated that Irishness and nationalism could help a journalist's career, not hinder it.

However, in gaining these editorial positions, and in their careers as a whole, they naturally also benefited from the 'British' side to their identities, and in the final phase of their lives this 'British' side would become even more apparent. With Home Rule on the statute book, O'Brien and O'Connor fully agreed with Redmond's decision to pledge Ireland's support for Britain in the First World War. Three of O'Brien's sons enlisted in the British Army, whilst from the autumn of 1914 O'Connor spoke at recruiting rallies across Britain. In taking this stance O'Brien and T.P. demonstrated the extent to which they identified with Britain as well as Ireland.[133] They showed that alongside their Irish nationalism they possessed an overarching Imperial loyalty. This wartime commitment to Britain was a fitting testimony to their lifelong 'mixed' political and cultural identities.

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[129] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, pp.196-7. See too his *Reminiscences*, I, p.15.
[130] O'Brien, *Life of Lord Russell*, pp.85-6, 156, 254; O'Malley, *Glancing Back*, pp.64, 214.
[131] Bryce, *England and Ireland*, pp.27-8.
[132] *The Irish Catholic*, 13 Aug. 1892.
[133] O'Brien obituary, *The Times*, 19 Mar. 1918; Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, pp.219-21; T.P. O'Connor, "The Irish in Britain", in Felix Lavery, *Irish Heroes in the War* (London, 1917).

But it was no surprise. Almost from the outset of their careers as nationalist writers and politicians in the 1880s they had combined support for Home Rule with protestations of Imperial loyalty. For them, Home Rule was the prelude to Imperial unity and harmony rather than separation. Home Rule would enable Ireland to join other 'white' colonies like Canada and Australia in an Empire of self-governing democracies. Their support for Britain in 1914 was therefore not, as Brady has suggested of O'Connor, a "new duality of loyalty", but the culmination of a long held belief in the compatibility of Home Rule and Imperial loyalty.[134] When put to the test in the crucible of the First World War that belief held firm. Both in this belief and the related idea of an Empire of self-governing nations O'Brien and O'Connor understandably drew upon Liberal ideology. Gladstone of course loomed large, underlining his impact upon the Home Rule writers. Self-government had long been his guiding principle in colonial policy, and recent studies have stressed how he saw Home Rule as a great measure of Imperial pacification and unity. But it was not simply their Liberal values that O'Connor and O'Brien were again exhibiting.[135] Their vision of a Home Rule Ireland at the heart of the Empire was shared by both Butt and Redmond. Thus, both in its political results and its political-intellectual influences the Home Rule writers' attitude towards Ireland and Empire was expressive of their 'mixed' identities. And, by linking Butt and Redmond's Imperial visions, they show that Imperial loyalty was not peculiar to either the early or late periods of Home Rule nationalism but was central to the movement throughout its existence.

An early example of T.P.'s belief in Home Rule as a route to Imperial progress was, appropriately enough, his 1889 article on Gladstone, "The Candour of Mr Gladstone." After completing his defence of the Liberal leader, T.P. concludes by saying that future generations would remember his "great heart" and how he "toiled" in the work of improving "the lot of men all the world over, and especially of adding to the stability and glory of our own Empire."[136] It was in his journalism of the 1890s, though, that this Imperial strain to O'Connor's Home Rule politics really came through. In part this was due to commercial and political pressures. Rivals like the *Evening News* and *Daily Mail* had capitalised on a growing Imperial spirit among the public by focusing on Imperial issues, and T.P. was no doubt hoping to attract readers by giving his papers a similar

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[134] Brady, *T.P. O'Connor*, p.220.
[135] Dunne, "Les trahison des clercs: British Intellectuals and the first home rule crisis", *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii (1982-3), pp.134-73; Biagini, *Gladstone*, pp.25-8, 76-89, 103-4; Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-98*, pp.468-71, 501.
[136] O'Connor, "The Candour of Mr Gladstone", *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1889, p.369.

Imperial flavour.[137] At the same time Home Rule was slipping down the Liberal agenda and by emphasising its benefits for the Empire O'Connor hoped to restore its lustre, especially as Rosebery, the new Liberal leader, was known for his commitment to the Empire.[138] Even so, O'Connor also expressed his convictions when he argued in *The Sun* in 1894 that Home Rule nationalism and Imperial loyalty went hand in hand: "side by side with the...consecration in an Irish Parliament of the great principle of...national patriotism, I want to see grow up the noble and exalted patriotism of...the heirs, the creators of a mighty empire." "The Irish question is the obstacle which stands before Ireland and her growth into the full stature of Imperial struggle and Imperial glory," he said. Equally crucial was his Gladstonian belief that the Empire a Home Rule Ireland would inhabit had to be one of freedom, not aggression: "I want to see every Nationality in this great...Imperial fabric equally loyal, equally proud, because equally free."[139]

O'Brien's work of the 1880s is littered with similar claims that Irish reform would bring Imperial unity and loyalty. For him, Bright was as much an influence here as Gladstone, Bright's speeches having consistently made this point. One phrase from an 1866 speech - "make Ireland a strength and not a weakness to the British Empire" - particularly struck O'Brien and was used by him on several occasions, the first time being at the end of *The Irish Land Question and English Public Opinion*.[140] It was then carried into the Home Rule debate of 1886, with O'Brien using it to present Home Rule in classic Gladstonian terms. In an 1886 essay he depicted Home Rule as a great measure of Imperial reform, drawing the colonial parallel with Canada that was much favoured by Home Rulers, including Gladstone, because of how Canada's earlier religious difficulties echoed Ireland's. "Home Rule, and Home Rule only," wrote O'Brien, "made Canada loyal and contented. Home Rule, and Home Rule only, will make Ireland loyal and contented - the strength, and not the weakness, of the Empire." That same year O'Brien asked in another article: "Will the struggle of centuries be closed on the equitable terms of Home Rule for Ireland and Ireland for the Empire?" Moreover, both pieces first appeared in the Dublin *Freeman's Journal*, so that the theme of Imperial loyalty was not

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[137] Jones, *Fleet Street and Downing Street*, pp.132-150.
[138] See here *The Sun*, 9, 11, 13 Mar. 1894, and O'Connor's article, "Home Rule and the Irish Party", *Contemporary Review*, Aug. 1896.
[139] *The Sun*, 7 Mar. 1894.
[140] This phrase came from Bright's famous 1866 Commons speech on an Irish Coercion Act (see *Speeches by John Bright, M.P.*, ed. Thorold Rogers, I, p.355). O'Brien quoted at length from this speech in *Fifty Years of Concessions* (II, pp.220-4). See p.42 above for the conclusion to *The Irish Land Question and English Public Opinion*.

a sop to reassure the British public. Elsewhere, he described himself as "one...sincerely desirous of maintaining the connection between England and Ireland".[141] Such statements further dent the image of O'Brien as an unqualified Parnellite in the 1880s and 1890s. They do not tally with either the ambiguity of Parnellism in the 1880s or the Parnellites' post-split flirtation with separatism. Conversely, they are another reason why O'Brien suited the *Speaker*, as Reid naturally promoted the Liberal idea of a Home Rule Ireland in a wider 'democratic' Empire. Like T.P., he emphasised this line following Rosebery's accession to the Liberal leadership.[142] Finally, it is worth noting that, as well as Gladstone and Bright, nearly all O'Brien's Irish friends - Butt, Duffy, Bryce and Russell - believed in a self-governing Empire in which a Home Rule Ireland would enjoy a central role.[143]

McCarthy can be added to this list as well. He was not around to support Britain in the First World War, having died in 1912, but would undoubtedly have done so, as he shared both the belief of O'Brien and O'Connor in Ireland's Imperial loyalty and the allied Gladstonian vision of a harmonious, democratic Empire. McCarthy's Imperial education began in 1855. That year he was greatly impressed by Gladstone's speech on colonial policy at Chester.[144] Whilst Gladstone's advocacy of colonial self-government offered encouragement to the nationalist in McCarthy, it was accompanied by the avowal that such self-government would breed loyalty to England and her Empire in the colonies. Here was a distillation of McCarthy's subsequent Home Rule faith: Irish self-government combined with Imperial loyalty. By 1880 Gladstone could see the extent to which McCarthy had absorbed the teachings first heard at Chester. Writing on Home Rule that year, McCarthy declared that it was a way of furthering the Empire, for "the Empire is strengthened and not weakened, consolidated and not dismembered, by the changes which reconcile the colonists to their place in the Imperial system." But in other respects McCarthy had now gone beyond Gladstone, as this article also showed how, through contact with the Royal Colonial Institute, which he joined in 1874, he had embraced the idea (to be championed by Rosebery) of Imperial Federation. Home Rule Ireland would

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[141] R. Barry O'Brien, "Canada and Ireland", in "Articles on Ireland", *Freeman's Pamphlets, No.8* (Dublin, 1886), p.45; O'Brien, *Irish Wrongs and Remedies*, p.162, 186. For further expressions of confidence in the Irish people's loyalty to the 'English connection' if 'justice' was accorded them, see his *Thomas Drummond* (p.183 above) and *Fifty Years of Concessions*, II, p.427.

[142] See, for example, *The Speaker*, "Democracy and Empire" (25 Nov. 1893), "Lord Rosebery" (10 Mar. 1894).

[143] O'Brien, *Life of Lord Russell*, p.156; O'Brien, *Parnell*, pp.331-60. Of Russell's 'idea' of Empire, O'Brien wrote: "it meant the aggregation of self-governing communities united by their common interests, common sympathies, and common aims."

[144] See p.48 above for McCarthy's reaction to the Chester speech.

take her place in a great Imperial assembly at Westminster that would secure a united Empire of self-governing nations.[145] For McCarthy, the confirmation of his long-standing Imperial loyalty, and the fitting testament to his 'mixed' identity, would come not in 1914 but in 1904, in *The Story of an Irishman*: "I believe that if Home Rule were conceded to Ireland, she might become as prosperous and as contented a partner in the imperial system as Canada or Australia"[146]

Away, though, from ideas of Empire and their mixed political identities there was another, simpler, sense in which the wartime loyalty to Britain of O'Connor and O'Brien was entirely appropriate, and would have been for McCarthy too. As emigrants, pledging support for Britain was a recognition that England (and London) was their home and where their lives and careers had been made. Identification with their adopted country in her hour of need was effectively a display of gratitude. The emotional pull of England for the Home Rule writers, along with the mixed identities that the First World War highlighted, was well expressed in McCarthy's *A Fair Saxon*. "God save Ireland," says Tyrone at the close. "And England - our England?" asks his new English wife, Jenny Aspar. "Our England, indeed. God save England, and bless her!" replies Tyrone. "She has given me my love and my wife, and my heart should be cold indeed if it did not warm to her name." Yet, perhaps the final word should go to Parnell. After all, it was with Parnell that this study of the Home Rule literary emigrants commenced, and, although it has brought out the vital non-Parnellite aspects of their politics, it is with him that their names remain most closely associated. Parnell, who himself was never happier than when at Brighton with Katharine O'Shea, told Morley in November 1890 that Ireland was "a very good place to live out of, and England the best of countries to live in."[147]

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[145] McCarthy, "The Common Sense of Home Rule", *Nineteenth Century*, Mar. 1880, pp.406-7, 411-13; McCarthy Papers, MS 3694: Diaries, 17 June, 1874; Doyle, *Justin McCarthy*, p.20. See too *A History of Our Own Times*, IV, pp.184-205, for McCarthy's ideas on Imperial Federation. McCarthy's 1868 letter to Gladstone from America had earlier demonstrated his Imperial loyalty through its rejection of the example of John Mitchel (see pp.48-9 above). Wilfrid Blunt, for one, commented on McCarthy's Imperial loyalty (*Gordon at Khartoum*, pp.422-3).

[146] McCarthy, *The Story of an Irishman*, p.250. See too, pp.179-80.

[147] John Morley, *Recollections* (2 vols., London, 1917), I, p.255.

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Lord Ripon Papers

G.B. Shaw Papers

C.P. Scott Papers

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J.A. Spender Papers

B. Bodleian Library, Oxford

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W.M. Crook Papers

Sir William Harcourt Papers

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Alfred Milner Papers

C. National Library of Ireland

Edward Blake Papers

J.F.X. O'Brien Papers

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James Bryce Papers

Isaac Butt Papers

Gerald Christy Papers

Daniel Crilly Papers

Edmund Downey Papers

Charles Gavan Duffy Papers

W.J. Fitzpatrick Papers

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P.J. Quinn Papers

Michael MacDonagh Papers

Justin McCarthy Papers

T.P. O'Connor Papers

John O'Leary Papers

John Redmond Papers

George Sigerson Papers

D. National Library of Scotland

Blackwoods Papers

Master of Elibank Papers

R.B. Haldane Papers

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E. Leeds University, Brotherton Collection

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An Claimdheah Soluis

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